VICTORIA, BC — An appetite for local, healthy, sustainable food is bringing two new City of Victoria urban food production pilot projects to life this fall. The City is partnering with two neighbourhoods on the Community Orchard Pilot Program and a community centre-based Kitchen Garden Pilot. Both will demonstrate new ways of growing food in the City of Victoria in visible, public places.

The Victoria West Community Association and the Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group (FNRG) are establishing Community Orchards and Fernwood will also be home to the Kitchen Garden pilot project. Both groups have experience managing community food gardens and are interested in increasing the amount of food produced in their community.

“Community orchards and kitchen gardens offer an incredible opportunity for people to connect with their neighbours, grow nutritious food and then maybe sit together around the kitchen table digging into an apple pie to celebrate,” noted Mayor Dean Fortin. “These projects aim to grow sustainable, local food and strong neighbourhoods.”

A Community Orchard is a grove of fruit or nut trees in a public park where a community group participates in the care, maintenance and harvesting of the trees. The food that is produced is then shared with the community. The two potential Community Orchard sites will be developed within existing City of Victoria parks and will demonstrate how food production can co-exist in public spaces with multiple uses.

The two community associations will propose a design for their orchards and will select fruit and nut trees that will continue to thrive in drier, hotter summers and wetter, stormier winters. The City will purchase the trees, install and maintain irrigation and mow the lawn around the trees during regular park maintenance. The community group will be responsible for planting the trees, tree health, pruning, harvesting and distribution of the fruit. The orchards could also be used for public education programs such as fruit tree pruning. These details will be set out in a licence agreement, similar to what is used for community gardens in City parks. Plans for the orchards are being developed and submitted to Council this fall. The orchards could be planted as early as the end of January.

The Kitchen Garden project at the Fernwood Community Centre will transform the centre’s 1800 square foot front decorative garden beds that are currently maintained by City staff, into edible food gardens that will be managed by the FNRG. The gardens will be used to educate, inspire and supplement some of the 700 snacks and meals that the centre provides to program participants each week. This is the first phase of the FNRG’s long term vision to establish the Fernwood Community Centre as a community hub for food programs and demonstration projects.
Opportunities to learn more about local food production:

- **The New Urban Food Culture – Talk By Don Genova**
  Be inspired by the trend of urban food culture and learn more about FNRG’s plans to move in this direction.
  When: Wednesday, November 21, 7:30 p.m.
  Where: Fernwood Community Centre, 1240 Gladstone Avenue

- **Banfield Park Community Orchard Placemaking Design Workshop**
  Community members and interested friends are invited to a design workshop for the Banfield Park Community Orchard. This is part of the work to make the “Craigflower Village” an engaging place to meet neighbours.
  When: Thursday, November 22, 7:00 p.m.
  Where: Vic West Community Centre
  [www.victoriawest.ca](http://www.victoriawest.ca)

These programs align with the Food Systems objectives found in the Official Community Plan. The objectives include: increasing urban food production on private and public lands, ensuring that citizens have access to affordable, healthy and local food and working to strengthen local food infrastructure. The programs also align with the Victoria Sustainability Framework and the Sustainability Action Plan.

For more information visit: [www.victoria.ca](http://www.victoria.ca)

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**For More Information:**

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