



GORGE TILLICUM

GORGE TILLICUM COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Neighbourhood NEWS



Vera Wynn-Williams, GTCA President; Jennifer Loo, Fairway Market - Community Relations; Arden Little, GTCA Arts & Celebration; and Kay Gallivan, Mural Artist at the mural opening.



'A GORGEOUS DAY' : A NEW MURAL WELCOMES YOU TO GORGE TILLICUM

The Gorge Tillicum Community Association (GTCA) is excited to celebrate the completion and official opening of A Gorgeous Day, our third community mural in Gorge Tillicum.

Created by artist Kay Gallivan, a high school teacher in Vancouver, this vibrant and whimsical mural celebrates the people, places, pastimes, and non-human neighbours that make our community special. Located on the backside of Fairway Market, facing Tillicum and Gorge Roads, it is one of the most visible public art projects the GTCA has undertaken.

This mural is particularly special to us because the GTCA has wanted to create a "placemaking" mural for some time. We wanted something that would help announce that you have arrived in Gorge Tillicum and create a stronger sense of identity for our neighbourhood.

We still hear from people who confuse Gorge Tillicum with Burnside Gorge, so we hope this mural is just the first step in making the Tillicum corridor more welcoming, distinctive and inviting.

A big thank you to Fairway Market, the District of Saanich Community Canvas Mural Grant Program, and everyone who helped make this project possible. We are also incredibly grateful for the enthusiastic response from the community while the mural was being created. Kay truly felt the love and encouragement from the neighbourhood.

We are excited to see what might come next!

Kay has also tucked two fairy doors into the mural. Have you spotted them yet? Keep your eyes open the next time you pass by!



We welcome comments — please let us know what you think of your newsletter!

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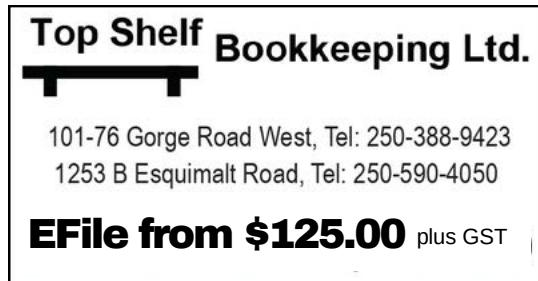


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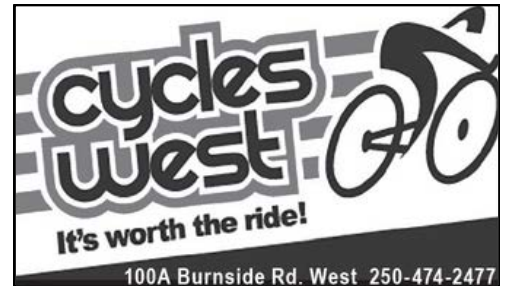
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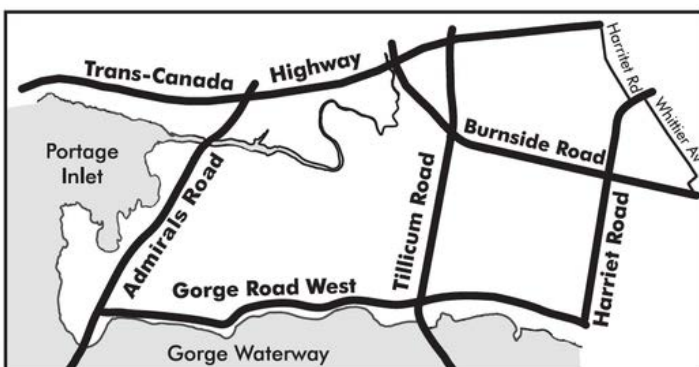
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GTCA BOUNDARIES

The GTCA boundaries are the Gorge Waterway and Portage Inlet shorelines, the Trans-Canada highway to the north and Harriet/Burnside East/Whittier/Harriet to the east.

To learn more about Saanich Community Associations and view the boundaries, see <https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/community/community-associations.html>



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GTCA UPDATE

When I became involved with the Gorge Tillicum Community Association, I expected to meet people who cared about their neighbourhood. What I didn't expect was how many truly wonderful people I would meet along the way, people I might otherwise never have crossed paths with. That has become one of the most rewarding parts of volunteering with the GTCA.

More Than a Community Association

The people who get involved with the GTCA come from all walks of life, with different backgrounds, experiences, interests and perspectives. We agree on many things, but certainly not everything. We have different priorities, different ideas and, at times, genuine differences of opinion.

I think that's a strength. The GTCA isn't a group where everyone has to think alike. We really do represent a wide variety of interests and opinions within Gorge Tillicum. What brings us together is something simpler: we care about this neighbourhood and want to contribute to making it a better place to live. Having different perspectives makes for interesting conversations and, ultimately, a more thoughtful community voice.

The Power of Collective Effort

One of the things I've come to appreciate is just how much can be accomplished when people contribute what they can. One person organizes an event, someone else spends a Saturday gardening, another attends a Saanich meeting and speaks up about an issue, while someone else shares information online or offers an idea for a new project.

None of these contributions, on their own, is likely to transform a neighbourhood. But put them together, year after year, and they make a real difference. The GTCA provides a place for those individual efforts to come together, to share ideas, support one another, raise issues and give Gorge Tillicum a collective voice.

You Don't Have to Do Everything

Volunteering can sometimes sound like a major commitment, but it doesn't have to be. You don't need to join a committee, take on a leadership role or devote large amounts of your free time. You might help at one event, spend an afternoon in a garden, share a particular skill, attend a meeting or simply offer an idea.

Every contribution adds something. And getting involved can give you something back as well. I've met people through the GTCA who I almost certainly would never have met otherwise. We've come from different parts of the community and have different perspectives, but working together has created friendships, connections and a much stronger sense of community for me.

A Simple Invitation

I often think about what makes a community strong. I don't think it is that everyone agrees, or that everyone participates in the same way. It's that enough people care to get involved.

Gorge Tillicum is fortunate to have many people willing to give their time, energy and ideas. The GTCA is simply a place where some of those people come together. There is always room for another perspective, another helping hand and another person who wants to make a contribution. So, if you've never been involved, I'd encourage you to give it a try. Join the GTCA, bring your perspective, meet some neighbours and lend a hand when you can. You may be surprised by what a small contribution can accomplish, and by the wonderful people you meet along the way.

Vera Wynn-Williams
President, GTCA

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FAIRWAY MARKET: A GORGE TILlicum TRADITION



Fairway Market's original store, established in 1963, was on Gorge Road West



Don Yuen, 2012 - Founder of Fairway Market

For many people in Gorge Tillicum, Fairway Market is more than a place to buy groceries. It is part of the neighbourhood's story.

In fact, the story of Fairway begins right here. In 1963, Chinese-Canadian entrepreneur Don Yuen and his partners opened the first Fairway Market on Gorge Road. More than six decades later, the family business has grown into one of Vancouver Island's largest independently owned grocery chains, with nine locations. Today, the Gorge Centre store at 272 Gorge Road West remains a particularly significant part of the company's history and is home to Fairway's corporate operations.

Fairway describes itself as **"Community Focused. Community First,"** and that philosophy has been evident in Gorge Tillicum for generations. Under current president Doug Yuen, a fourth-generation grocer, the company continues to emphasize local community involvement alongside its diverse selection of fresh foods and international specialties.

The Yuen family was recognized in the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce's 2024 Business Hall of Fame for its longstanding contribution to the region. The Chamber noted that Fairway has grown from a small family business into one of Vancouver Island's largest independently owned grocery chains and that the Yuen family has created jobs for more than 600 people while supporting numerous community initiatives.

For Gorge Tillicum residents, however, Fairway's community involvement is perhaps best measured by the familiar

events and activities that have brought neighbours together over the years.

One example is the **Gorge Canada Day Picnic**. Fairway Market has been a longtime supporter of the annual celebration, including the much-loved Strawberry Tea. For more than 20 years, Fairway's support has helped the picnic remain one of the community's signature traditions, an event that brings thousands of people to the Gorge each July.

The Strawberry Tea is one of those simple community traditions that has become part of the fabric of the neighbourhood. Volunteers, families, visitors and local businesses all contribute to making the Canada Day celebration special, and Fairway's longstanding support is one of the connections that has helped sustain it.

More recently, Fairway has become part of another visible addition to the neighbourhood: the Gorge Tillicum Community Association's mural program. A new mural on the Tillicum side of the Fairway building at 272 Gorge Road West is intended to welcome people to the neighbourhood with colour and whimsy, while reflecting what residents value about the community.

For GTCA President Vera Wynn-Williams, the conversations around the mural with Fairway President Doug Yuen revealed something deeper about the relationship between the business and the neighbourhood. "When meeting with Doug to discuss the mural theme, one thing that came up over and over again was that Fairway wanted to communicate that this is a neighbourhood

where everyone belongs," Vera says.

It is a simple sentiment, but one that captures much of what Fairway has represented in Gorge Tillicum over the years. The store has served newcomers looking for familiar foods, generations of local families doing their weekly shopping, and employees who began their working lives there. Fairway has also supported community celebrations and organizations that bring people together.

That sense of connection was especially apparent following the recent passing of Don Yuen on August 12, at the age of 94. His obituary in the Times Colonist described a businessman, family man and community leader whose Fairway grew from a single Gorge Road store into a Vancouver Island chain. His generosity included providing employment and mentorship to new Canadians and supporting organizations and causes throughout Greater Victoria.

The response from members of the Gorge Tillicum community echoed that larger legacy. People recalled working at Fairway, shopping at the Gorge store for decades, finding familiar foods after arriving in Canada, and experiencing the friendliness of its staff.

One longtime community member summed up the sentiment particularly well: "What a loss to the community but what a wonderful legacy he left for us."

The comments also revealed just how many different ways Fairway has touched people's lives. Former employees

remembered their first jobs and the people they met there. Longtime customers recalled shopping at the Gorge store for decades. For newcomers to Canada, Fairway was sometimes a place to find familiar ingredients and foods from home, and in some cases, a first workplace and starting point in a new community.

Perhaps that is why the idea behind the mural feels so fitting. Fairway's story is not only about a grocery business that grew from a single store. It is also about the people who have passed through its doors, the families who have built their lives here, and the community connections that have grown around it.

There is something fitting about the fact that the original Fairway continues to serve the community where the company began. The neighbourhood has changed, the Yuen family has grown into another generation of leadership, and Gorge Tillicum continues to evolve. Yet the basic connection remains.

We don't simply have a Fairway Market in our neighbourhood. We have the original Fairway, the place where a small family grocery business began more than 60 years ago, a continuing corporate presence in Gorge Tillicum, and a business that has grown alongside the community.

And perhaps the new mural captures the relationship best of all: ***this is a neighbourhood where everyone belongs.***



Don Yuen, Fairway Market - Founder & Chairman (right), and Doug Yuen, Fairway Market, President (left) 50th Anniversary, 2013



GORGETILlicUM
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

PUMPKIN PARADE

NOVEMBER 1st

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PUMPKIN PARADE - 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

 Saanich Gorge Park- 301 Gorge Road West
(Entrance off the Parking Lot by the Community Garden)

PUMPKIN DISPLAY - ENTERTAINMENT - HOT CHOCOLATE

Leave pumpkins at the foot of your driveway and crews will pick them up. VERY limited parking on site.



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HOLIDAY SKATE

PEARKES ARENA
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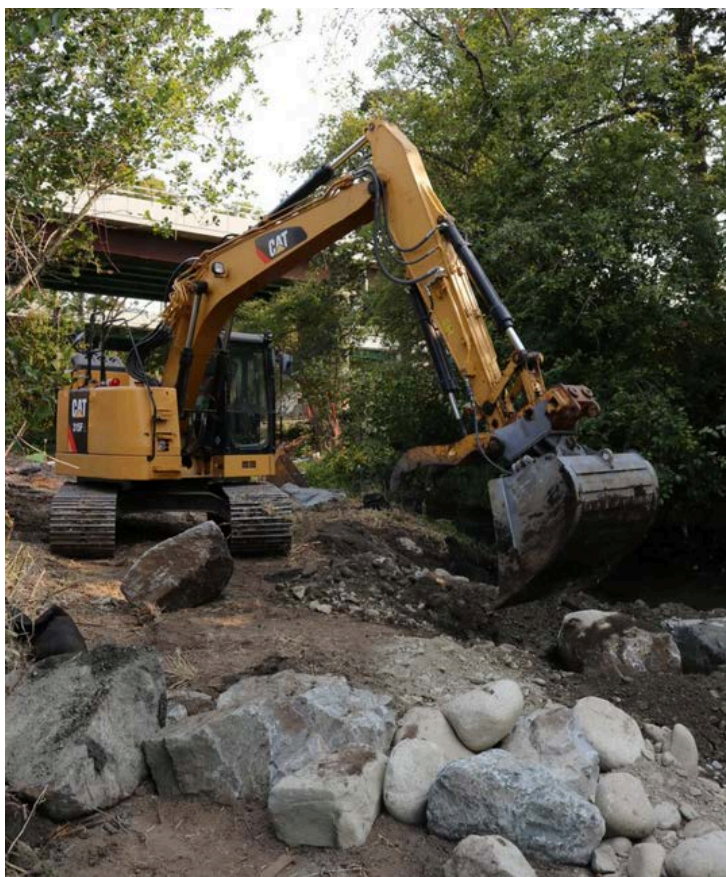
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Colquitz River UPDATE

Restoration: Lower Colquitz instream work complete

This August, in partnership with the District of Saanich's Creeks and Waterways department and with support from Saanich Parks, the Ministry of Transportation and Transit, and other funding partners, Peninsula Streams & Shorelines (PSS) completed a major phase of the Highway 1 Colquitz River Bridge Habitat Restoration Project. More than 20 tandem loads of natural river rock were used to rebuild the previously dredged channel, creating three riffles, three new spawning areas, and three refuge pools with added cover. The project restored approximately 400 m² of instream habitat, improving habitat complexity and conditions for salmonids. Extensive native planting across roughly 3,000 m² of riparian habitat will take place this fall, with plenty of opportunities for volunteers to get involved in planting and ongoing stewardship efforts. Interested in getting involved? Sign up as a volunteer on the PSS website to learn more: www.peninsulastreams.ca/join-us/volunteer-opportunities/



Monitoring: Adult salmon counting camera

This summer, PSS installed a new camera box on the Colquitz River to help quantify returning coho salmon and better understand adult salmon returns to the watershed. Built by [InStream Fisheries Research](http://InStreamFisheriesResearch.com) with support from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the system funnels salmon in front of a camera against a high-contrast background, providing consistent, high-quality footage for identifying and counting fish. The system will also use motion-detection software to help streamline footage processing, while allowing community members to view and engage with the recordings. We're hoping this new tool will strengthen our long-term monitoring of salmon populations on the Colquitz and provide valuable data to support our restoration efforts.

To learn more about the Peninsula Streams Society (PSS), become a member, sign up as a volunteer or to donate go to peninsulastreams.ca or scan the QR code.



Boulevard Brigade



Sue Gee, Brenda Sopow and Pam Loadman cleaning up the boulevards on Dysart Road.

Many of the beautiful gardens you see around our boulevards and traffic circles are cared for by your neighbours!

Years ago, when our community successfully advocated for these traffic-calming measures, Saanich didn't have the budget to maintain garden areas. Without volunteers, these spaces would have simply been concrete. Instead, a group of passionate residents saw an opportunity to make our neighbourhood greener and more beautiful, and stepped up to care for the gardens.

For more than two decades, volunteers have lovingly provided the time and labour to keep these spaces looking their best. Saanich has supported their efforts by providing plants, compost and haul-away services, creating a wonderful partnership between the community and the municipality.

Over the years, our gardening team has become a little smaller, and they would love to welcome some new helping hands.

You don't need gardening experience or any special skills, just a bit of time, some energy and a willingness to pitch in. It's a great way to meet neighbours, spend some time outdoors and perhaps learn a few tricks about beautiful, low-maintenance gardening along the way.

If you've ever enjoyed these gardens, consider helping to keep them growing!

Email: info@gorgetillicum.ca

Let's Make Gorge Tillicum More Creative, Connected & Fun!

From the peeps who bring you the Pumpkin Parade, Fairy Door Festival, Winter Skate — and all those poppin' murals around the neighbourhood, like Fairway's new Gorge-Tillicum mural — we're looking for people in the community to join our work group!

But first, lemme introduce myself! My name is Nathan John-Gill, and I've recently taken over the Arts, Culture & Celebration Group as team lead. I've got a passion for bringing people together and a yearning for creating fun, welcoming, and connected spaces for the folks of Gorge-Tillicum to enjoy!

Now, how about you? You — or even someone you know — might be interested in helping out, joining the work group, or even putting on your own community event!

We're looking for volunteers, people interested in helping make decisions, and even folks who might want to take the lead on an event of their own. You don't need to commit to everything. Whether you want to help out once in a while or become a regular part of the group, we'd love to hear from you.

We want to build an exciting and diverse roster of people who can help us meet the needs of our neighbourhood while continuing to build a fun and vibrant community identity. **And we can't do that without your help!**

So, if you or someone you know might be interested, reach out to info@gorgetillicum.ca with a simple:

"Hey, I'm interested in the Arts & Culture Group!" And we'll go from there!

Thank you, and as always: Stay real, Gorge-Tillicum :)

-Nathan John-Gill

Team Lead, Arts, Culture & Celebration Group



Gorge-Tillicum Sponsorship Group to Welcome Refugee Family After an Eight-Year Wait

Over eight years ago, a group of Gorge Tillicum residents and friends from across the region came together with the intention of sponsoring refugees and building community in the process.

On Sept. 14, 2026, we finally received the good news: the family of seven, most of whom have never been outside the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya, has been granted permanent residency in Canada. **We had no idea how hard we would have to fight for this success when we set out, and we are elated.**

Now, the real work begins, and we are once again looking to you, our community, to support us and this family as they settle and adapt.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- **Housing:** we are looking for housing for 7 people, ideally in the Gorge Tillicum area. This can be spread across two units, so we are interested in any two-bedroom plus rental units you maybe aware of, although a four-bedroom would be our first choice. This is our **most urgent need**, and we appreciate any support you can offer.
- **Finances:** While we are now very close to achieving our ICA-mandated fundraising target and we have set a goal of raising approximately \$21,000.
- **Your time:** we will need helping hands during the process, so please be in touch if you want to volunteer for one-off events.
- **Donations in-kind:** Please contact Elise Cote at velazquez.cote@gmail.com if you have household items, bikes, children's clothes, toys, devices, and more. Arrangements must be made before donations are received.

To learn more & donate see <https://gtrsg.wordpress.com> or scan the QR code below.



-Elise Cote on behalf of the



Safe Routes to Colquitz Middle School Have Only Gotten Worse

Last spring, our community raised serious concerns about the removal of the crosswalk on Burnside Road West connecting the Galloping Goose and Colquitz River trails, a route used by many Gorge-Tillicum students travelling to Colquitz Middle School.

The Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT) removed the crosswalk without notifying the school. Before Colquitz could alert families to the change, a student was struck by a vehicle while trying to cross where the crosswalk had been. Thankfully, the student was not seriously injured.

In May, families rallied at the site and called on Saanich to step up and work toward restoring a permanent crossing where MOTT removed the temporary one. So far, we have not seen action — and this fall, the situation has actually gotten worse.

Students returned to Colquitz in September to find construction blocking the sidewalk on the side of Burnside that the removal of the crosswalk now forces many of them to use. Kids walking and biking to school are being asked to navigate an increasingly difficult route that we already know presents safety concerns.

This is about more than one crosswalk. Safe routes to school continue to be a serious issue in Gorge-Tillicum, and we need Saanich to listen when our community raises concerns, not only when it is time to create or update another plan.

We are also calling for better communication between MOTT, Saanich, and our schools when infrastructure changes affect routes to school. Colquitz should never have learned that a crosswalk had disappeared because a child was hit.

We know kids are being put at risk. We should not have to wait for a tragedy to take action.

-Elise Cote



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We are so grateful to have successfully hosted the 26th Gorge Canada Picnic! An event of this size is only possible thanks to the incredible dedication and hard work of our core volunteer team, led by our hardworking Chair, Brandon Devnich.

On Canada Day, nearly 100 volunteers pitched in to help make the celebration a success. We simply couldn't do it without the time, energy, and community spirit of everyone who volunteered.

A special shout-out to Saanich Police for helping keep everyone safe throughout the festivities.

And a huge thank you to Cut the Crust by Mona, Save-On-Foods – Tillicum, and 4 Mile Brewing for generously supplying food and drinks for our volunteer appreciation party. Your support means so much to us!

Thank you to **everyone** who helped make the 26th Gorge Canada Picnic such a memorable celebration. We're already looking forward to next year!

Join The Picnic Team for 2027

**We have roles for every level of participation.
Visit our website to learn more
or send us an email.**

gorgecanadaday.ca/volunteer
info@gorgecanadaday.ca



Many thanks to our 2026 Organizing Committee

Brandon Devnich
Chair

Marlon Coy
Community Engagement & Volunteer
Coordinator

Benjamin Dam
Logistics Team Assistant

Ray Farmer
Entertainment & Pancake Breakfast
Coordinator

Randi Fjeldseth
Zone 5 Co-Captain &
Canada Day Market Vendor Coordinator

Nathan John-Gill
Zone 3 Co-Captain

Chris Kask
Food Vendor Coordinator & Treasurer

Karen Laberee
Strawberry Tea Coordinator

Michael Laing
Logistics Team Coordinator

Phil Lancaster
Communications & Security

Arden Little
Zone 3 Co-Captain

John McWilliams
Logistics Team Assistant

Tracy Menzies
Zone 5 Co-Captain &
Canada Day Market Vendor Coordinator

Kelly Nakatsuka
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Andrew Wynn-Williams
Vintage Car Show Coordinator

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Graphics, Marketing & Public Relation
Zone 6 Captain

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**All proceeds from the
Gorge Canada Day Picnic go to
fund the GTCA's programs such
public art, community events
and this newsletter.**



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MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE ANNUAL GTUF SEED SWAP

Sunday, February 7, 2027 - 2-4 pm
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Saanich Neighbourhood Place in Pearkes

A donation of \$2 at the door is appreciated

Whether new to the neighbourhood or already GTUF members we welcome you to come to donate, trade, or simply take some seeds at our "give and/or take" annual Seed Swap. Nothing is "sold" for cash. The Seed Swap is a great opportunity to meet fellow gardeners. We surely have many things to chat about from simple actions we can take in our gardens for better satisfaction and abundance to the major challenges and threats we are all faced with via Climate Change. Sharing our thoughts and knowledge is critically important!

All viable seeds and plants are welcome – commercial or home cultivated edibles, ornamentals, tubers, corms and bulbs and, particularly, indigenous plant species. Please clearly label and date what you bring secured in suitably sized containers. Small plastic or paper envelopes (or small jars with screw top lids) work best for seeds. Label each container with your name, plant name and date seeds were obtained or harvested. Extra packaging and marking materials will be available. We'll have a colouring table to occupy young gardeners.

We will also have a refreshment table. Contributions of homegrown and made or commercially made savoury, sweet or fresh snacks will be appreciated. Home grown ingredients and makings are ideal! A selection of teas and juices plus plates and napkins will be provided. In case there are not enough mugs to go around from the kitchenette, we ask you please to bring your own mug/s. Then chat away!

Volunteer helpers are always welcome. Please come prepared to take home what you collect and what's left of your initial contribution. Unclaimed remaining seeds will be managed by the Seed Swap Team.

-Olivia Anderson & Julie Graham

<https://www.seed-bank.ca>

EMAIL: gturbanfarmers@gmail.com

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