

Edmonton VitalSigns®

2013

What is Edmonton Vital Signs® 2013?

Edmonton Vital Signs® is the first of an annual check-up conducted by Edmonton Community Foundation, in partnership with the Edmonton Social Planning Council, to measure how our community is doing on a specific issue; this year we are looking at food security. Community Foundations across Canada are reporting on how their communities are doing and how Canada is doing over all.

Who we are

Edmonton Community Foundation

Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF) works with donors to support the causes important to them through gifts now and/or in their wills. Endowment funds are permanently invested for long-term growth. Over the past 24 years ECF's assets have grown to almost \$350 million and we have granted more than \$150 million to charities and in scholarships.

Board Members: Carman McNary, Chair, Liz O'Neill, Deputy Chair, David McCalla, Secretary, Joanne Berger, Gurvinder Bhatia, Chandra Clarke, Terena Delaney, Linda Hughes, Ted Kouri, John Mah, Anne McLellan, Nancy Reynolds, Garth Warner (Martin Garber-Conrad, CEO, Carol Watson and Elizabeth Bonkink, Communications)

Edmonton Social Planning Council

Edmonton Social Planning Council (ESPC) is an independent social research and analysis organization which has been operating in Edmonton for over 73 years. ESPC focuses on analyzing and responding to policy decisions that impact people living in low-income situations, including issues

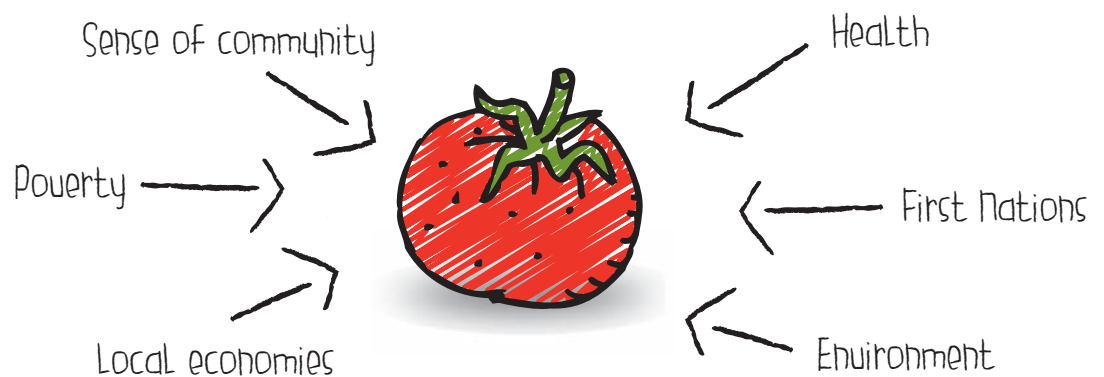
of homelessness, wage equity, and social supports and benefits. ESPC produces "Tracking the Trends" a report that analyzes current social and economic updates on trends over a 25-30 year time frame.

Board: Vasant Chotai, President, Iris Moreno, Doug Meggison, Sumeet Shinde, Jarrod Bayne, Rose Marie Tremblay, Oliver Kamau (Susan Morrissey, Executive Director, John Kolkman, Research Coordinator)

For more information visit our websites
ecfoundation.org
edmontonsocialplanning.ca



Why Food? Food is a major intersection where many challenges meet.



Eat it Up

Edmonton Food Map



Snap Shot of Edmonton

See how Edmonton stacks up nationally and how we have changed over the last decade.

Population (2012)

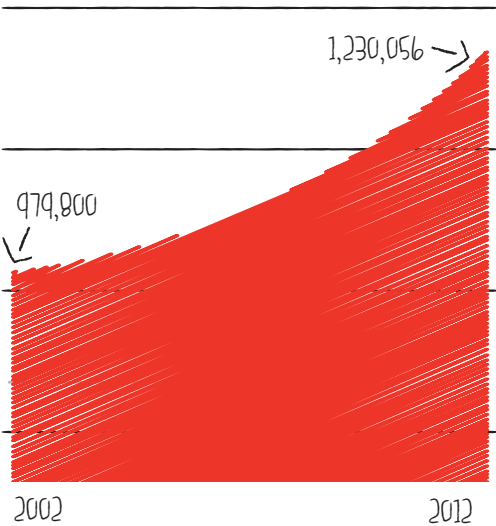
In 2012 Edmonton had the smallest population of Canada's six largest metro areas, trailing Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary, and Ottawa.

Metro Edmonton Population

2012	1,230,056
2002	979,800

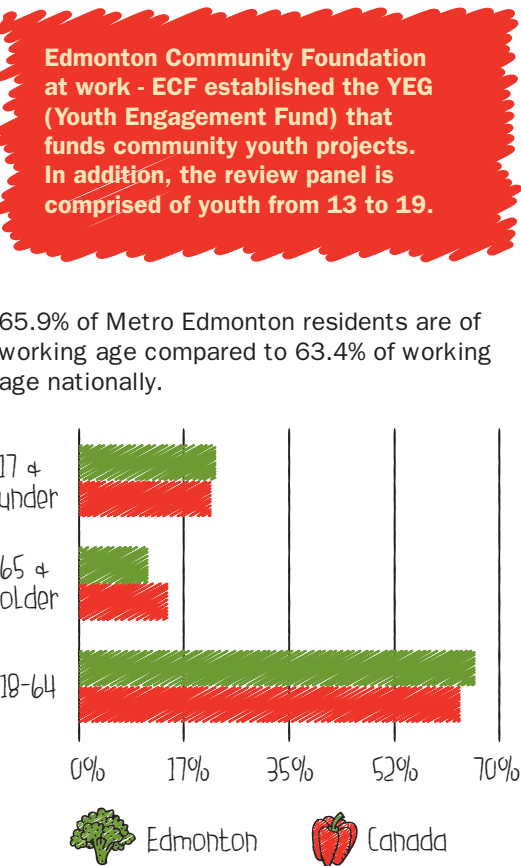
An increase of 25%

This is the second highest rate of growth among major metro areas trailing only Calgary.



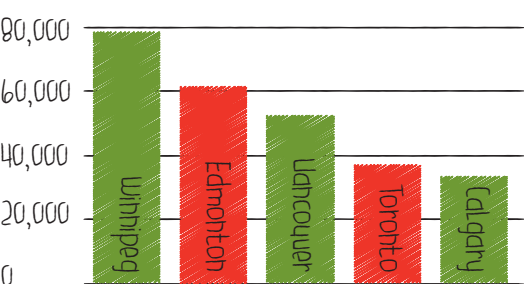
Age

In 2011, 22.7% of Edmonton residents were 17 or younger, while only 21.9% were nationally. 11.4% of residents were 65 or older compared to 14.7% nationally.



Aboriginal Peoples

Edmonton has the 2nd largest Aboriginal population of any metro area in Canada after Winnipeg. Aboriginal peoples is defined as First Nations, Metis or Inuit ancestry.



The five largest urban Aboriginal Identity populations in 2011 were Winnipeg (78,415), Edmonton (61,765), Vancouver (52,375), Toronto (36,990), and Calgary (33,375).

ECF, through the Belcourt Brosseau Metis Awards Fund gave over \$14million in scholarship funds to Metis Students in 2012.

stories

Wecan Food Basket

The Wecan Food Basket Society's motto is, "It's not a food bank; it's food in the bank!"

Wecan assists low and fixed-income individuals by arranging for food pick-up in the week before their next monthly income arrives. It is essentially a budgeting tool that participants can rely on to ensure they have nutritious food available to them when finances are the tightest.

More than half of the recipients are sponsored by an agency that is helping them move from surviving to thriving. Participation in the program teaches individuals self-reliance and the importance of budgeting, rather than relying on soup kitchens and food banks when things get tight.

By purchasing a basket of food in advance - paid for by the first Friday of the month and delivered to the depot on the third Thursday of the month - participants are guaranteed that they will be able to feed their family to the end of the month.

Wecan works closely with a grocery supply warehouse to provide food for the hampers at a reduced rate. By using only one source for the food, volunteer drivers only have to make one stop before delivering food to the depots to be sorted.



The 25 depots throughout the city are also run by volunteers and are found in churches, non-profit agencies (like Crystal Kids), apartment buildings, daycare centres or wherever there is convenient access and a need. The depot coordinator is the person who promotes the depot, thereby helping it stay in existence, and becomes a safety net for the individual users. When an order does

not get picked up, the coordinator reaches out to that person to ensure they are okay. The depot is also an opportunity to be social – to connect with people – as many of the participants are seniors or have disabilities and are at risk of isolation.

How it works

Participants must become members of the Wecan Food Basket Society at a cost of \$5 per year. They then pay the depot coordinator for their order by the first Friday in the month and pick up the order on the third Thursday of the month. Members can then choose from:

- **Fruit and vegetable hampers including 3 types of fresh vegetables and 3 types of seasonal fruit at \$10.**
- **Frozen meat hamper including 3 cuts of meat at \$15, or**
- **Both for \$25.**

Advisory Committee

This report was created in consultation with the following individuals. We thank them for sharing their food security expertise.

Kayla Atkey
Alberta Agriculture
Marjorie Bencz
Edmonton's Food Bank
Debbie Hubbard
Sowing the Seeds

Laura McGowa
Tourism Destination Competitiveness Branch Alberta
Tourism, Parks and Recreation
Hani Quan
Principal Planner with Sustainable Development, City of Edmonton

Jessie Radies
Live Local Alberta
Susan Roberts
Growing Food Security Alberta
Kim Sanderson
Citizen at Large

Other committee members included:

Susan Morrissey
Co-Chair Vital Signs Edmonton

Carol Watson
Co-Chair Vital Signs Edmonton
Elizabeth Bonkink
Communications Coordinator
John Kolkman
Researcher

Snap Shot of Edmonton

Diversity

Edmonton is becoming increasingly diverse. In 2011, three in ten residents were a visible minority. That is 254,990 people.



Rental Market

As of April 2013 the average 2 bedroom apartment rented for \$1,007/month. This is an increase of 4.2% from April of 2012.

At 1.2% vacancy rate, Edmonton tied Calgary to have the lowest rate of any major Canadian city. 2.7% average of Canada's 35 largest urban centres.

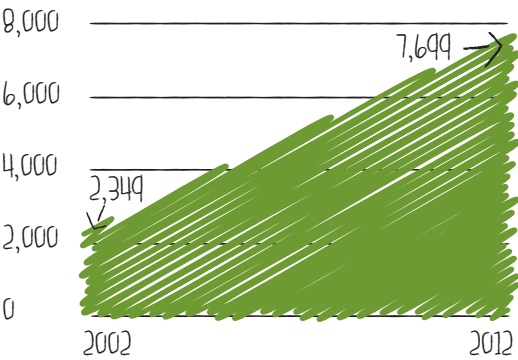
Newcomers

The number of New Canadians settling in Edmonton is increasing. We trail only Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, and Calgary.

2011 - 11,806 immigrants and refugees settled here.

2002 - 4,225 made Edmonton their permanent home.

The number of temporary foreign workers moving to Edmonton has been going up even faster, from 2,349 in 2002 to 7,699 in 2012.



ECF supported the expansion of existing parent and child programming at Multicultural Family Resources Society to accommodate the needs of temporary foreign workers. (\$45,589)

Median Household Income

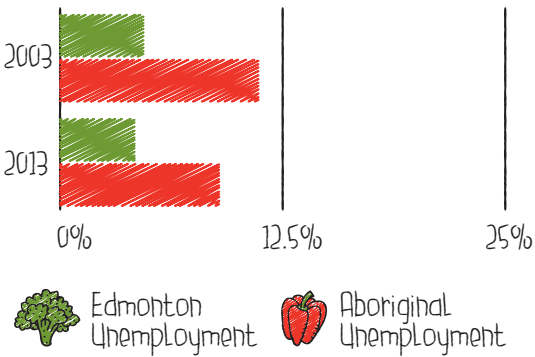
Metro Edmonton's median after-tax household income was \$59,200 in 2011, 16.8% higher than \$50,700 the median after-tax household income national average.



Unemployment Rate

Among the six largest metro areas in Canada, Edmonton has the lowest unemployment rate (4.5%) during the first half of 2013. Aboriginal unemployment was twice as high (8.9%) for the same period.

In 2003 Edmonton's unemployment rate was 5.0%, and the Aboriginal unemployment rate was 11.1%.



Many in Low Wage Work

Over one in five employed persons in metro Edmonton (21%) earned \$15.00/hour or below in 2012. 62% are women, and 58% are adults 25 years and older.

ECF supported Empower U, a consortium of seven agencies, led by the United Way, teaching low income women about financial managements as they build assets and exit poverty. (\$75,000/year for three years)

Low Income Rates for All Persons, Children (LIM After-Tax)

In 2011, 123,000 persons (10.6%) in metro Edmonton lived in low income compared to the national rate of 12.6%. 39,000 children under 18 (15.4%) lived in low income.

Living in low income

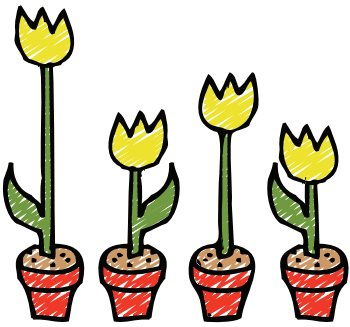
2011 - 10.6% of metro Edmonton - 123,000 people and 15.4% (39,000) were children under 18.

2001 - 9.% of metro Edmonton - 87,000 people and 12.9% (30,000) were children under 18.

Sense of Community Belonging

In a 2012 survey, 60.4% of metro Edmonton residents expressed a somewhat strong or very strong sense of belonging to the local community. This is below the national average and lowest among Canada's six largest metro areas.

This may be due to high levels of immigration. Community gardens have been proven to be a strong community development model.



The John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights received support from ECF for #YEGrights, a human rights program delivered in local schools. (\$5,950)

stories

Mill Woods Bread Run

You may not have heard of a Bread Run but there are three of these food distribution centres in Edmonton.

A Bread Run, as the name suggests, is a place to get bread, but also vegetables, dairy and when really lucky, eggs. It is food assistance for low-income individuals as the offerings are free of charge.

Organized by volunteers like Don Grabinsky and Carla Janzen from the Millwoods Bread Run (located in Richfield Church), the food provided comes from local grocery stores and bakeries and is no longer saleable but still edible. Grabinsky and Janzen contact the stores looking for items they are about to throw out and pick them up for distribution at the church.

At the Millwoods Bread Run, serving an average of 25 families each Saturday (but has seen many as 40 families), distribution is on a first-come first-served basis. Recipients arrive early, add their name to the list and wait their turn – no additional information is collected. The waiting area is often a buzz of activity as the neighbours connect.

Volunteers, with the exception of Janzen and Grabinsky who are members of the organizing church, are also recipients. They arrive early and organize the groceries into categories; bread, dairy, fruits and vegetables, dry goods and on the rare occasion eggs or meat. As a thank you to the volunteers who assist, they get to "shop" first. Volunteers welcome the opportunity to give back for what they receive.

No money is charged for the items, but a donation tin is put out. The donations are then used for a community BBQ or pancake breakfast.

The families have come to rely on the weekly supply of food. One participant stated that he started coming to the Bread Run when he was laid-off and had no income, but continues to come because it has allowed him to afford 'luxury' items like a phone. Another participant stated that it is more convenient than taking the bus to the

grocery store and makes a difference of \$50 or more in her monthly budget.

The bread run serves mostly immigrants and those who need a continuous supplement to their income.

Janzen says that it is never known if there will be enough food to go around or if there will be extra left over. Left-overs are taken to the Youth Emergency Shelter. Organizers are confident that only those who need it are using it. Grabinsky tells us, "It is a matter of pride, no one will come unless they have to."

Bread Run locations in Edmonton

Millwoods Bread Run
3715-85 Street

Garneau United Church Bread Run
11148-84 Ave

Freedom Centre Bread Run
4925-134 Ave

Food Security

Food Insecurity Grows

According to the most recent Canadian Community Health Survey, 12.3% (or 172,300) Alberta households experienced food insecurity in 2011.

For Canada's wealthiest province, this is a decidedly average performance and identical to the national average.

Food insecurity levels in Alberta (12.3%)
2.5% severely, 6.0% moderately,
3.7% marginally.

According to a recent Leger poll, "Half of Edmontonians (48%) agree that food security is a significant problem in Edmonton. They feel that solving this problem should be a combined effort between individuals and governments."

Children disproportionately live in food insecure households. In 2011, 17.9% of Alberta children lived in a food insecure household slightly above the national average. Over one in three (35.1%) of lone parent households experience food insecurity.

Food insecurity is closely linked to a lack of household income. One-third of households below the Low Income Measure poverty line experience food insecurity.



Fruits and Vegetables Consumption Declines

In 2012, only 36% of residents in the Edmonton Zone of Alberta Health Services consumed fruits and vegetables the recommended five servings per day, compared to 40% of Canadians.



Diabetes Increases

The prevalence of diabetes is linked to both nutrition and income. At 5.62% in 2011, the Edmonton Zone of Alberta Health Services had a greater prevalence of diabetes than the 5.27% provincial rate. The rate of diabetes has also been increasing from 4.1% in the Edmonton Zone 10 years earlier.

Edmonton's Food Bank

Edmonton's Food Bank is a central warehouse and referral centre, which distributes donated or surplus food to more than 200 agencies, churches and food depots that provide food services to people in need.

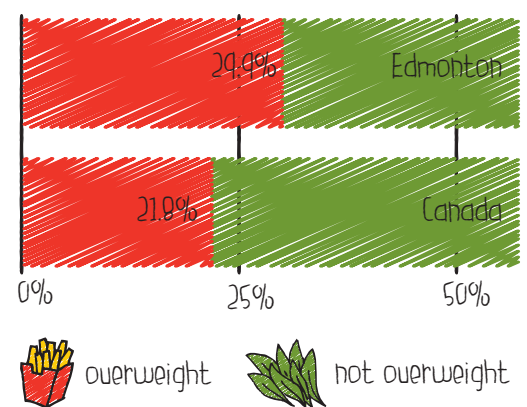
Edmonton's Food Bank used a grant from ECF to buy new electric pallet jacks for their warehouse. (\$26,000)

Food services can be in the form of food hampers, meals and/or snacks. In March, 2013, 12,677 individuals per month receive donated food through the hamper program alone. 40% of clients are children. **The Food Bank distributed 3.2 million kilograms of food in 2012. The approximate value of this food is over \$17,000,000.**

Youth Obesity Increases

In 2012, of those aged 12-17, **29.9%** of those in the Edmonton area are considered overweight or obese in comparison to the national average of **21.8%**. Moreover, data on Edmonton youth considered overweight or obese became available starting in 2005.

In 2005, when data first became available, the rate was 18.6%. So it trending up.

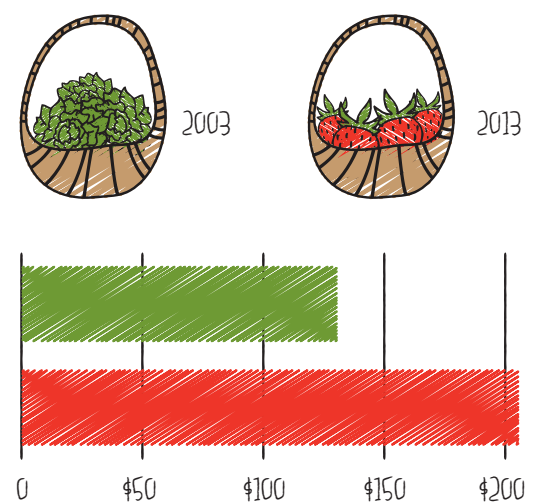


Cost of Nutritious Food Basket

The cost of a nutritious food basket for a family of four in metro Edmonton averaged \$210 per week for the first half of 2013.

The cost of a nutritious food basket is based on requirements for an adequate and healthy diet based on supermarket food purchases.

In 2003, the cost of a nutritious food basket for the same family was \$133 per week. The increase in food costs is more than double the increase in overall inflation over the same time period.



How You Can Get Involved

Agriculture for Life

www.agricultureforlife.ca

Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development

[www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/cbd13179](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/cbd13179)

City of Edmonton - FRESH Strategy

www.edmonton.ca/city_government/news/2012/a-fresh-approach-to-food-in-th.aspx

Edmonton's Food Bank VIDEO

www.edmontonsfoodbank.com

Fruits of Sherbrooke

fruitsofsherbrooke.ca

Greater Edmonton Alliance/Local Food Team

www.greateredmontonalliance.com

Growing Food Security in Alberta

www.foodsecurityalberta.org

Live Local Alberta

www.live-local.ca

Operation Fruit Rescue

www.operationfruitrescue.org

Team Food Edmonton

www.teamfoodedmonton.org

WECAN Food Basket Society

www.wecanfood.com

Edmonton Organic Growers Guild

www.eogg.org

Localize: The Story of Where Your Food Comes From

www.localizeyourfood.com

Slow Food Edmonton

www.slowfoodedmonton.ca

Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association (AFFPA)

www.albertafarmfresh.com

E4C Community Garden Project

www.e4calberta.org/programs-services/nutrition-community/community-garden

Community Supported Agriculture in Alberta

www.csaalberta.com

On Borrowed Ground

www.onborrowedground.com

The Local Good

www.thelocalgood.ca

Alberta Food Bank Network Association

www.afbna.ca

The Alberta Farmers Market Association

www.albertamarkets.com

Sustainable Food Edmonton

www.sustainablefoodedmonton.org

Edmonton Permaculture

www.edmontonpermaculture.ca

Breakfast for learning

www.breakfastforlearning.ca/services-info/regional/alberta/

APPLE Schools - Alberta Project Promoting active Living & healthy Eating

www.appleschools.ca

University Food Bank

www.campusfoodbank.com

Grant MacEwan Food Bank

www.facebook.com/GrantMacewanFoodBank

Community Kitchens -

Coming Together to Plan and Cook Meals

Diane Thursby, Alberta Health Services Collective Kitchens Coordinator 780-735-3044

Hope Mission VIDEO

hopemission.com

LIVINGbridge VIDEO

livingbridgeedmonton.com

Growing Locally

Farmer's Market

As of the summer of 2013, there are 12 farmers' markets within the City of Edmonton and 13 farmers' markets in surrounding communities within the metro area.

An estimated \$724 million of total sales took place in Alberta farmers' market in 2012 (about a third is from Edmonton markets based on relative population share).



High Quality Soils

The City of Edmonton is located on some of the best agricultural soils in the country. The highest concentration of Class 1 farmland in the province is located within the Edmonton region. Most of these soils have high levels of organic matter, drain well, and are of sufficient depth to pose no significant limitations for agricultural production.

Community Gardens

There are over 80 community garden sites in metro Edmonton.

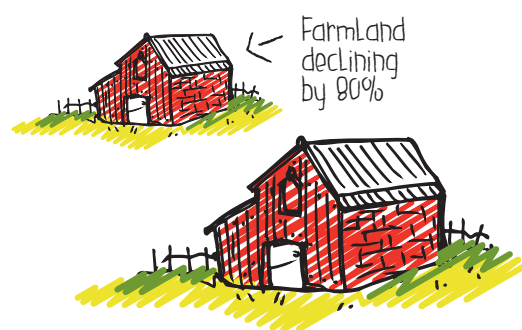
Many of the gardens are located in higher density areas where residents do not have access to land on their own property. The gardens vary widely in terms of number of plots, growing medium (raised beds or in-ground), and growing techniques.



Number of Farms

There are 3,591 farms in metro Edmonton with 5,270 farm operators. 73 of those farms are with 95 operators within the City of Edmonton.

Edmonton's growing urban footprint led to a dramatic reduction in the number of city farms (from 170 in 2006) as well as an 80% decline in area farmed. Some of the reduction may be due to farms moving their headquarters outside City boundaries in advance of urban development.



Types of Farms

Due to their proximity to a large urban market, a larger proportion of farms in metro Edmonton are involved with potato, vegetable and fruit production, greenhouse and tree nursery production, and specialty animal breeding compared to the provincial average. These types of farms also require a smaller land base compared to grain, oilseed or cattle ranching to generate a comparable level of income.

Food Security Videos

Check out Edmonton Community Foundation's youtube channel and website:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/YourECFoundation>

stories

Lady Flower Gardens

More than 20 km from city centre on the north eastern edge of the City, lies Lady Flower Gardens. It is one of the few farms within Edmonton city limits and despite the name the garden is home to vegetables not flowers.

For the past two years, the garden, which is entirely volunteer run, has invited volunteers from Hope Mission, The Mustard Seed, Bissell Centre and others to farm their own plot of land. This five acre garden is more than a source for fresh food; it is a place where individuals can make a connection to others. In fact, some volunteer to garden just for the opportunity to find peace away from the inner-city. Kelly Mills, one of the two organizers behind the garden says, "This has become a space for people to rejuvenate and find solace and peace in the earth and nature."

When Mills met Doug Visser, of nearby Riverbend Gardens, she told him about her dream to have a space where organizations feeding vulnerable individuals can grow fresh vegetables. Doug knew just how to make this happen.

Visser, retired from farming, provides the expertise to the volunteers. Mills, a dental hygienist by trade, donates her time at the

garden every Wednesday - rain or shine. Neither receives compensation for their work at the garden and in addition Mills also spends many hours communicating with the groups and helping them coordinate volunteers. They do it because they want to bring the community together. "It levels the playing field. We are all just human beings and it's about connecting; looking someone in the eye and getting them," says Mills.

There are nine plots at Lady Flower Gardens allocated on a barter system - you must volunteer with the other gardens as payment for your own. Roland and Shirley, new Canadians who have one of the smaller plots not allocated to an organization, donate 10 hours per week to helping others garden as their payment. They have planted their plot in a traditional way that seems foreign to the Canadian gardeners. Appreciatively Visser feels we have a lot to learn from others. Mills says, "It's very cool to see them using gardening techniques from their countries of origin."



In addition to nutritional benefit the garden brings to the organizations' food programs, some have been able to sell produce for additional revenue. Hope Mission's Youth Shift Program raised over \$1300 selling sweet corn at the Edmonton Valley Zoo on Saturdays throughout the month of August, and Bissell Centre is looking into using their plot to make a soup they can sell with the vegetables that have been tended by community members.



Sustainability



Re-Use, Recycling and Composting

The City of Edmonton is a world and national leader when it comes to waste reduction, recycling and composting. Curbside recycling was introduced City-wide in 1988. This was later expanded to apartment buildings. The first eco-stations for household hazardous wastes opened in 1995. Two others have since been added. A composting facility for organic wastes opened in 2000. In addition, the city encourages and provides training for backyard composting. A Re-Use Centre opened in 2007. A facility to recycle waste construction materials opened in 2012.

When a waste to biofuels facility opens in 2014 fully 90% of Edmonton's residential waste will be diverted from landfill.

Water Quality and Use

The City of Edmonton's contaminant discharge into the North Saskatchewan River improved from 4.4 in 1999 to 7.1 in 2011. (Higher index score means less contaminant discharge).

This is due to investments such as improved tertiary sewage treatment at the Gold Bar plant and adoption of low impact development concepts.

At 144 litres per person per day, the City of Edmonton's residential water use is the lowest of Canada's six largest cities with the City of Toronto being the next lowest at 198 litres per day, and Calgary at 226 litres/person/day.

When non-residential uses are added, Edmonton's 320 litres per capita daily consumption is still the lowest among major Canadian cities but the gap is narrower.

Other municipalities in metro Edmonton don't stack up nearly so well especially in terms of total water use (residential and non-residential combined). Leduc County (location of the Nisku Industrial Park) consumes a staggering 2,155 litres of water per capita per day. All data is from 2009.

ECF at work: Partnering with other community foundations across the Prairies, ECF supported the production of a video project by the University of Lethbridge to raise awareness about water quality and management across the Lake Winnipeg Watershed. (\$25,000)



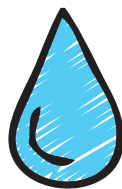
Litres per person per day



← Edmonton 144 Litres



← Toronto 198 Litres



← Calgary 226 Litres

stories

Composting with Mark Stumpf-Allen

Mark Stumpf-Allen, composting programs co-ordinator for the City of Edmonton, is passionate about soil. "It is vital to life. It is the source of our food security. If we didn't grow food, we couldn't eat," says Stumpf-Allen. He makes the analogy that soil is the "WOMB of the Earth" – Womb stands for water, organics, minerals, and biology."



Stumpf-Allen is a waste recycling specialist and says that about 60% of what we throw out can stay in your yard. "Your kitchen scraps becomes nutrients for the soil."

He explains that because human beings are carbon based we require the nutrients from the soil in order to survive. Composting puts what we grow back to the earth to replenish it, so it can grow more food. "This is why composting is so important; it is food for the earth. It provides essential minerals and vitamins that end up in our food."

Composting is the process of creating decomposed organic matter from things like leaves, grass clippings, or food waste. According to Stumpf-Allen it is a simple mixture of greens, browns, water, and air. "About 50% greens like vegetable waste and browns like dried leaves, water to keep it moist, and stir it to add air."

According to Mark there are six easy things you can do to increase your food security and reduce your waste:

1. Leave grass clippings.

Rather than bagging the clippings and putting them out for waste pick up, leave them in the grass. This is known as 'grasscycling' and it keeps the moisture in the soil and quickly decomposes to naturally fertilize your lawn. "We can reduce our waste by 20% by doing this and it is less work for you".

2. Plant food in place of grass.

Even a small garden will yield a fair amount of food and reduce your grocery costs. If you live in an apartment or condo, then plant food in pots on your balcony.

3. Return food to the soil, close the loop on food.

Don't throw your organic waste in the trash, compost it. A bucket of scraps will become nutrients for the soil. Anyone can compost; the only science to it is to keep it moist and stir it occasionally. Composting can be done in a pile, but most often is done in a container. Even individuals in apartments can compost with a water tight container on their balcony.

4. Improve your waste education.

Visit the local waste centre to learn where your waste goes. Edmonton has a world class recycling facility - the largest in North America. Since we pay for it, we should know what it does and see the waste we create. The Edmonton Waste Management Centre offers tours to individuals on Friday afternoons. The tour is two hours long and not recommended for children under nine. Call 780-496-6879 to make a reservation to attend a tour.

5. Keep it simple.

You are more likely to continue if it is easy to do. Keep your composter near the door, rather than at the back of the yard so it is accessible regardless of weather. Try planting just one kind of vegetable and enjoy the harvest. Do what works for you. Even on a small scale you can help reduce waste and improve your food security; the key is to keep it convenient.

6. Find out more.

There is several workshops on composting you can attend in the spring. There are also many organizations that will assist you either with planting or composting or both. If you don't have access to a garden, consider looking into a community garden.

Mark offers that if you want more information on composting to contact him at compost@edmonton.ca.

For information on the sources in this report please go to ecfoundation.org for a full listing.



Edmonton
Community
Foundation

