



School Food For All:
Nourishing Futures



L'alimentation scolaire pour tous :
Nourrir l'avenir



Growing School Gardens

**Orlando Lopez Gomez, FoodShare
Sunday Harrison, Green Thumbs TO**

June 4, 3:00-3:30



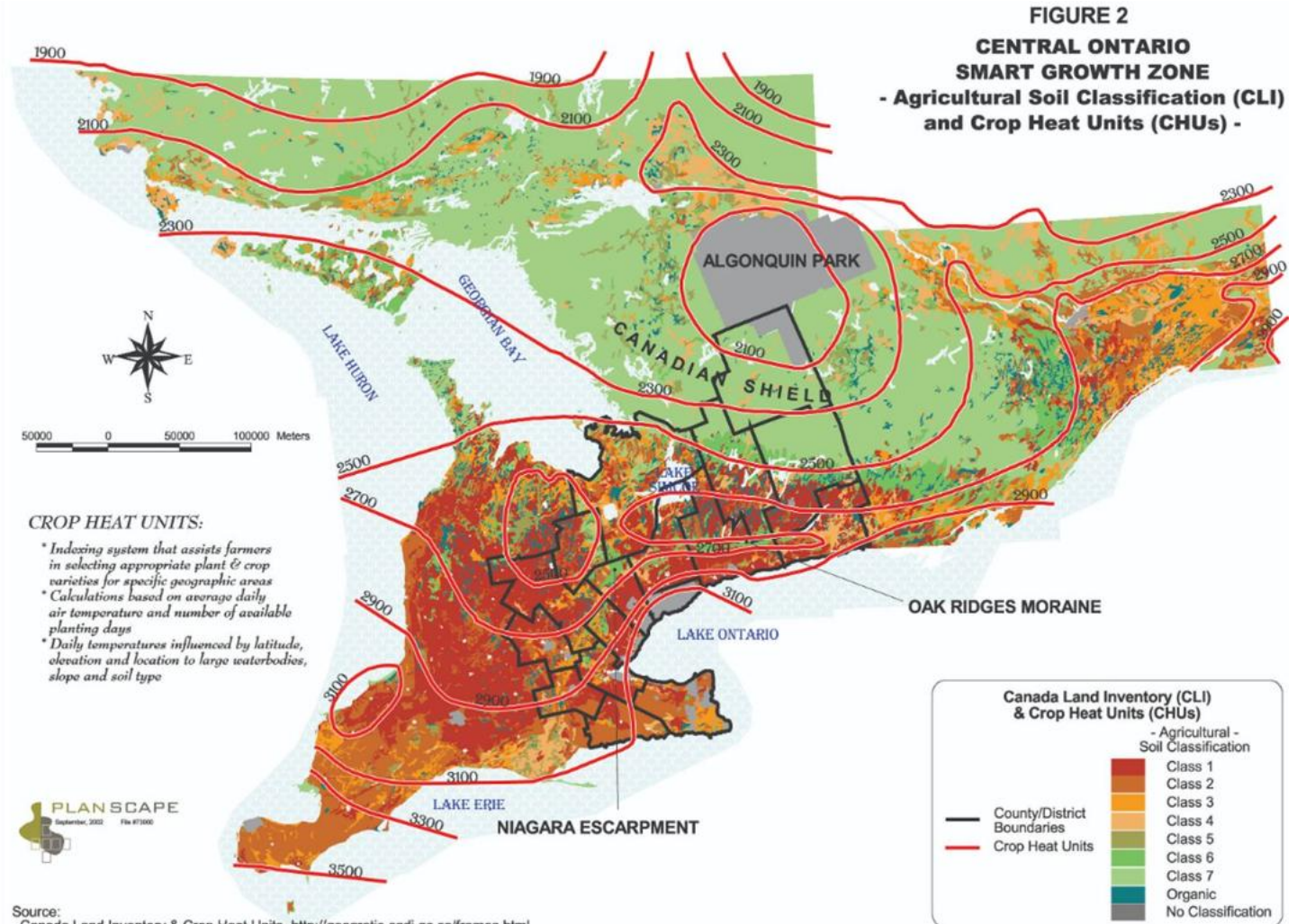
Équiterre



School Garden Network Proposal

This presentation (a slightly longer version) was led by Sunday Harrison (Green Thumbs TO) and Orlando Gomez (FoodShare Toronto). We showed our respective programs in school gardens, as partners with the Toronto District School Board. We now invite you to revisit the slides, and join in a virtual conversation and network, via the QR code (Discord platform) on the last slide. If you prefer a different method of communication, please email us sunday@greenthumbsto.org or orlando@foodshare.net and we will be happy to be in touch!

Context: Land quality





Green Thumbs Growing Kids

Est. 2000, focused on downtown East Toronto

<https://www.greenthumbsto.org>

Sunday Harrison: sunday@greenthumbsto.org

Winchester PS

400+ K-8

2001 start



- Largest, at 11,000 sq. ft
- Good sun, also shade trees & fruit trees
- Food & composting, lunch program aligned
- Summer programs, teacher training, day camp visits
- Youth program 1 day/wk after school



Rose Ave. PS

2005 start



- 700+ students, majority live in St. Jamestown high-rise complex
- K-6 school
- 70%+ newcomers
- Garden users: K-6, Early Ons centre
- Summer: managed by summer student staff, produce sold @ Cabbagetown farmers market or given to parents in programs
- Shady, good for leaf & herb crops
- Fiddleheads!

Allan Gardens Children's Conservatory



- 1,000+ students visit mid Feb-May
- Planting, vermicomposting, tour of facility
- Youth after-school program

Sprucecourt PS 2008 start

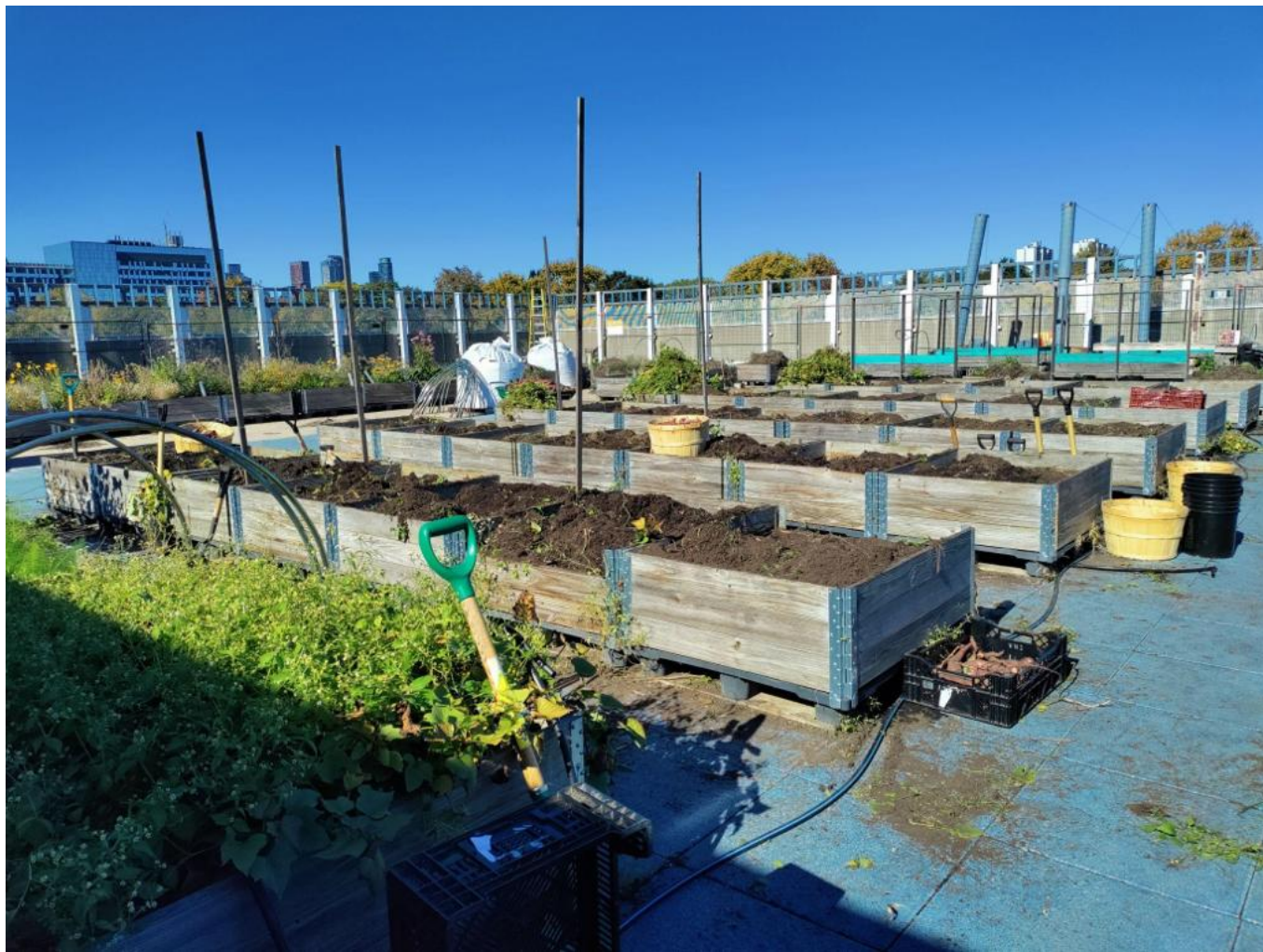
- 300+ K-8, food production, composting, tree nursery, lean-to greenhouse, fruit trees and shrubs
- Users: K-6, Early Ons, parent gardeners.
- Regent Park school,
- Summer programs with day camps, produce sales @ local Good Food market.
- Youth program 1 day/wk after school



Eastdale CI

Secondary school, majority neurodiverse students. Unusual, unique rooftop - 16,000 sq ft with deep raised beds. FoodShare and school board created/installed in 2012, now passed along to Green Thumbs for garden-based learning & summer care.





Indoor growing

We know school gardens are not possible in “every” school, but every school can participate in growing food. Indoor microgreens alone add nutrients often in short supply in kids’ diets. Raw greens require minimal infrastructure and are tasty. We use Speckled Pea, organic seed from Mumm’s.



Above: decorated cup with
crayons, hole poked in
bottom of cup
Left: under lights unit

FoodShare

Orlando Lopez Gomez
orlando@foodshare.net



about FoodShare

who are we?

FoodShare is a food justice organization, advocating for the right to food, and working to challenge the systemic barriers that keep people from accessing the food they need to thrive.

We are committed to working alongside and supporting those most at risk of food insecurity in our community, especially those facing multiple forms of oppression, particularly Black, Indigenous and racialized communities, as well as folks with disabilities and seniors. We advocate for food justice by supporting community-based food initiatives and through ongoing advocacy and public education.

Whether it is supporting urban farms, subsidizing local produce markets or campaigning for a new Toronto Food Charter, all of our work is focused on supporting people so that they can feed themselves, their loved ones and their communities with dignity and joy, on their own terms.

what does that look like organizationally?

vision

A Toronto where all people can feed themselves, their loved ones and their communities with dignity and joy.

mission

We advocate for [food justice](#) by supporting community-based food initiatives and through ongoing advocacy and public education.

values

- We believe that everyone has the right to food.
- We are equity oriented.
- We acknowledge the existence of various forms of systemic oppression and work to challenge them.
- We believe that BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of colour) and low-income communities must play a central role in defining food justice and its priorities.
- We recognize that leadership exists in community.
- We believe in prioritizing lived experience in addressing food insecurity.
- We believe that all bodies have a right to exist as they are.
- We are committed to self-examination and ongoing critical assessment of our work.
- We ask our partners and funders to engage in ongoing critical assessment of their work.

School Growing

- Launched in 2013
- Located at Burnhamthorpe CI (500 the east mall)
- Youth Employment Opportunity, Coop and Farm Apprenticeship





Farmer Market



Youth Leader

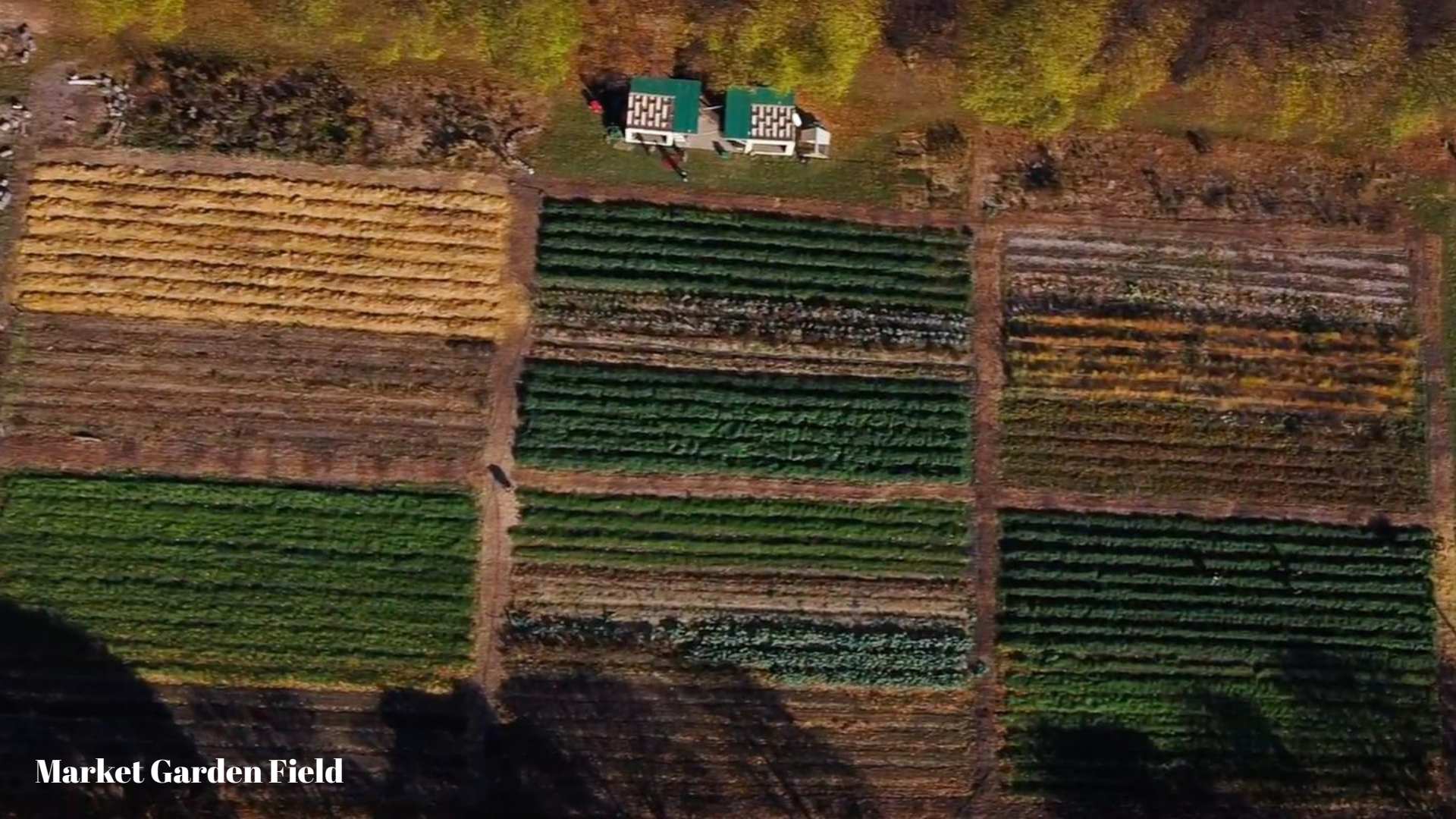


Farm Field



First Harvest





Market Garden Field



Market Garden Field

Community Garden

- Over 400 Community Garden in Toronto
- Peer support program
- Seed and Plant Giveaway
- Support process and advocacy



Community Compost

- Animating small to mid-scale composting activities.
- Training and Resources on waste reduction through composting
- Over 60+ different gardens and Community Centres in Toronto & GTA.
- Community Compost Exchange Program.







Community Compost Exchange



Compost Input

Compost Visitor





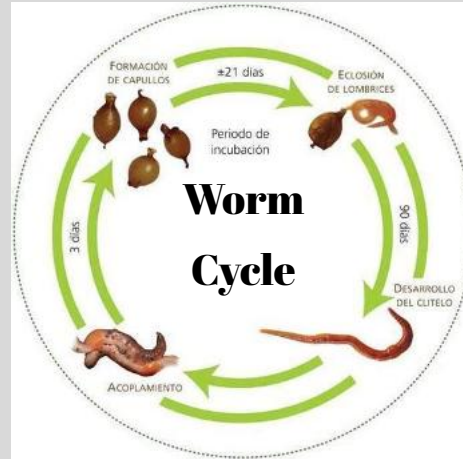
Worm Farm System



Worm Casting



Eisenia Fetida



Vermicompost Training

Flemo Farm

- Community-led project through farming -
- 11 Community Farmers/groups
- Community Engagement
- Increased access to affordable locally grown food



FLEMO FARM



National School Food Policy Statement

School food programs can be designed to build food literacy, and to promote environmentally sustainable practices

Programs can create opportunities for learning about the environment and food systems, and incorporate elements such as school gardens, "farm-to-school" approaches and composting systems. These elements support sustainable food systems and reduce waste, while also equipping children with the confidence and knowledge to adopt sustainable practices and develop a positive relationship with food.

For example, a review of 15 studies on behavioral outcomes associated with farm to school programs found that these programs contributed to increased knowledge about growing cycles and sustainable agriculture among students, along with gardening skills and ability to identify local foods (Joshi et al, 2008).

“Can” be → **Should be**

How do we get there from here?

School food gardens were once required in Ontario. Teachers had to live nearby to care for the gardens in the summer break, which was instituted to support farming and our food system - farms required the children's help in July/August.

Now we think of the summer break as a barrier to school gardens - but it could be an asset - if partnerships were instituted, with municipal and public health systems. At the moment, this gap is filled by non-profit partners, parents and volunteers.

What policies and partnerships can facilitate more school gardens?

Land Acknowledgements

A rote statement heard over the PA system in TDSB as the day begins (followed by the Canadian National Anthem - cognitive dissonance much?)

LET'S LEARN from the LAND by BEING ON IT.

We learn the bare minimum: the name of the nation that stewards the land the school is built on. Let's create awareness and education, and encourage Indigenous-led garden and outdoor education programs.

Networking

A network can help strengthen the cause of school gardens, building more capacity and connecting us for advocacy. It is open to all, teachers, parents, non-profit partners - so we identify the key enabling policies and practices in our respective regions.

Discord site

<https://discord.gg/ScXJSmZj>



Scan the QR Code to join **School Garden Network**