

# Green Thumbs on Campus

BY WAYNE GROSZKO

Got a green thumb and need a place to garden? Well, now there is an organic community garden on the Dal campus.

Many people in our community live in apartments or residences and don't have an opportunity to grow a garden, or simply don't know how. Last winter, a group of students associated with nspirg (nova scotia public interest research group) got together to plan a community garden.

Dalhousie's department of Physical Plant and Planning permitted a plot of land on campus, about 100 square metres, to be used for the garden. They also allowed access to a nearby water faucet, and donated a mixture of mushroom compost and sheep manure to be spread on the garden to improve the soil.

Last June, volunteers tilled the soil and planted a wide variety of seeds and plants: radishes, lettuce, spinach, tomatoes, potatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, beets, carrots, turnips, parsnips, parsley, cilantro, basil, dill, onions, garlic, strawberries, swiss chard, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, sunflowers, peas, beans, green peppers, and more.

Most of the plants have grown well, with a few exceptions. We found out, for example, that June is the wrong time to plant spinach, because it went directly to seed. Either early spring or late summer are better for planting spinach. Through observing the garden, and through talking with farmers at the Farmers' Market, the community gardeners have learned a lot.

No pesticides or synthetic fertilizers are used in this organic garden. There is a compost barrel on site to make organic-rich compost to improve the soil. Grass clippings from the university have been used as mulch between the plants,

and in the fall we hope to have some of the leaves from the campus as well. Our long-term goal is to build up a thick layer of healthy, rich soil in the garden.

Now, what to do with all this food? On a fairly informal basis, anyone who works in the garden, either weeding, watering, or contributing in some other way, is allowed to share in the harvest. Some of the crop was sold to help pay for a hoe to make weeding easier, and some was given away.

There is still plenty of food to be harvested, and plenty of opportunity for anyone who wants to garden. Fall crops of spinach and radishes are being planted, and a fall planting of garlic will come later. The tomatoes are beginning to turn red, and the green peppers are almost ready.

There is also planning to be done for next year's garden.

On Sunday, Sept. 29, from 2 to 4 pm, there will be a workshop on "Urban food politics and the importance of urban gardening" with guest speaker Summer Fike, an organic farmer. The workshop will be held at the garden.

If you would like a tour of the garden, contact nspirg, room 304 of the SUB at Dal, or phone 494-6662. You can also

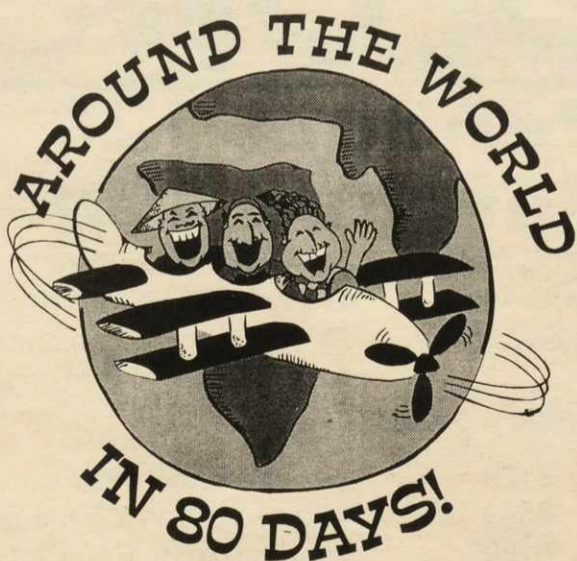
email [nspirg@is2.dal.ca](mailto:nspirg@is2.dal.ca) or take a virtual tour of nspirg at this web page: <http://chebucto.ns.ca/CommunitySupport/NSPIRG/>



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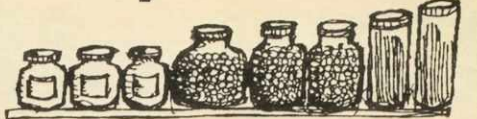


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give us a holler: the nova scotia public interest research group, room 304, 6136 university avenue, halifax, nova scotia, b3h4j2. phone/fax:494-6662 e-mail:nspirg@is.dal.ca

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