



YARD GARDEN HARVEST PROJECT

Volunteer Handbook



Table of Contents

Introduction

Yard Garden Harvest Project	3
Our Gardens	4
Our Mission	4
Core Values	5

Volunteers

Volunteer Experiences & Benefits	6
Volunteer Opportunities	7
General Roles	7
Leadership Roles	8
We Are Here For You!	13
Volunteer Rights, Responsibilities & Expectations	13
Volunteer Guidelines & Policies	15
Volunteer Dismissal	15

Forms

Volunteer Checklist	16
Volunteer Application Form	16

This Handbook was created and designed by Emma Fenty with the help of Brianna Thompson, Nancy Bradshaw and Art Bomke.

Yard Garden Harvest Project

Feeding, Inspiring and Growing Together

The YGHP grows food in our neighbour's yards to provide produce to LMNH's Food Distribution program and has partnered with four caring neighbours to turn their lawns into food scapes. It was an idea sparked by Jordan Sim, Brianna Thompson and Art Bomke who wanted to expand the positive impact of the RPCG by providing food grown with organic practices to those experiencing food insecurity and expanding spaces for people to learn how to grow food. Our program is rooted in deepening connections within the community of Little Mountain Neighbourhood by engaging with members through **access to their land or labour** while **growing food** in a way that benefits the soil, the pollinators and our community! As a part of growing healthy produce for others, we provide opportunities to **learn** and **practice sustainable growing methods**. These actions build a stronger sense of community, increase local food security and contribute to a more sustainable world. We accept volunteers for the duration of the growing season from April to October and accept landowner applications throughout the year.



We believe that our project contributes to a community food system that is more just, food secure and sovereign. We believe that everyone deserves access to fresh, healthy and sustainably grown foods of their choice. As such the food we grow was voted upon and selected by the recipients in our food distribution program.

Equally as important, is the health of our land which affects the wellbeing of our planet. By creating foodscapes within our community, we not only address the needs of our community but the health of our environment as a whole.

Our Gardens



We have partnered with four caring neighbours in the Little Mountain area to turn their lawns into urban foodscapes. With each harvest, these foodscapes are supporting access to fresh and healthy produce- lettuce , tomatoes, carrots, garlic, pac choi, and so much more – for community members experiencing food insecurity For more information check out our “About Yard Garden Project” sheet.

Our Mission

Our mission is to transform Little Mountain Neighbourhood into a **thriving urban food scape hub** centred around a supportive community, from Little Mountain and beyond. The Yard Garden Harvest Project aims to create a connected and empowered neighbourhood through providing produce grown with organic practices in our neighbour’s yards for community members experiencing food insecurity.



LMNH Core Values

From LMNH Volunteer Handbook p.3

Diversity: We value diversity of backgrounds, circumstances and opinions and strive to include all members of the community as equals

Responsiveness: We are responsive to the ever changing needs of our participants, stakeholders and volunteers by being open, flexible and proactive in how we meet their needs

Integrity: We operate with a high level of integrity, transparency, honesty and respectfulness in everything that we do

Engagement: We stimulate staff, volunteers and neighbours to listen, connect, partner and engage with our programs and one-another

Accessibility: We provide welcoming, affordable and accessible services

Caring: We strive to provide a fun, caring, healthy and safe space that fosters compassion and respect

Excellence: We strive for excellence in everything we do by delivering innovative, professional and effective programs that make efficient use of our limited resources

Empowerment: We empower our participants, staff, volunteers and the greater community through learning, skill development and teaching

Volunteer Experiences & Benefits

What You Can Expect From Us

- Receive guidance and support in your volunteer role and education on urban food production
- Our best effort in designing tasks for various ability needs
- A meaningful learning experience
- An environment that fosters connection with the community and other volunteers
- Updates on the progress of the gardens
- Reference letters for engaged volunteers at the discretion of leaders
- A certificate for volunteer hours committed
- Fun community and volunteer events
- Laughs - We've developed some good farm puns!



Events

We plan to have volunteer appreciation days and fun events filled with food and games to give some time for our community to connect. Due to covid the nature and types of events are TBD and more information will be given by email at a later date.

Letters of Reference

The YGH program will provide a letter of reference on an individual basis. Please contact the volunteer coordinator if you are interested in receiving a reference and they will provide more information.

Health Benefits

Gardening creates a fun way to get physical exercise that promotes and improves general wellness. Studies have also shown that interacting with nature alleviates feelings of stress, anxiety and depression therefore can be extremely beneficial for mental health!

Volunteer Hours Certificate

A certificate of the number of volunteer hours contributed will be provided upon request.

Volunteer Opportunities

General Roles

General roles are a great opportunity to get involved in the gardens and learn more about agriculture. These roles are suitable for people of all skill levels and are a good fit whether you have a little or a lot of time to contribute.



Gardener

Learn and practice organic food growing on our yard properties with the supervision of trained farmers and gardeners! The types of activities include: weeding and preparing land, harvesting, seeding, transplanting, making trellises, pruning and having a good laugh and eating weeds (many of them are edible!) as we go!

Number of volunteers per shift: 1 - 8

Reports to: Yard Garden Coordinator

Fruit and Produce Gleaner

Join the gleaning team in a partnership with the Vancouver Fruit Tree Project. Gleaning is the process of harvesting unused produce or fruit. When a community member has a surplus of food the gleaning team will jump in to harvest it.

Number of volunteers per shift: 2

Reports to: Gleaning lead



Irrigation Checker

This role involves a quick walk over to the yards to make sure timers and irrigation is working, the soil isn't too dry and the plants aren't wilting. These are short shifts for those who enjoy a walk and checking on the plants.

Number of volunteers per shift: 1

Reports to: Irrigation lead and Yard Garden Coordinator:

Photographer and Story Sharing

We would love to share the work we are doing with the community! This role would include taking photos of the work being done and the progress of the yard gardens.

Number of volunteers per shift: 1

Reports to: Social Media Manager/Volunteer Coordinator



Leadership Roles

Leadership roles are for those who want to take on more responsibility and have a long-term role in YGHP. These roles are a great way to gain meaningful work experience that will challenge you as well as give you key skills that can be applied to leadership positions in the future. One growing season is the minimum required commitment for these roles (to the end of October). An interview is required to be considered for the role.

If you feel as though you may not meet the required skills for the role or are interested in mentorship, let us know and we can pair you with a mentor!

Garden Lead

This is a role for people who feel confident in their growing abilities and want to take on a leading role. The type of work involves leading volunteers on scheduled activities from the coordinator in the garden and making sure all check-ins and covid protocols are followed and creating summaries of the work completed.



Key Skills:

- Familiarity with vegetable production
- Understands weeding, bed preparation, seeding, transplanting and harvesting methods for all garden vegetable production
- Attention to detail
- Good organizational skills
- Ability to lead a team of individuals and properly explain the tasks at hand

Hours: 2-3 hour shift 30 minutes for meeting with Coordinator and priority tasks

Irrigation Leader

Ensuring the health of our growing veggies by keeping our plants watered. The leader will help with putting in place the irrigation lines, fixing leaks, checking that the irrigation is working and watering appropriately. Works with organizing water checkers on days when no yard garden farm parties are happening.

Key Skills:

- Good Problem solving Skills
- Have worked with drip irrigation before

Hours: one week for setup, after setup 1 hour per week



Leadership Roles

Gleaning Team Lead



The leader of this group will go into neighbours properties and harvest apples and produce that they have indicated can be used for the Harvest Matchmaking program. The lead will make sure that the other members are using the right harvesting techniques and will develop friendly, respectful relationships with the land owners who are donating their freshly grown food.

Key Skills:

- Knowledge of proper harvesting techniques for vegetables
- Good communication skills to make property owners feel comfortable
- Ability to lead a team in harvesting produce

Hours: based on availability and need, active in July, August and September

Pilot Program Coordinator: Grow a Row

Exploring the potential for community members to grow a specific vegetable in a section of their own garden for Food Distribution. Tasks can include researching similar models and community outreach to explore interest. Support will be provided by the Yard Garden Coordinator



Key Skills:

- Growing skills
- Willingness to speak with the community and local newsletters
- Designing a rubric for gardeners to ensure food safety

Hours: subject to availability

Food Literacy Educator



This role will work with the coordinators of the Foodhub to help create food literacy materials easy-to-follow recipes with pictures for our food recipients. There will be opportunities to also run workshops on both food preparation and preservation community and volunteer events. Tasks can include designing posters, organizing event activities, organizing snacks/food, creating an Eventbrite, finding creative ways to engage our community.

Key Skills:

- Great organizational skills
- Creativity

Hours: Subject to availability

Leadership Roles

Data Analyst and Impact Reporter



This is a role for someone who likes excel and visual imaging. They will help with the collection of data for what is harvested, planted and volunteer hours. A person can choose to just analyze one of these parameters if that is all the time/interest they have and/or to help the Riley Park Garden in this task as well. They then will make infographics, visual data displays at various times throughout the year to share with the community, volunteers, donors and aid for grant applications. Showing data is so important for us communicating what we are doing!

Key Skills:

- Data management experience
- Experience utilizing and analyzing excel data and creating data visualizations

Hours: 1-2 hours per week OR done in total at the end of the harvest season

Newsletter Creator

This role includes creating bi-weekly newsletters containing updates and pictures for our Food Hub. There's an option to create the content exclusively for the Yard Gardens or for the entire food hub. Content and photos will be shared in advance.



Key Skills:

- willing to learn or has experience with Canva and/or Mailchimp
- Engaging writing skills

Hours: 2 - 4 per week

Social Media Content Creator

Creating content for our social media platforms that share with our virtual communities what we are doing! This can include Instagram and Facebook posts using content provided by the coordinator, volunteers and information for the newsletter.



Key Skills:

- Understanding of social media platforms
- Good organizational skills
- Creativity

Hours: 1-3 hours per week , based on availability

Leadership Roles



Event Planner

This role will work with the coordinators of the Foodhub to help plan community and volunteer events. Tasks can include designing posters, organizing event activities, organizing snacks/food, creating an Eventbrite, finding creative ways to engage our community.

Key Skills:

- Great organizational skills
- Creativity

Hours: subject to availability

Educational Content Creator

The educator will be doing research and creating educational materials around sustainable food growing for our volunteers and the wider community. They will receive support from the Yard Garden coordinator and materials should be short and easy to follow.

Key Skills:

- Solid foundation in growing food and sustainability issues
- Ability to find credible resources
- Good communication skills

Hours: subject to availability



Artistic Educational Creator

Sourcing outdoor safe materials to create beautiful artistic signs that educate the wider public about what we are growing and why. Types of educational material will be provided by the Yard Garden coordinator. Artistic expression is up to you!

Key Skills:

- Passion for art

Hours: subject to availability

Leadership Roles

Fundraising Team

For those who are interested in helping raise the funds to keep this program going and expanding it. Fundraising efforts will include things like call-outs to neighbours in newsletters, searching for applicable grants and aid in writing those grants. Grants for the program will even include little fun grants to create community events. Lastly, helping to write thank you letters to our wonderful donors to the program!



Key Skills:

- Willingness and interest in opening doors to new potential donors
- Strong writing skills
- Knowledge around grant writing and community engagement

Hours: based on availability

Community Research in Sustainability Studies

Researching how to improve the sustainability of the program or expanding the growing spaces. This is for someone interested in looking at innovative ways we can increase the sustainability of what we are doing and the feasibility of doing so (infrastructure, fund etc.). We are open to multiple research projects based on a volunteer's interest. Possible topics include rainwater collection, composting, drip irrigation.

Key Skills:

- A passion for sustainability
- Ability to conduct research and report results
- Good communication skills to present ideas
- Organization and attention to detail
- Creativity to develop programs or initiatives while ensuring safety and feasibility are assessed sufficiently

Hours: Dependent on availability and size of project undertaking



We Are Here For You!

We want to recognize that YOU are the reason our projects exist and are as successful as they are. YOU are the bright energy that drives us to this work. As such, it is very important that we make sure YOU feel supported. If you ever feel we have asked too much, or you need support or any help resolving a conflict, we are here for you. We want your volunteer experience to be one that makes you feel safe, welcome and connected to your community in a way that helps you thrive as an individual.

If you don't feel comfortable contacting your direct lead please contact the **Food Hub Manager: maria_valenzuela@lmnhs.bc.ca** for support and guidance.

Volunteer Rights, Responsibilities & Expectations

Responsibilities

- **Orientation:** Volunteers are required to attend an orientation to the the project about protocols. If a volunteer hasn't received an orientation, they should contact the volunteer coordinator to set up an orientation.
- **Interview:** Those who are applying for a leadership role must attend an interview to be considered.
- **Forms:** Volunteers must complete all forms (intake form, criminal record check, garden agreement and photo release form). Volunteers must complete a pre-arrival self assessment for COVID for symptoms.
- **Dress Code:** Volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions for the performance of their duties. This includes closed-toe shoes and appropriate clothes for the activities and weather.
- **Tetanus Shot:** Get your tetanus shot up to date (or get one if you come in contact with rust).

Volunteer Rights, Responsibilities & Expectations

Rights

- Work in a safe & healthy workplace, to know about unsafe work and refuse unsafe work
- Be assigned tasks that you feel you can safely and physically accomplish.
- A supportive environment in which to work and contribute.
- Effective and meaningful volunteer involvement practices.
- Provide feedback and receive feedback.
- Ask for and receive support from their supervisor when required.

Expectations and Guidelines

- Understand and respect LMNH's and YGH's philosophy, mission and values
- Be committed to your volunteer work and perform your duties and responsibilities promptly, and reliably
- Be punctual and provide as much notice as possible to the volunteer coordinator if unable to be present for volunteer duties
- Be respectful and non-judgmental when working with fellow volunteers
- Ask questions and share ideas, feedback, and concerns about your assignment or any other matter
- Keep a record of your hours (*only applies to leadership roles*)
- Respect the privacy of the landowners and do not go into yards when a farm party is not in session unless instructed by the Yard Garden coordinator
- If you are unable to perform a task, let the garden lead know and they will assign you something you are capable of doing
- Volunteers must not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol when acting on the behalf of LMNH in any role. Nor can they buy alcohol or drugs for a fellow volunteer

LMNH Volunteer Policies: Management and Accountability

From LMNH Volunteer Handbook p. 8 and 9

Volunteer Orientation, Training, Support and Feedback

Volunteer orientation will cover essential issues such as boundaries, diversity, teamwork what to expect during a shift. Each volunteer will have a designated staff supervisor who is responsible for providing volunteers with further program-specific training, ongoing support, direction, feedback, and supervision.

Representation of LMNH and YGHP

All volunteers should seek prior consultation and approval from a supervisor should any action or statement they make significantly affect or obligate LMNH and YGHP. Volunteers must receive authorization to make statements to the media on behalf of LMNH and YGHP.

Conflict of Interest

If the volunteer or volunteer placement is deemed not suitable, a meeting will be arranged in order to explore other options within LMNH. A meeting between the supervisor and volunteer will take place as soon as possible to discuss concerns, to set/clarify expectations, and to identify ways to rectify the situation. The volunteer will be informed of any consequences which may occur as a result of concerns/problems not being solved

LMNH Volunteer Dismissal

From LMNH Volunteer Handbook p. 9

LMNH retains the right to terminate a volunteer placement with no notice in cases of gross misconduct. Misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- i) Misconduct which endangers the safety or well-being of employees, volunteers and participants, including out in the community.
- ii) Any other act or event or omission for which the volunteer is responsible which flagrantly breaches the fundamental trust of the volunteer-LMNH relationship.

Volunteer Checklist

Volunteer Checklist to Get Growing!

- Selected your volunteer role
- Completion of all forms:
 - Volunteer application form which includes a gardener agreement and photo release form
- You have completed a criminal record check
- You have read through the YGHP volunteer handbook
- You have read through the About The Yard Garden Project Sheet
- You have received an in-person orientation
- Excitement about growing with us!

Volunteer Checklist for Leadership Roles

- You have had an interview with the Volunteer Coordinator/met with the supervisor of the program you will be volunteering at
- You have made agreements with your supervisor about the assignment and the hours you will be Volunteering

Volunteer Application Form

Please use the link below to fill out the application form.

[CLICK HERE](#)

*Welcome to the
Yard Garden Team!*

Our Collaborators

This project would not be made possible without the help, volunteers and contributions from the following collaborators



Art Bomke

Nancy Bradshaw

With special thanks to:

Emma Fenty for designing and creating the handbook with the help of Brianna Thompson and Nancy Bradshaw.