

CITY OF VICTORIA | Parks and Recreation

Get Growing Victoria

2025 Impact Report



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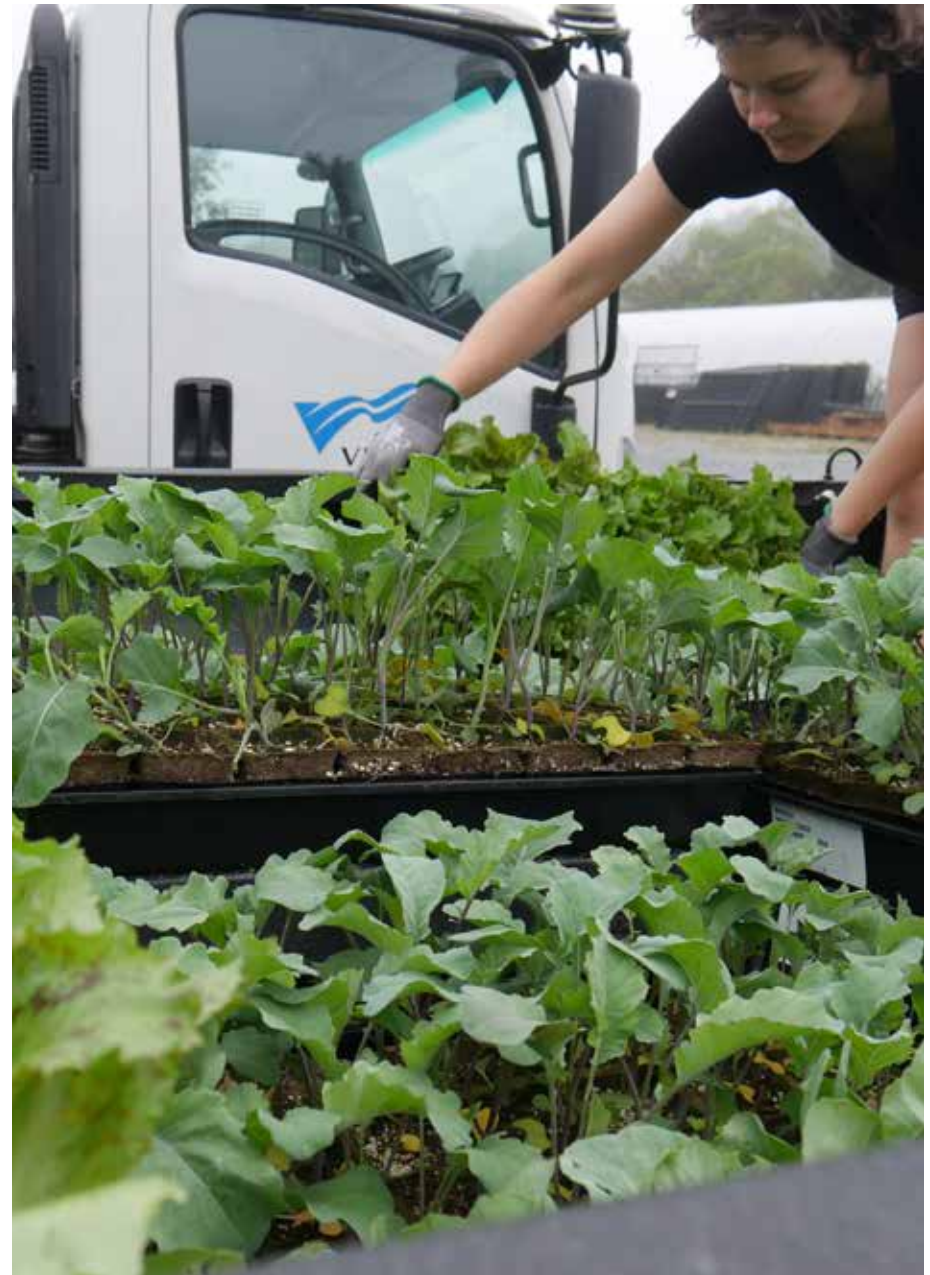
About the Program

Get Growing Victoria is an award-winning program that provides seedlings and soil-building materials to communities in need through partnerships with non-profit organizations. Since 2020, the program has helped thousands of residents who face barriers to growing their own food.

Every year approximately 100,000 seedlings are grown in the City nursery at Beacon Hill Park and hundreds of yards of soil-building materials are produced through Parks operations. The distribution of seedlings and soil-building materials occurs through a vast network of 68 community partners like neighbourhood houses, community centres, schools, community gardens, social housing organizations, intercultural community organizations, food security and environmental stewardship groups, First Nations and Indigenous-led organizations.

The City also works in partnership with the Compost Education Centre and Growing Together. The Compost Education Centre provides gardening resources and hands-on guidance during each neighbourhood distribution day event. Growing Together is a regional network of organizations that provide free online educational videos to help participants grow their gardening skills and confidence.

The City invests approximately \$200,000 annually into Get Growing Victoria: including materials, resources, staff time and grants. Get Growing Service Grants provide a total of \$30,000 in funding annually to core partner organizations including neighbourhood distribution day hosts, organizations leading gardening education and non-profits growing produce directly for food banks.



Program Goals

Get Growing Victoria was created in alignment with the City's Official Community Plan to support local food production, provide opportunities for residents to have access to affordable, healthy and local food, strengthen our local food system and foster resilient communities.

The main goals of the program are to:

Grow Food

- Support the City's urban food system and improve access to fresh, local produce for communities in need.

Grow Gardeners

- Help new gardeners by providing free supplies, seedlings and learning materials through partnerships with local organizations.

Grow Community

- Encourage community involvement in local gardening by offering resources, partnerships and funding that promote connection, learning and the health benefits of gardening.

Program Delivery

Get Growing Victoria provides:

- Seedlings that are easy to grow for beginners and suitable for a variety of locations like garden beds or balcony containers.
- Access to essential gardening resources such as compost, leaf mulch, wood chips and educational materials.
- Distribution through organizations that are familiar to participants, bringing these resources closer to home.



Partnerships and Distribution Days

The program reaches communities in two ways: neighbourhood distribution days and direct distribution through a network of non-profits.

Neighbourhood distribution days are run by 11 community partners in each neighbourhood in Victoria. Each community association plays a vital role in coordinating and collecting data on distribution days in their neighbourhood. These public-facing events are an open invitation to any residents who self-identify as facing barriers to growing food. The Compost Education Centre attends all seedling distribution days to provide hands-on educational support to gardeners of all levels.

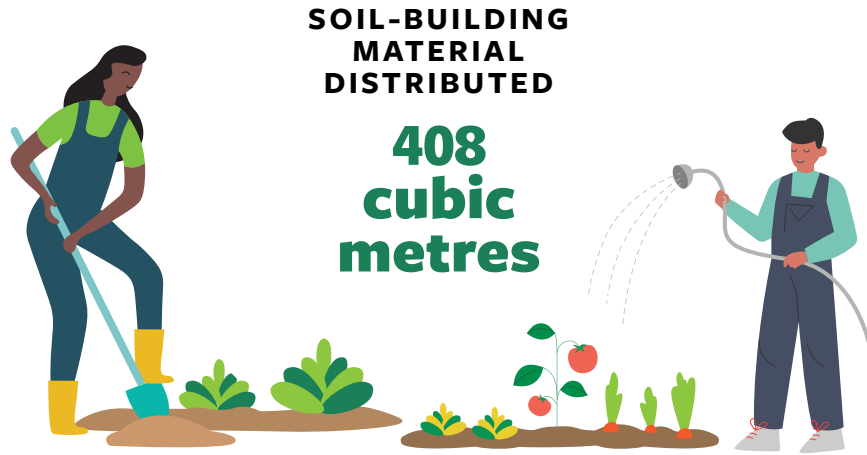
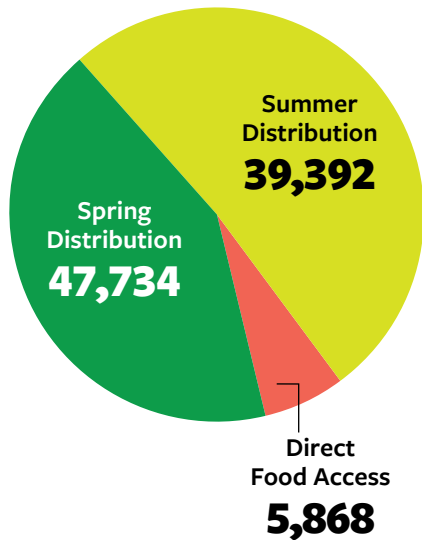
Across Victoria, 57 non-profit partners distribute directly through to their communities ensuring materials reach those who face barriers to accessing plants and garden materials but want to be growing and eating fresh, local food. This includes people who are Indigenous, experiencing loss of work, immunocompromised, living with cognitive, physical, financial or social barriers or disabilities, seniors, youth and families in need.

Seedling distribution occurs twice a year, in spring for summer gardening and in summer for fall and winter gardening. Soil-building materials are available during some seedling distributions and during the shoulder seasons to help participants built healthy gardens year-round.



2025 Impact

92,994 seedlings distributed



Neighbourhood Distribution Day Partners
supporting 5,500+ people



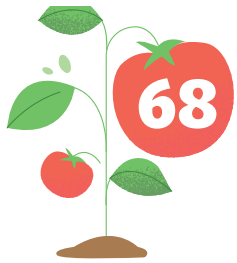
Community Organization Partners
directly serving 6,500+ community members



TOTAL IMPACT OVER 12,000 people reached



POTENTIAL TO PRODUCE UP TO **61,235 kg or \$945,000 value of produce grown**

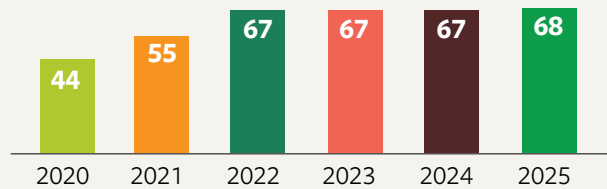


Partner Organizations

- 15 Health and Social Housing Organizations
- 11 Schools and Alternative Youth Education Programs
- 11 Neighbourhood Houses and Community Associations
- 10 Food Security and Environmental Stewardship Organizations
- 10 Community and Allotment Gardens
- 8 Indigenous-led organizations and First Nations
- 3 Intercultural Community Organizations



Number of Partner Organizations Annually



Neighbourhood Distribution Days

2,192 Attendees



Attendees' level of gardening knowledge

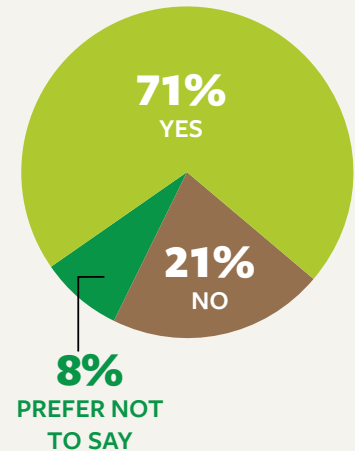


31%
BEGINNER

52%
INTERMEDIATE

16%
EXPERIENCED

Do you belong to a community facing systemic barriers to food access?



Program Recognition

- 2022 BC Recreation and Parks Association Program Excellence Award
- 2022 Ecostar Social Impact Award

Conclusion

Get Growing Victoria is a successful example of how the City can work with local organizations to increase collective impact and support resilient local food systems. The City provides greenhouse space and staff expertise for growing healthy seedlings, along with soil-building materials, grant funding and communication support. Partner organizations offer on-the-ground support that build food-growing skills, social connection and community resilience, which help improve equitable access to local produce and strengthen household food security. Seedlings distributed annually have the potential to produce up to 61,235 kg of food, valued at approximately \$945,000 based on current retail prices. This translates to a return of up to \$4.70 in fresh, local produce for every dollar invested by the City, benefiting 12,000 residents facing systemic barriers to food access. This initiative shows the value of municipalities and community organizations working together to grow stronger, healthier and more connected communities.

