



Every day may not be good, but there's something good in every day.
~Author Unknown

Winter

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Motor City may provide model for urban agriculture

Detroit leads the way for cities using vacant land to produce food and create jobs

BY DAVID RUNK, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Detroit, which revolutionized manufacturing with its auto assembly lines, could once again be a model for the world as residents transform vacant, often-blighted land into a source of fresh food.

With growing interest in locally raised food, cities including New York, Los Angeles and Seattle are looking at ways to foster and manage urban agriculture. San Francisco's mayor has proposed creating community gardens on vacant public land citywide.

But no city seems to have as much potential for urban farming as Detroit, where land is cheap, empty lots are plentiful, and residents are desperate for jobs. The number of community gardens has been growing each year, and bigger, commer-

cial agriculture could be coming as city planners draw up land use rules for farming.

"Most other cities aren't quite ready to think about large-scale agriculture," said Michael Score, president of Hantz Farms, which has plans to create the world's largest urban farm in the city. "We have vacant land and that used to be something that we were ashamed of."

Decades of population decline left Detroit with an estimated 40 square miles -- more than 25,000 acres -- of vacant property, and gardens have sprung up on empty lots in many neighborhoods. Often, they are just a few rows of greens and tomatoes. Others are more akin to small farms and include lots next to homes where pigs or goats roam behind fences and honeybees buzz.

The vacant property in Detroit covers nearly the same space as the entire city of San Francisco. New York, which has more than twice as much land as Detroit, has only an estimated 11,000 vacant acres, according to its planning department.

Farming was a big part of Detroit from the 1700s until the early 20th century, when a building boom pushed most agriculture outside the city limits. This year, Detroit could again see commercial

crops. Hantz Farms is in talks with the state to use 40 acres of the state fairgrounds for a demonstration farm before expanding to other parts of the city. It plans tightly packed rows and greenhouses, where it will raise fruit and vegetables as well as plants for landscaping. Less lucrative commodity crops such as corn, soybeans and wheat aren't part of the plan.

John Hantz, a Detroit resident who runs a network of financial services businesses, has promised to invest \$30 million in the project aimed at creating jobs, providing fresh food to residents and making the city a leader in urban farming.

The plan has sparked some skepticism among the community growers who have been the driving force behind agriculture in Detroit. Hantz Farms says there's room in the 139-square-mile city to coexist, but community activists worry a bigger, for-profit venture might not benefit Detroit residents.

"What's making urban agriculture interesting and sustainable is the small scale. A few lots in a community, potentially bringing some produce to market," said Frank Donner, 29, who has helped run the Birdtown Community Garden in the Cass Corridor neighborhood for the past six years. "If you start getting bigger, it loses its niche."

At Birdtown, gardeners share the work as well as the fruit and vegetables they grow each year. Dug in the ground where an apartment building burned about 15 years ago and was never rebuilt, Donner said the garden has become "a wonderful source of not just produce but friendship and community."

At least one nonprofit, however, also wants to get into large-scale agriculture in the city. Self-Help Addiction Rehabilitation Inc., which specializes in substance abuse treatment, has proposed RecoveryPark, a 10-year, \$220 million project that would create organic farms in four strug-

gling neighborhoods. The plan calls for about half of 2,000 acres to be used for 15- to 30-acre organic farms, with the rest used for education, commercial and housing development, parks and other green spaces.

The organization is waiting to see the city's new agriculture zoning regulations, but it expects to use land now owned by the city, state, schools and land banks, said Gary Wozniak, the nonprofit's chief development officer. The land could be bought or leased or held in trust, he said. The farms would employ recovering addicts as well as neighborhood residents.

"It's really a big job creation engine," Wozniak said. "We're looking to rebuild these neighborhoods."

Such projects -- tailored to Detroit, but potential models for other cities -- are gaining momentum as planners draw up the first land use rules governing agriculture since Detroit became urbanized. They are considering an agricultural district, where a wider variety of farming activities might take place, and specific rules would address how and where chickens, rabbits, other farm animals and bees could be kept.

A partial draft released last month provides a vision for agriculture in a postindustrial city. It lists 20 goals that include environmental, economic, social and health benefits. By putting vacant land to use, planners also hope to discourage the illegal dumping that's a problem in blighted neighborhoods.

"My personal hope," said Kathryn Lynch Underwood, a city planner who grew up gardening in the South, "is that the model that we roll out benefits as many people across the board in a city that really needs people to be employed and engaged in meaningful work."

GeoNB

The service NB website has the GeoNB function. It allows you to find property identification numbers and see aerial views of the site, elevations and flood information. The latest layer is the new provincial wetland layer which shows where provincially defined wetlands are. You may find it useful.



Guest Speaker Confirmed for January

Eric Young has been approved to come to New Brunswick and will be speaking in Central NB (Fredericton)

January 27th and Carleton County January 28th. Eric Young is an Agronomist and Soil Scientist that grew up on a dairy farm and is currently working at the Miner Institute in Chazy, New York.

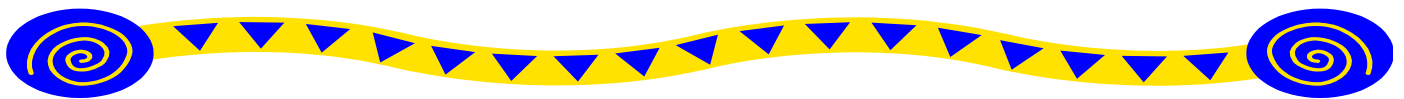
The Miner Institute conducts research programs that apply basic science to contemporary problems confronting the dairy and equine industries utilizing both the onsite Holstein Dairy farm and a Morgan horse herd. The following crops are grown on the farms crop ready 700 acres ; grass, alfalfa-grass, and corn.

At the institute Eric's responsibilities include developing a research program to address the economic and environmental implications of crop production and managing the institute's field crop operations.

The Agri Environmental Club Coordinators from Kings County and central had the opportunity to meet Eric and tour the Miner Institute last summer. After this meeting they felt NB farmers could certainly gain knowledge from the research being conducted on this research farm and can't wait for Eric's workshop.

Funding for this project is from the NB Department of Agriculture, and Aquaculture's Business Development Program.

Check out the Miner Institute's Website : <http://www.whminer.com/Home.html>



How to get the most out of your investment of time and money when attending a conference or workshop.

Here are some tips:

- * Talk to other producers and ask what learning events they have found most helpful and applicable.
- * Visit websites of those events you are interested in and drill down to what sessions are offered and the speaker profiles.

- * If you plan to take family or employees with you, don't all go to the same session if several are offered - have a game plan and decide who will go to what session. This will ensure maximum benefit of your time and money - have coffee with them the next day and share your experiences.
- * If the event offers a trade show - visit it - network - get what you need.
- * If the event is a full day workshop in one room with constant sitting - bring water, snacks and appropriate dress in case the room gets too hot or too cold.
- * Bring paper and pens and your BUSINESS CARDS - a great way to network. (I also take along my day-timer in case someone wants to set up an appointment or mentions another event you don't want to miss).
- * If you have to travel a distance to the event - plan it so you can make business calls along the way (e.g. meet suppliers, visit another farm, etc.)
- * Have a plan that you will implement at least 3 ideas that you received at the event and stick to it - Write them down in a visible place in your office for all to see - set a time line to achieve them.
- * Share what you learned with others in your business - don't just give them copies of the presentations to read - tell it in your own words and tell how you see it applying to your business.



Soil Life and Fertility (This article was originally published by the Commercial Appeal in Memphis, Tenn.)

by student reporter, Kristen Kelderman

Soil management is not an easy task for many farmers; it involves much more than simply applying chemicals, tilling and growing cover-crops.

Soil is teeming with life, and for farmers to reap any benefits, they must understand how to effectively supply this vibrant environment with the right tools for success.

Dr. Jill Clapperton informed attendees at the Innovative Farmers Conference in London, Ontario that "soil is a habitat, not just a hard surface that we stand on. It is a bio-diverse environment that offers many services from the living organisms within."

"When you are standing on the ground, you are really standing on the roof top of another world," says Clapperton.

Microscopic soil organisms such as bacteria, fungi, protozoa and microarthropods work in conjunction to give the soil environment an edge.

Bacteria and fungi are essential agents for decomposition, while protozoa eat bacteria and fungi organisms which release nutrients to the plants. Microarthropods such as mites and collembola increase nutrient release from decomposition by eating and burying organic matter.

Earthworms also contribute to the work force by naturally mixing and plowing the soil, which leads for better water penetration and aeration.

They also help stimulate decomposition of nitrogen making it readily available for plant use. And finally earthworms carry nutrients down to the root zone of the plants enabling better plant nutrient uptake.

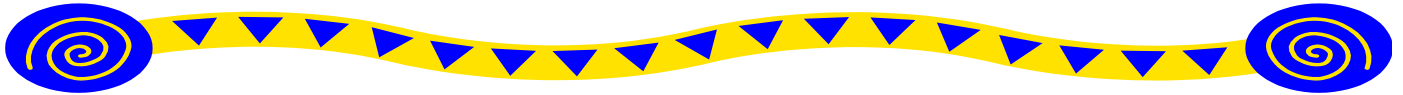
Without proper earthworm populations, soil can form what seems like a concrete layer on top creating problems for plant growth and development.

"We need to think about feeding our soil," says Clapperton. "A little organic matter on the surface goes a long way."

Clapperton stresses the importance of leaving behind residue on fields post harvest as a source of food for the soil organisms. Chopping residue such as corn stalks into a finer material works to speed up degradation, she says. However, if not enough material is left, organisms will not be present in abundant populations and unable to provide their services.

Clapperton says that cover crops and relay cropping are two methods which sustain soil organism populations, because there is a source of food in the soil for a longer period of time. Systems such as seeding clover and peas between corn or relay cropping wheat and soybeans together are viable alternatives.

Hire Earthworms For Improved Soil Quality



Recently two blueberry field windbreaks maintenance clinics were held in the Acadian Peninsula. The clinics took place in Tracadie-Sheila and Lamèque. Despite Mother Nature's bad weather, thirty participants braved the rain and cold to participate. On site, there were two representatives from Biopterre, La Pocatière, Quebec, who specialize in maintenance and management and a team from the Eastern Canada Soil and Water Conservation Centre (ECSWCC).

Protecting the environment and implementing agricultural best management practices such as agroforestry are very important for producers and can provide them a means of innovative management. This practice is defined by the integration of trees and/or shrubs in an agricultural production system and is currently under development in Eastern Canada. The most important agroforestry practice in Gloucester County is undoubtedly the establishment of windbreaks. According to Jerome Damboise, agroforestry advisor at the ECSWCC, "the shelterbelts provide many environmental and socio-economic benefits when designed and maintained properly." Among their main functions in blueberry production is the improvement of pollination, a better distribution of snow and in addition enhancing the aesthetic value and to encouraging a greater biodiversity. Maurice Basque, Development Officer with the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries (NBDAAF) said, "Hundreds of kilometers of windbreaks have been established in the blueberry fields of the Acadian Peninsula and it is now time to do the maintenance".

To maximize the effectiveness of windbreaks, it is important to trim and prune them regularly to maintain an optimal density. The ultimate goal of the clinics was to demonstrate to blueberry growers and industry representatives how to properly maintain their windbreaks. To do this, participants were invited to visit different types of windbreaks made from trees of various species and ages. During the visit on his property Mr. Bernard Savoie, co-owner of the Services Agricoles Savoie, shared with other participants the importance of windbreaks in his blueberry management system. At the closing of the second day, Ms. Andrée Duclos, owner of the Bleuetière Duclos Ltd, was keen to stress the importance of planting trees and good management, because in her words, "The trees are the lungs of the planet".

These clinics were possible thanks to the following partners: the ECSWCC, the NBDAAF, Biopterre, Bleuets NB Blueberries, and the Club agro-environnemental Bleuets Nord-Est. This initiative has been funded by the Northern Economic Development Fund and the NBDAAF.

For more information on agroforestry and windbreaks, please visit the CCSE website: www.ccse-swcc.nb.ca

NBSCIA AGM & Technical Workshop

February 24 & 25, 2011
Best Western, Woodstock
123 Gallop Court, Woodstock



Thursday, February 24th

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 10:00 am | BUSINESS MEETING | (Delegates must attend) |
|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|

Should the business meeting not be concluded during this time period it will reconvene at 3:15 pm on Friday.

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| 12:00 pm | LUNCH (on your own) & VISIT BOOTHS |
|-----------------|---|

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|----------------|---|
| 1:00 pm | WELCOME: <i>Maarten van Oord, President NBSCIA</i> <i>Cedric MacLeod, President Carleton Co. S&C</i> |
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|----------------|--|
| 1:15 pm | What is on a Soil Analysis Report? <i>Tom Bruulsema, Director, Northeast Region, International Plant Nutrition Institute</i> |
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| 2:15 pm | Soil Health - Heather Darby, University of Vermont Extension |
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|----------------|---------------------------------|
| 3:00 pm | BREAK & VISIT BOOTHS |
|----------------|---------------------------------|

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|----------------|---|
| 3:30 pm | A look at Potassium Nutrition for Potatoes - Peter Sexton, South Dakota State University |
|----------------|---|

- 4:15 pm** **Effect of Liming on the soil P:Al Ratio and P Fertilizer Recommendation in Potato**
Nicolas Samson, University of Laval
- 4:45 pm** **Cover Crop Options for New Brunswick - Steve Groff, Tillage Radish Solutions**
- 5:15 pm** **QUESTIONS & WRAP UP**
- 6:00 pm** **HOSPITALITY SUITE**
- 7:00 pm** **NBSCIA FARM OF THE YEAR AWARD BANQUET** *Sponsored by: Pioneer*
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Friday, February 25th

- 8:30 am** **Door Prizes**
- 8:45 am** **Role of Nitrogen in Crop Production -** Pat Toner & Walter Brown, NBDAAF
- 9:30 am** **Tillage Options for Transitioning to a Reduced Tillage Production System**
Dave Dum, Brinkley and Hurst
-
- 10:15 am** **BREAK & VISIT BOOTHS**
-
- 10:45 am** **Role of Micro Nutrients in Crop Production -** *Medhi Sharifi, NSAC*
- 11:30 am** **New Brunswick New Fertility Table & Phosphorus Research Update**
Daniel Savoie, Pat Toner, Walter Brown, NBDAAF
-
- 12:00 pm** **LUNCH & VISIT BOOTHS**
-
- 1:15 pm** **Calcium and Phosphorous Management in Potatoes: McCain Research Farm Update**
Gilles Moreau, McCain Research Farm
- 2:00 pm** **Nutrient Alternatives -** *Pat Toner, NBDAAF*
- 2:45 pm** **Wrap Up**
-
-
- 3:15 pm** **NBSCIA Board of Directors' Meeting (if necessary)**

Accommodations: Best Western Woodstock 1-888-580-1188 or 328-2378

Please mention that you are with Soil & Crop

| Registration fees | Advance (before Feb 15 th) | | After Feb 15 th | |
|--|--|------------|----------------------------|------------|
| | Member | Non-Member | Member | Non-Member |
| Full | 75 | 150 | 90 | 180 |
| Feb 24 th only (no banquet) | 10 | 30 | 15 | 40 |
| Feb 25 th only | 30 | 75 | 35 | 90 |
| Banquet only | 35 | 45 | 40 | 50 |

Full registration includes coffee breaks on Thursday afternoon and Friday morning and lunch on Friday as well as the banquet.

To register send the following information and your registration fee to:

NBSCIA 16 Gilks Road, Maugerville, NB E3A 8N4. Please make cheques payable to NBSCIA

Name _____

Group/Company _____

Full _____ Thu _____ Fri _____ # of banquet tickets required (total) _____

Please send submissions for the newsletter to Susannah Banks, NBSCIA 16 Gilks Road, Maugerville, NB E3A 8N4, phone: 454-1736, fax: 472-4718, email:nbscia@nbnet.nb.ca. Deadline for the next edition will be March 1, 2011. For sale items welcome.
