



CULTIVATING COMMUNITY THROUGH HARVESTING LOCAL FOOD

# Summer2014 Okanagan Fruit Tree Project



IN THIS ISSUE

## Summer 2014 in Review

by Ailsa Beischer, Coordinator

Wow! What an amazing start to the 2014 harvesting season.

Before we could start picking, we had to get organized! We spent lots of time planning and re-connecting with old friends of the Fruit Tree Project in our brand new office space, courtesy of the Kelowna Community Food Bank.

Our first cherry tree was ready for harvesting on June 23, and the ball kept rolling from there. We went on to pick **104** fruit trees (in the Central Okanagan and Penticton) including cherries, apricots, golden plums, peaches, and Italian prune plums. We also tried picking garlic scapes (the curly "q" shaped part at the top of the garlic plant) for the first time. I think we all smelled like garlic for days, but it was worth it! We harvested 120 lbs of this savory vegetable to share with volunteers

and the Kelowna Community Food Bank.

This summer also saw 75+ new volunteers join the project. We now have a list of close to 300 volunteers who help pick fruit, lead fruit picks, or support the project in varying capacities. It's incredible to see so many people from different walks of life come together to help feed our community.

On a personal note, I feel humbled by the dedication and hard-work our volunteers put in to make this project possible and by the enthusiasm from community groups and local businesses. It's been a tremendous first half of the season, and I look forward to seeing what the next few months bring!



### An Abundant Harvest

We've picked 104 fruit trees so far. What's your guess for how many lbs of fruit we've picked? (See 2014 Stats on page 2).



### Collaborative Harvest

Check out our brand new program launched this year to include more of our partner agencies' clients in fruit picks.

## Statistics

**2012** was the first year of the project. With a budget of \$0, volunteer coordinator, Laura Hsu, and founder, Casey Hamilton, got the project off to a great start:

- 70 volunteers joined
- 12 community organizations received fruit donations
- 5,100 lbs of fruit picked

**2013** was an important year for growing! Thanks to a grant from the City of Kelowna, the OFTP was able to hire Ailsa to coordinate the project:

- 200 volunteers
- 22 community organizations received fruit
- 17,700 lbs of fruit picked



**2014** has been amazing! Grants from the City of Kelowna and Central Okanagan Foundation have helped the project grow substantially:

- 300 volunteers so far
- 25 community organizations
- **12,765 lbs picked**

Our goal for 2014 is to pick 25,000 lbs of fruit, and we are well on our way already!

### GET INVOLVED

To register your fruit tree, volunteer, or sign up your organization to receive fresh fruit donations contact us at:

E: [okanaganfruittree@gmail.com](mailto:okanaganfruittree@gmail.com)

Ph: 778-214-5664



## Collaborative Harvest

We are very excited to be off to a great start with our brand-new Collaborative Harvest Program!

Much like a fruit tree, this program grew as a new branch of our existing picking program.

The idea is to offer clients of our partner organizations the opportunity to pick fruit for personal use, build community, and improve their physical and mental well-being. Clients that we work with often face food insecurity, marginalization, and isolation. We strive to provide

empowering, community-building experiences where all diversabilities are welcomed and celebrated!

We are partnered with Cool Arts, the Canadian Mental Health Association, and the Karis Support Society.





HARVESTING LOCAL CHERRIES



### Everyone welcome!

There is something for everyone at the Okanagan Fruit Tree Project. All ages, backgrounds, diversabilities, and first time pickers!



### Join us in cultivating community.

Come climb a ladder, pick from the ground, sort fruit, or just come to chat and meet new people.

#### DID YOU KNOW

**40%** of all food produced in Canada ends up in the landfill.

## Early Summer Recap

Check out what we've been up to this summer!

- **June 1:** Potluck picnic and tree fruit education lesson by Bob McCoubrey
- **June 2:** moved into our office courtesy of the Kelowna Community Food Bank. Our organizations will be working together towards food security in our community.
- **June 6<sup>th</sup>:** We got up bright and early to give a presentation to the Kelowna Sunrise Rotary.
- **July 2<sup>nd</sup>:** Presentation to MLA Norm Letnick, MLA Steve Thomson, and Cheryl Doll (assistant to Premier Christy Clark)
- **July 16:** Cherry pick and potluck picnic
- **July 28:** KCFB and Partners Open House
- **August 1:** Music in the Park – handing out fresh fruit
- **August 17:** Feast of Fields
- Picking, picking, and more picking!

## Upcoming Events:

- **September 11:** Presentation to West Kelowna Daybreak Rotary
- **September 20:** KCR Volunteer Fair
- Great Apple Harvest - TDB.
- **September 28:** Organic Okanagan Festival

#### DID YOU KNOW

**3,000** is the approximate number of families who rely on food assistance in the Central Okanagan. This number does not include individuals/seniors.



## Community Partners

1. Single Parent and Seniors' Foodbank
2. Boys and Girls Club Kelowna
3. Boys and Girls Club West Kelowna
4. Pathways
5. Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)
6. Freedom's Door
7. Gospel Mission
8. Inn From the Cold
9. John Howard Society
10. Karis Support Society
11. Kelowna Community Food Bank
12. Ki-Low-Na Friendship Centre
13. Cool Arts
14. Kelowna Women's Shelter
15. Lake Country Food Assistance Society
16. Living Positive
17. Metro Community Church
18. NOW Canada
19. Peachland Foodbank
20. Salvation Army Community Life Centre
21. West Kelowna Community Food Bank Society
22. Outreach Urban Health
23. First United Church
24. Kelowna Young Parents Program
25. Kelowna Senior's Society

## Tree Owners

BIG thanks to local tree owners for growing and sharing healthy and delicious fruit. Check out some of the feedback we received from tree owners this year:

---

*"You did an awesome job!! We have more than enough for our family and the people we share with!!! Thank you so much and it really does feel nice that the fruit goes out to others!! [...] I am really using this as an example of kindness, caring and kinship for the greater good to teach my children with. I admire what you all are doing, it's an inspiration." - KM*

---

\*

---

*"Just wanted to thank you and your team for picking my apricot tree this year. The people who arrived were very good with the tree and fruit and had the job done in no time. My tree is breathing easy now." -LR*

---

### Tree Owner Program:

Much like a fruit tree, our project continues to grow, and we have a couple of **brand new services (free!)** to offer fruit tree owners this year:

- **Pre-Pick Inspection** by our volunteer, Bob McCoubrey. Set up a time/date that Bob can come by to determine the quality of your fruit before volunteers arrive to pick. This helps streamline our operations and saves tree owners the hassle of checking fruit for quality, worms, etc.

- **Tree Care and Pruning Tips** - Bob will examine fruit trees to help you grow the healthiest fruit! He will offer advice/tips on tree care and pruning. Bob is a former owner of McCoubrey Farms, a board member of the Central Okanagan Community

Gardens Society, and a key figure in the development of the Central Okanagan Food Policy Council's Community Farm Project. He has a wealth of knowledge about local agriculture and is happy to share it.

Cheers to Bob for a successful start to this new program!

### DID YOU KNOW...

We adopted the gleaning program in Penticton this year and also pick fruit in Oyama, Lake Country, Kelowna, West Kelowna, and Peachland.

Pentictonites can register their fruit trees, sign up to volunteer, or make a donation by contacting us directly:

E: [okanaganfruittree@gmail.com](mailto:okanaganfruittree@gmail.com)

Ph: 778-214-5664

## Submissions:

### From Lois:

#### What Is The Difference Between Fruit Butter And Jam?

Soft fruit spreads are like cousins; similar but different.

Jam – combination of crushed or chopped fruit and sugar cooked until gelling point

Jelly – combination of fruit juice and sugar cooked until gelling point

Preserves – chopped fruit pieces preserved in sugar and cooked until gelling point

Conserves – combination of fruit and nuts or raisins and sugar cooked until gelling point

Marmalade – usually citrus fruit peel and pieces and sugar cooked until gelling point

Butter – combination of fruit puree and sugar cooked until thickened

<http://www.motheearthnews.com/real-food/fresh-fruit-butters-zbcz14o8.aspx#axzz3BXZj6Fyl>

### From Casey:

#### Apricot Lavender Jam:

1 kg apricots

3 tbsp lemon juice

1 ½ cups sugar

1 ½ tsp lavender buds

Stone and place apricot pieces into a large bowl. Add the rest of the ingredients and cover with a cloth. Allow the flavours to meld for a few hours. The sugar will draw out the fruit juices and the fruit will begin to break down.

Place the mixture into a non-reactive pot and heat mixture to a rolling boil. Cook until the mixture breaks down to desired jam consistency. Ladle jam into sterilized jars and process in boiling water bath for 20 min.

Adapted from: <http://larderlove.com/apricot-and-lavender-jam/>

## People who make it all possible

**Volunteer Pickers:** cheers to all our amazing volunteers for their collaborative effort in helping feed our community.

**Harvest Leaders** go the extra mile to help get the fruit from the tree to the charity by leading safe and fun picks! You might have met one of these superstar team leaders this summer:

- Amber
- Ashley
- Billie
- Catherine
- Courtney
- Lois
- Loreen
- Negin and Temo
- Ralph
- Warren

\* Thanks to all the volunteers who have recently trained as Harvest Leaders and are ready to lead fall picks!



### BECOME A SUPERSTAR HARVEST LEADER

If you like fruit, building community, and taking on a leadership role you may be ripe to be a Harvest Leader! Contact us for more info:

E: [okanaganfruittree@gmail.com](mailto:okanaganfruittree@gmail.com)

Ph: 778-214-5664

## The Fruit Tree Project Team



Left to right:

**Ailsa Beischer**, Coordinator

**Julie Kellet**, Secretary-Treasurer

**Casey Hamilton**, Founder and President

The OFTP is a non-profit organization with a "working board", which means that Casey and Julie aren't afraid to get their hands dirty picking fruit, leading picks, or delivering fruit. Kudos to their hard work to help make this project a success!

## Save the Date

Okay, well... we don't exactly have a date yet, but September is another big month for the Okanagan Fruit Tree Project because we will be holding our **annual Great Apple Harvest** mid to late month.

This multi-day, apple-picking extravaganza sees different community groups and lots of volunteers come out to harvest apples for pressing into juice to sell as a fundraising activity. Everyone is welcome to take home lots of apples too!

### STAY CONNECTED



<https://www.facebook.com/OkanaganFruitTreeProject>



@OKFruit



[www.fruittreeproject.com](http://www.fruittreeproject.com)



[okanaganfruittree@gmail.com](mailto:okanaganfruittree@gmail.com)



778-214-5664



# Gratitude:

This is truly a community-driven project made possible by countless people throughout the community who have donated their time, money, skills, and support.

- **Summerhill Winery**
  - Apple Juice Partnership (2012, 2013)
- **City of Kelowna Community Social Development Grant**
  - \$5,000 (2013), \$10,000 (2014)
- **Central Okanagan Foundation**
  - \$10,600 (2014)
- **Canadian Federation of University Women**
  - \$1000 (2013)
- **Okanagan Changemakers and the ChangeUp attendees**
  - \$3000 plus \$750 of mentorship (2013)
- **Kelowna Community Foodbank Society**
  - In-kind office space
- **Kelowna Sunrise Rotary**
  - \$2320 for ladders and first-aid kits



We also can't forget...

- Okanagan Growers Supply
- Home Hardware West Kelowna
- Home Depot West Kelowna
- Springfield Bulk Food
- Nature's Fare
- Urban Harvest
- Private Donors
- UBCO
- Central Okanagan Food Policy Council
- OGO Car Share Co-op
- Castanet.net
- Kelowna Now
- SO Country Radio
- Am1150
- Kelowna Capital News
- And many more!

