



# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Written By  
*Raina McDonald*  
SCFF Community Coordinator

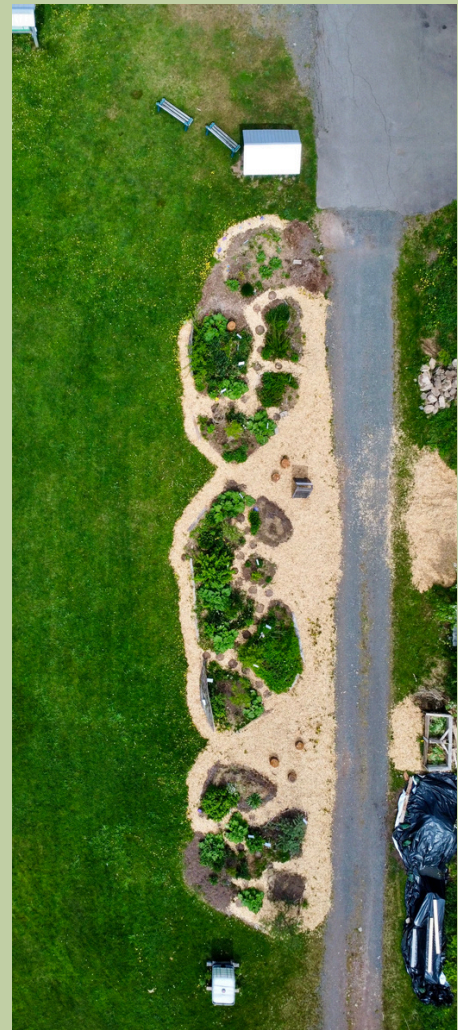
[scotsburnfoodforest@gmail.com](mailto:scotsburnfoodforest@gmail.com)  
[www.scotsburnfoodforest.com](http://www.scotsburnfoodforest.com)

# ABOUT US

The Scotsburn Community Food Forest (SCFF) is a grassroots, community-driven initiative focused on nurturing an edible, medicinal gathering and learning space for current and future generations.

We have a long-range vision to contribute to food security and food literacy through growing and sharing food and education in regenerative, inclusive ways. With this, we are fostering biodiversity and habitat for pollinators and empowering our youth to become change agents in a shifting climate.

We operate as a committee under Scotsburn Recreation Club.



## In Mi'kma'ki

---

Our permaculture demonstration site is located in Scotsburn Trail Head Park in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral & unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people. We acknowledge with gratitude that permaculture owes the foundation of its principles & practices to indigenous knowledge & ways of being in relation with the land and all life. Treaties of Peace and Friendship cover these lands. As treaty people, we are committed to the long-term journey to reconciliation as we learn and unlearn.

---



# Committee Members

Raina McDonald  
Alena Martin  
Annie Ferguson  
Mandy Sandbach  
Matthew Connor  
Mallory Willoughby

## A message from our Community Coordinator:

What an incredible fifth growing season! I'm grateful for the opportunity to have collaborated in community over the last five years, from the inception of this idea in 2019 to the thriving ecosystem of growing and learning that the Scotsburn Community Food Forest has become. I'm excited to see what flourishes out of the fertile beginnings that we've nurtured together.

Yours in Community,  
Raina



## In 2024 we...

- launched our new website: [www.scotsburnfoodforest.com](http://www.scotsburnfoodforest.com).
- were featured in Nova Scotia Journal for Sustainable Community Development, the Advocate Newspaper and the award-winning short documentary Roots for Change.
- held our 2nd annual plant sale focused on edible, medicinal & pollinator-friendly plants.
- participated in Nourish Nova Scotia's Grow Eat Learn program to support, enhance & grow school community food gardens in Nova Scotia & received a \$5000 grant for supplies & operations.
- received the support of the Province of Nova Scotia's Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage through a \$5000 grant from their Community Food Access & Literacy Fund for programming, coordination & local food.
- welcomed our first summer student with support from Canadian Parks & Recreation Association's Green Jobs Initiative.
- have 635 followers on Instagram (@scotsburnfoodforest), 664 members in our interactive SCFF Facebook Group & created a new Facebook page to share information specific to our project.
- were represented at New Glasgow's Seedy Saturday & started the Friends of the Food Forest membership.

# EMPOWERING OUR YOUTH



Ms. Grant's grade 4/5 class from Scotsburn Elementary

Our Food Forest was engaged as an outdoor classroom for important hands-on learning through the spring and fall this year. We led mini greenhouse climate action and Earth Day activities, as well as planted and saved seeds with the students at Scotsburn Elementary next door. We also hosted field trips from other schools.

## PICTOU LANDING FIRST NATIONS SCHOOL

We're grateful for the opportunity to have partnered with Melinda Mackenzie's grade 5/6 class from PLFNS this year. These youth joined us in knowledge exchanging field trips to the Food Forest. As part of this, students from PLFNS and Scotsburn Elementary worked together on new signs, adding Mi'kmaq words for native plants along with QR codes for pronunciation.



## NORTHUMBERLAND REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

We engaged with NRHS's Agriculture 11 class as they move towards producing food on school grounds for their lunch program. We hosted a hands-on learning field trip in June, and Ash Allan joined us as our Youth Change Maker guest at our Propagation Workshop. Students left with edible transplants, inspiration and knowledge to apply to the food forest learning space they are now installing at their school.



# Addressing Food Security in our Community



**Our Harvest Share Stand:**  
"Take what you need, leave what you can. This free food is for everyone!"

Thanks to support from Nourish Nova Scotia and the Province of Nova Scotia's Community Access and Literacy Fund, we've been able to provide free local food at our knowledge shares and workshops this year. And, in our free food stand, we supplement harvests from the Food Forest with produce purchased from local farms. We've also matched volunteer harvesters with local gardens that have a surplus of food to share in the stand. Lots of moving parts as we learn along the way, but all of it leading to more healthy local food in local bellies!



# COMMUNITY EDUCATION

We hosted nine community workshops and knowledge share gatherings this year, drawing a total of 150 learners. Over the winter, we offered the Backyard Food Forest Series online and a Winter Sowing session. In April, Charles Williams, long-time permaculture educator and designer, joined us to kick off our in-person spring learning at a well-attended Propagation Workshop. Knowledgeable community members then led a handful of identification walks and classes wrapping up with a permaculture orchard tour and Fruit Tree Support Workshop at our local 100 Folk Farm.

## COMMUNITY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED IN 2024:

- Backyard Food Forest series online
- Winter Sowing
- Propagation Workshop
- Herb Spiral Workshop
- Food Forest Tour and Plant Identification Walk
- Foraging Walk
- Mushroom Identification Walk
- Fermenting
- Fruit Tree and Shrub Support

### HERB SPIRAL WORKSHOP



On June 8th, participants worked together to create a uniquely-shaped raised bed for optimal herb growing. In addition to participants leaving with a thorough understanding of how to create their own and the benefits of this design, the SCFF now has a beautiful herb spiral as a focal point near the Harvest Share Stand!

# FEEDBACK FROM LEARNERS

"A HUGE day today with Scotsburn Community Food Forest . Charles Williams joined us to lead a plant propagation workshop. Sooooo much valuable knowledge. Sooooo many new cuttings going out into the community. Soooo much yummy local food into the bellies of inspired humans. I am deeply grateful for this Mi'kma'ki land that I am rooting into and caring for."

-Newcomer to Scotsburn

"What a great day, and a wonderful turnout. Thanks to all who organized this and brought in plant material to practice on. The food was an amazing bonus! I'm grateful for the opportunity to learn and enjoy the programs offered. This community punches way above its size when it comes to its heart!"

-Scotsburn resident workshop participant

"Reconnecting with Mother Earth can start with plants. Saturday ... April 20th I spent the day with the Scotsburn Community Food Forest to learn about propagation of food forest inclusions of trees, shrubs, herbs; some medicinal, some food. Surrounded by 24 other participants, all plant enthusiasts of varying experience levels, we all learned something, ate great food, laughed and shared stories. Knitting a web. More communities need to empower themselves and take their open spaces back to grow food for humans or fodder. There could even be potential for your food forest to make money for itself, and grow a small income for local producers. In community: together we can! Wela'lin. Grateful for all my relations: Msit No'kmaq"

-Visiting workshop participant



# SUPPORTING POLLINATORS

One of our goals is to demonstrate ways to support pollinators and educate community on why this is so important. Our Food Forest incorporates a diversity of native plants and other nectar sources that bloom throughout the season. We leave decomposing plant material in place, knowing this becomes shelter for overwintering pollinators. Pollinators carry out a vital ecological role on Earth: they reproduce plants that grow our food, protect our soils and more. Creating supportive habitat helps them do their job!



In 2023 we became a Butterflyway garden as part of The Butterflyway Project under the David Suzuki Foundation. Local Butterflyway Ranger, Annie Ferguson, is taking the lead on educating and creating pollinator zones throughout Scotsburn and beyond! Annie will be working with students in the winter and spring of 2025 to install Scotsburn Elementary's pollinator garden, a process that was ignited by students seed saving from the Food Forest this fall!



## MONARCH WAYSTATION

In 2021, with the help of students from Scotsburn Elementary and volunteer community members, we became an official Monarch Waystation under Monarch Watch. By providing milkweed (essential to the life cycle of the monarch butterfly), nectar plants and shelter throughout their cycle of reproduction and migration, we hope to help assure the continuation of the endangered monarch's migration in North America. After observing 20+ monarchs in our Food Forest in 2022, unfortunately we have not spotted any since then. Each year we harvest and share swamp milkweed seeds with individuals and other initiatives supporting monarchs and pollinators in general.





## SEED SAVING

Seed saving has been a meaningful element of our project over the first five years, fostering biodiversity, community connection and education. This year we harvested an abundance of annual and perennial vegetable and pollinator-friendly flower seeds.

Seed packet bundles are being developed by Annie with educational information for those wanting to seed their own pollinator gardens. This is being explored as a form of future fundraising for the project.

Raina presented at the Atlantic Seed Gathering, a regional conference on seed security, in Tatamagouche at the end of November. She shared the story of how and why seed saving is an important part of the project.



Saving seeds with Scotsburn Elementary students this fall.



# Inaugural Garden Party Fundraiser!

Five years of collaborative growth were celebrated with fantastic hats, amazing food and teas and locally-sourced door prizes galore! Our speakers highlighted a community leaning into resilience and showcasing what's possible. Funds raised will support the ongoing operations and programming of our project in 2025. Our thanks to a long list of donors, ticket purchasers, musicians and amazing volunteers!

## Teas and more!

---

This year community members harvested, dried and blended a selection of herbal teas from the Food Forest. We now have these herbal tea blends available for purchase along with SCFF totes, badges, seeds and pins. All funds from sales go towards the coordination and operations of this project.



# FROM LAWN TO BIODIVERSE ECOSYSTEM



2020



2023



2024



Painting event with local artist at the Food Forest



**LEARN MORE  
AND JOIN US!**

**[WWW.SCOTSBURNFOODFOREST.COM](http://WWW.SCOTSBURNFOODFOREST.COM)**

