

Highland Community Garden

Learning in the Community Garden

When April 17, 7pm

at Highland Church

On Tuesday, April 17 we have asked Marina Gibson who works with Abbotsford Community Services and runs the urban farm behind the ACS building to come to speak to our gardeners. She is an engaging speaker (She can be found on TED talks) and she has written an article for an agricultural magazine.

Marina will be talking about how to improve your gardens, how to use clay pots for watering, talking about her urban garden and answering any questions you might have. Bring a friend, it should be an interesting evening!

RSVP wnmcfarland@yahoo.ca



Our First Speaker at HCG

Marina has a countrified heart despite always having lived in cities. She spent several years as a Professional Agrologist working on environmental aspects of BC Agriculture. With her children now grown, she has time to combine her enthusiasm for outdoors with the challenge of starting a social enterprise business. Partnered with Abbotsford Community Services which owns the land, Marina has converted an unused gravel lot in Historic Downtown Abbotsford into an Urban Farm selling locally grown fruits and vegetables.



Plant those useful legumes before winter ends

Peas and Fava beans are about the only plants you can start before winter officially ends. Legume crops are a fantastic way to condition the soil without a lot of work on your part and without disturbing the soil too deeply. Peas in particular send fine roots deeply into the ground so they will leave behind well-aerated soil and nitrogen-rich organic material when they die. This is a perfect environment for beneficial microbes and our friendly earthworms.

Fava beans have a slightly coarser root that will drill down 24 inches (61 cm), even in heavy soils, saving you the trouble and effort of deep tilling. Working wet clay soils can turn your garden into a sheet of concrete that is difficult to fluff up and impossible to weed.

Watch the long term forecast and chose a planting date when the risk of hard frost (colder than -3) has passed. **Don't work up the soil**, just get the seeds in the ground, at least an inch deep and cover with compost. After the favas have been harvested, use a sharp spade to cut through the roots around the main stalk and leave the finer part of the root system in place to rot. With peas, simply cut the vine off at soil level and compost it, again leaving the roots. (copied from the Van. Sun- Randy Shore)

How to get a head start on spring vegetables

1. *Make sure the seeds are fresh, and invite a neighbour to share packages (seeds lose viability in as little as one to two years)*
2. *The keys to successful germination are timing and temperature. The biggest problems are moisture and killing frost. Clear days bring sun and warm the soil, but nights might be still too cold. Plant in light, well drained soil. Peas and broad beans can be planted early under these conditions. Later on, before the end of April, spinach and radishes can be planted (depending on the rain and temperature of course).*
3. *Spinach needs a lot of nutrients so apply compost, alfalfa or seed meal, kelp meal and bone meal and hoe it into the top ten to 15 cm along with a little dolomite lime.*
4. *Later in April, plant another row of radishes but alternate the radish seeds with carrot seeds. The carrots are slow to start, but they will grow rapidly once the fast maturing radishes are out of the way.*
5. *Plant indoors. The No. 1 rule is to use sterile potting soil. There are far too many pathogens and potential predators in garden soil that come to life indoors if you use garden soil.*
6. *Plants that benefit most from an early start indoors are broccoli, cauliflower, Lacinato Kale, fennel and onions.*

