



# ORCHESTRATING A GROWING MOVEMENT IN THE CITY OF VICTORIA

Aaren Topley,  
Can You Dig It Provincial Manager  
Public Health Association of BC  
[sr.consultant@phabc.org](mailto:sr.consultant@phabc.org)

Alex Harned,  
Food System Coordinator  
City of Victoria  
[aharned@victoria.ca](mailto:aharned@victoria.ca)

# OVERVIEW

- About Can You Dig It
- City of Victoria Growing Landscape
- Scaling Up Growing in the City
- Key Components of the Project
  - Resource Materials
  - Educational Videos
  - COVID-19 Protocols
- Community in Action
- Take Away





# ABOUT CAN YOU DIG IT

Our vision is to strengthen  
community connections  
where community  
members are contributing  
to their own  
neighbourhoods through  
community growing.



# CITY OF VICTORIA GROWING LANDSCAPE

## ▣ Population:

- 80,000

## ▣ Growing in the City:

- 5 bylaws amended to enable growing & selling food throughout City

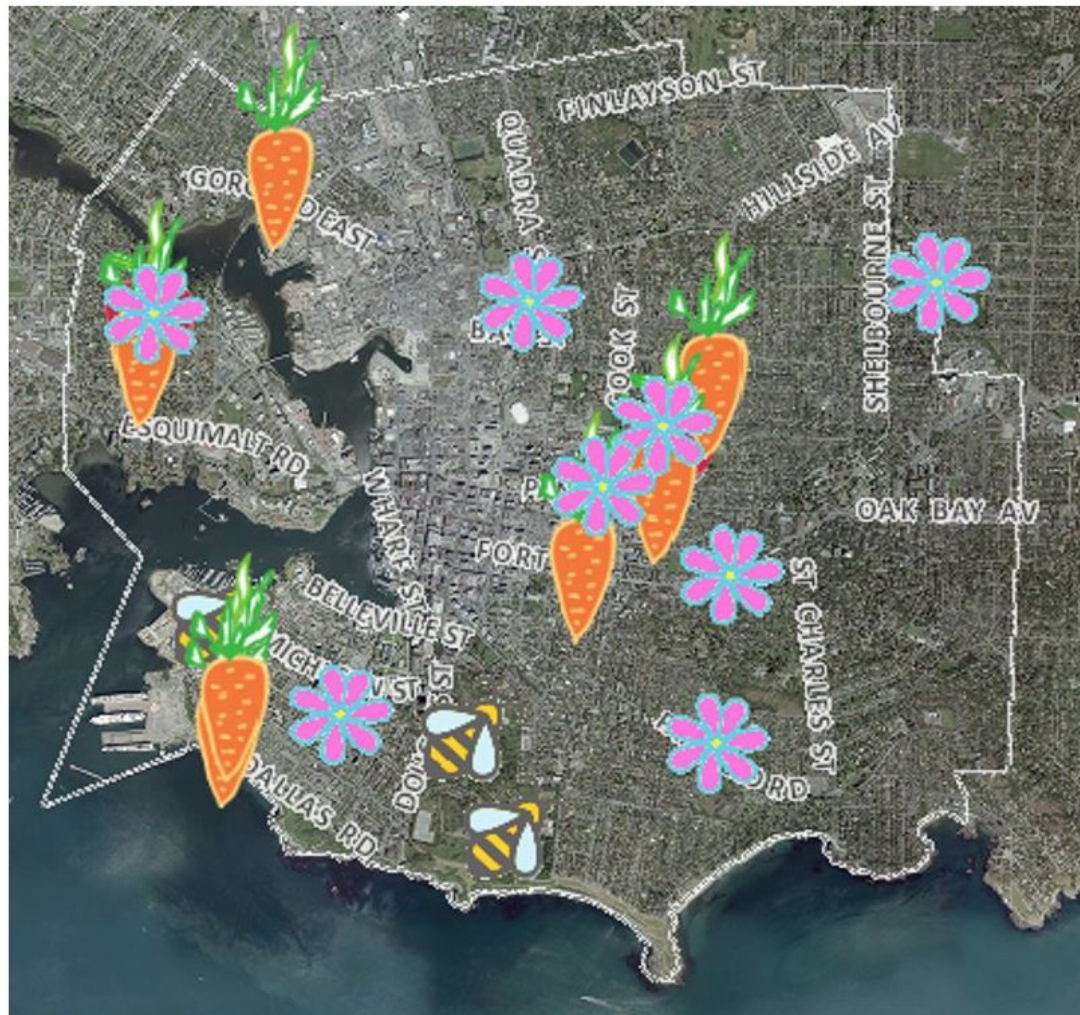
## ▣ Victoria Urban Food Table:

- Established 2016





# CITY OF VICTORIA GARDEN LANDSCAPE



Commons gardens are communal garden areas maintained and managed by the community.



Allotment gardens have plots that are rented, maintained, and harvested by individual member gardeners.



Community orchards are groves of fruit or nut trees. A community organization is responsible for the care, maintenance, and harvesting of trees.



Other types of gardens with interesting features. These are not considered community gardens, but you are welcome to visit these public gardens.

**18**  
**Community  
Gardens**

**14**  
**on City Land**

**4**  
**on Private or  
SD61 Land**

# SCALING UP OF THE GROWING IN THE CITY

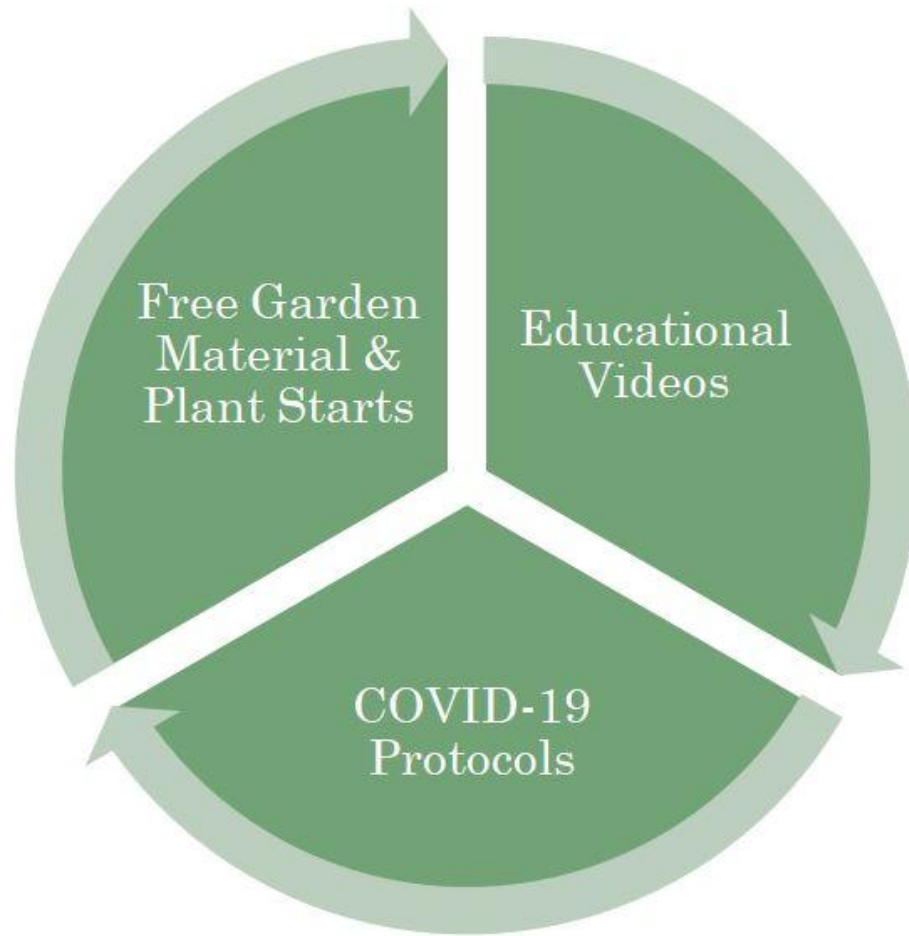
## **April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 Motion**

That Council authorize the scaling up of the Growing in the City initiative with the following actions, to increase community resilience and food security in response to Covid-19:

1. Temporarily reprioritize the focus of some Parks Department capacity to grow food plants from seed in the municipal nursery and greenhouses for planting in the 2020 growing season, harnessing expertise on appropriate plant selection from stakeholders in the Urban Food Table.
2. Work with stakeholder organizations in the Urban Food Table, School District 61 and local farmers to develop a distribution plan for food plants, soil and educational resources to scale up food production and increase community resilience and food security
3. Adhere strictly to workplace safety and public health guidelines during the implementation of this program.



# KEY PROJECT COMPONENTS



# GARDEN MATERIAL FOR DISTRIBUTION

## Garden Material

- Neighbourhood compost and leaf mulch drop off (pilot)
- Community Gardens already getting this resource

## Distribution Plan

- 3 decentralized community centres/neighbourhood houses
- Neighbourhood pods/Community Garden Coordinators to support





# PLANT STARTS FOR DISTRIBUTION

## Plant Starts

- 50,000 to 75,000 plant starts (supporting local seed businesses)
- Urban Food Table informed the selection of plant starts
- Working with horticultural team

## Distribution Plan

- Tier 1: Organizations that have capacity to grow food through existing operations and ensure the produce will be distributed to communities in need
- Tier 2: Organizations that have capacity to distribute the seedlings to residents through pick up or delivery services




# EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS

## Farmers and Urban Growers

- Tapping into knowledge at the Urban Food Table
- Short (2 to 5 min) videos on what to do with the material

## Community Member Knowledge

- Community members supporting each other
- Equity and accessibility lens

 **Victoria Compost Education Centre** April 18 at 3:39 PM · 🌐

Backyard Composting Basics with our Site Manager, Kayla Siefried!

These videos are created to support local food security initiatives, like the [#urbanfoodtable](#) and [Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable](#).



YOUTUBE.COM

**Backyard Composting Basics**

A two minute crash course in making compost to nourish your gardens!

  20

4 Comments 4 Shares



# COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

## Safety Protocol and Guide

- Adapting farmer markets protocol
- Environmental Health Officer review
- Video's discuss how to growing with physical distancing measures





# COMMUNITY IN ACTION

- **Larger regional Growing Together initiative**
  - Additional funding for community partners
  - Mentorship hot-line
  - Sharing Backyard (Young Agrarians)
  - My FED Farm (Balcony gardening)
- **Growing for food banks and school meal programs**
  - School Farms (Seed the City and Vic High Learning Farm)
  - Parkade roof top
  - Supportive Housing





## TAKE AWAY:

- Know the key points of the program
- Work with City Councillors and Municipal Staff
- Everyone is signing from the same song sheets
- Aligning efforts already happening
- Equity and accessibility lens

Aaren Topley,  
Can You Dig It, Provincial Manager  
Public Health Association of BC  
[sr.consultant@phabc.org](mailto:sr.consultant@phabc.org)

Alex Harned,  
Food System Coordinator  
City of Victoria  
[aharned@victoria.ca](mailto:aharned@victoria.ca)



# WEBINAR SERIES: APRIL 29

## Small but Mighty: Farm to School in a Rural-Remote Context

Wednesday April 29th, 3:30 – 4:30pm

*Kenda Chang-Swanson, Food Programs Coordinator,  
People for a Healthy Community (Gabriola Island)*

Kenda will share the story of her small island community, and how school and community partners to develop their garden and school meal program. Through unique partnerships and use of community-school assets, Gabriola's Farm to School program provides hands-on-learning for students while addressing food insecurity amongst young learners.



### FARM TO SCHOOL WEBINAR SERIES

Learn about the Farm to School on Gabriola Island in a Rural-Remote Context. We will be learning from Kenda Chang-Swanson from People for a Healthy Community.



This program is supported by the Province of British Columbia and the Provincial Health Services Authority.

