

APRIL 2016

earthday

a special supplement to **yellowknifer**

MAKING
YOUR OWN
SEED PLANTERS

LANDFILL
TO EXPAND -
RECYCLING SAVES SPACE

ELECTRIC CAR
FOR GNWT

NWT FRESH FISH
CAMPAIGN PROMOTES

EATING
LOCAL





photo courtesy of the Department of Public Works and Services

This 2015 Chevrolet Volt fully electric car is now part of the fleet with the territorial government's Public Works Department. The department took over the lease from Arctic Energy Alliance on March 31. The alliance has used the vehicle for the past year and a half to get to and from its home energy audits in and around Yellowknife.

Electric car added to GNWT fleet

Arctic Energy Alliance used Chevy Volt for the past year and a half; official says it worked like a charm and reduced organization's carbon footprint

by John McFadden
Northern News Services

The territorial government has added a new vehicle to its fleet and no, it is not a gas-guzzling pickup truck. On March 31, the GNWT took over the lease from Arctic Energy Alliance of a 2015 Chevrolet Volt,

fully electric car. Louie Azzolini, executive director of the alliance, said after about a year and a half using the vehicle, the organization was unhappy to see it go. He added the car had served the organization well but it just didn't have the funding to keep it.

"In town, in the summer, we were pretty well exclusively running on batteries. That has a lot of appeal to an organization that's in the business of reducing greenhouse gas emissions," Azzolini said. "The technology of the vehicle is second to none."

Azzolini said there is still a charging station at Arctic Energy Alliance, meaning that if an electric car was driven into Yellowknife and needed charging, it could be done there. The car was put to good use in the year and a half or so the organization

had it, said Azzolini.

"We do home-energy audits and used it to do those in and around Yellowknife," Azzolini said. "We also took it on a promotional trip south of Great Slave Lake. We got into almost every community south of the lake that we could access. People loved it. The idea that you could run a car on electricity is pretty mind-blowing."

Azzolini added the vehicle operates best when the weather is warm.

"(In) wintertime we were running a lot of fuel because the battery had to charge more often. In the winter you get comparable gas mileage to a four cylinder car. The batteries don't last as long and the charge isn't as rich in the winter."

Azzolini said this car is one of two types of electric vehicles available to the public. It is referred to as a plug-in hybrid (PHEV), meaning, like the name suggests, it can be plugged in and therefore is more able to rely on the battery to power the vehicle for longer distances. The vehicle still has a combustion engine or generator to allow for long-range driving, said Azzolini.

This particular vehicle's internal combustion engine generates electricity for the electric motor and does not mechanically power the vehicle. It can drive on only electricity until the battery is depleted. After that, the engine

will generate the electricity.

"That's the beauty of it. It's engine is not a power train, it's a charge train," Azzolini said. "The engine is the generator and when your battery starts running low - the car already knows this so it turns on the generator which charges your battery. It uses the least amount of fuel it can use."

The other type of electric vehicles are known as hybrid electric vehicles or HEVs. They are essentially gasoline powered vehicles that use the battery to help with fuel efficiency, according to Azzolini.

He said that by helping introduce the NWT driving public to this electric car, he is optimistic people have seen its benefits. He said he knows of only two other similar electric vehicles in the territory.

Mike Burns, assistant deputy minister of Public Works and Services, said the GNWT funded the car all along and his department has now taken over the lease from Arctic Energy Alliance.

"The vehicle is low mileage and it's in good shape. It'll essentially fulfill the role of a fleet vehicle now," Burns said. "It'll offset the purchase of another vehicle and will replace a vehicle which we will now retire." Burns added that GNWT employees are being trained to operate the vehicle and assessments will eventually be made on the costs involved in driving and maintaining the vehicle.

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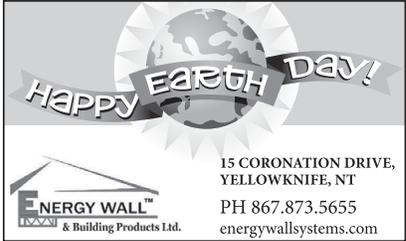
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With a logo, a chance to eat local

GNWT program aimed at improving fishing industry also helps proponents of eating local

by **Shane Magee**
Northern News Services

Those who want to eat locally harvested fish have to look no further than certain grocery store signs and restaurant menus thanks to a GNWT program aimed primarily at boosting the Great Slave Lake fishing industry.

The industry has slowed in recent years, although the department has been undertaking efforts to boost it, including plans for a new fish processing plant in Hay River.

As more people seek ways to eat locally grown or harvested products, the logo launched by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment last year is one way to know where to go when shopping or dining out.

The GNWT began a campaign to brand shop-signs and restaurant menus with NWT Fresh Fish.

Department spokesperson Drew Williams said it's largely aimed at promoting the fishing industry in the territory.

"In essence it comes more from a business side than from a healthy eating and Earth side, although they're all sort of wrapped in there together," he said.

The logo indicates the fish has been caught in Great Slave Lake by fishermen in the area.

"You're getting a product that is fresh out of the lake," Williams said, adding that the lake is full of the best tasting fish in Western Canada.

Those that use the logo include the Yellowknife Co-op, Luluz Market and Great Slave Fish Products.

Dale Bardeau at The Cellar Bar and Grill said the restaurant has patrons that specifically come in to dine on the freshly harvested, pan fried whitefish.

While the current menu doesn't have the logo, he said the restaurant does have people who ask about fresh fish – particularly tourists.

"I get tons of people coming in here looking for fresh, local fish and bison as well," he said. "I'd prefer to purchase from within the city if at all possible with a lot of my stuff but unfortunately I do have to source it from down south for things like pickerel. The whitefish will always be local."

Tracy Therrien, general manager of the Northern Frontier Visitors Centre, said while not many visitors coming through their doors ask about where to get fresh fish, when they do, employees direct them to restaurants or locations that offer it.

"We cannot promote our fish enough. Any opportunity we have to promote our fish is great," Therrien said.

The visitors centre will be using Great Slave Lake whitefish for its Great Northern Shore Lunch Cook-Off on June 4. The event is a fundraiser for the centre.



Shane Magee/NNS, photo

Jeff Kincaid, business development manager at the Yellowknife Co-op, rearranges the store's display of fresh fish. The store is one of the organizations that takes advantage of the territorial government's NWT Fresh Fish campaign.



Get in touch with **Kieron Testart**
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City's landfill to expand this year



The city's landfill is set to expand this year at a projected cost of \$3.5 million. Recycling can save space for waste that should be in the landfill, extending its expected lifespan.

Changes to recycling this past year includes electronics recycling, construction material diversion

by Shane Magee

Northern News Services

The past year has marked a shift in several aspects of recycling in the city, from a new way to reuse construction materials to the GNWT's electronics recycling system.

No matter the changes, those running the city's landfill say everything diverted is money saved.

"Everything you throw away has a cost to it," said Wendy Alexander, manager of public works and engineering, in a recent interview.

Electronics once taken to the landfill now go to The Bottle Shop on Old Airport road for free to be recycled.

The change came this year as the GNWT began an electronics recycling program, which includes fees when buying certain items like televisions. The fees are intended to cover the cost of the program.

Items accepted include computers, printers, monitors and batteries – although not vehicle batteries.

Electronics are diverted because when left in a landfill or just dumped outside and exposed to the elements, the items can leach harmful chemicals.

Recycling helps not only reuse materials but also helps the pocketbooks of city taxpayers.

"It does cost a lot of money to build a new landfill cell," Alexander said, adding that dealing with waste is a large expense for the city.

Landfill expansion coming

This year, construction will take place to expand the city's landfill. At the end of March, a tender was issued for construction of a new landfill cell,

which is estimated to cost \$3.5 million, half paid for from federal Gas Tax funds.

The landfill uses a bailing system for the garbage that compacts it, saving space.

Landfill cells these days are built to contain any runoff that flows through the garbage.

Once a cell fills up it is capped and various other steps are taken, such as monitoring for landfill gas.

The gas is the byproduct of the breakdown of materials in the landfill and can be explosive.

Requirements for the new cell include groundwater monitoring wells upstream and downstream to ensure the liners are working. Those wells are included in the project cost.

The cell is projected to last five years, then a new cell will be needed to take in the city's waste.

The amount diverted from the landfill in 2014 was up just slightly – from 16.1 to 16.4 per cent.

While not a huge increase, Alexander said any waste that can be diverted by recycling will help extend the landfill's lifespan.

In 2014, the most recent year data is available, the city shipped 3,386.72 metric tonnes of material south for recycling.

However, Alexander cautioned that figure is inflated because of a large shipment of steel, making up 2,151 metric tonnes of the total.

The remainder was 1,128 tonnes of paper and plastic, 47 tonnes of electronic waste, 20 tonnes of hazardous waste and 39 tonnes of batteries.

Construction materials accepted

Also new since Earth Week last year is the Habitat for Humanity ReStore facility near the landfill, which accepts construction material that is sold. The profit is used to help fund future Habitat projects.

The city hands out awards in recognition of those who have made an extra special effort to recycle.

Last year, those awards went to Lee Gresty at Mildred Hall School, Lindy Carpenter, the Ecole St. Joseph School Recyclers, a group of four Range Lake North School students, St. Patrick High School's life skills class, and Kim McKnight and the Green Team at N.J. Macpherson School.

The city was expected to hand out awards on Wednesday at the Earth Week Solid Waste Public Forum at city hall.

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Pre-Consumer Waste includes manufacturing waste from envelope converters, binderies, and printed paper that never reached the consumer. Although the material is being recycled, it was not originally destined for a landfill as it had not reached the end user; it was already in the manufacturer's best interest to reuse the material from the perspective of good business sense.

The Möbius Loop, the three arrow symbol, is the most well known icon of the recycling movement. It is, however, not monitored by any organization. Due to its recognizability, forest certification programs usually offer label variations where any recycled content can be indicated in a möbius loop. In terms of commonly accepted usage of the möbius loop, a paper must contain recovered materials. The amount may vary considerably, from small percentages of pre consumer waste to 100% post consumer waste.

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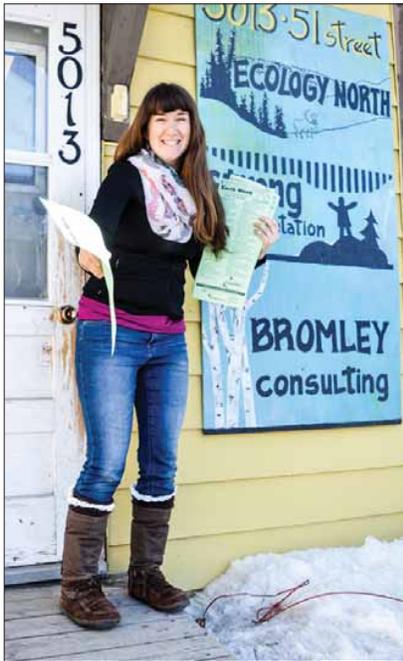
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Earth Week events abundant

Ecology North is hosting a range of activities through Sunday



Dawn Tremblay, the project officer for Ecology North, holds the schedule for last year's Earth Week.

by Jessica Phillips
Northern News Services

Ecology North is marking Earth Week with a week's worth of events that run through Sunday.

Dawn Tremblay, the project officer for Ecology North, says all events are free but donations are kindly appreciated.

"We (were set to kick it) off with our annual fish fry and we are finishing up the week on the weekend with our big coffee house," Tremblay said. "In between, we have everything from movie nights to a bike tune-up event, a clothing swap and a solid waste forum."

She said there will also be a silent auction and a live auction.

Tremblay said there is a lot to look forward to for Earth Week, not just the events.

"First of all it happens in the spring so it gives us the opportunity to look forward to the changing season and celebrate the Earth and reflect on the impact that we have on our planet whether it's positive or negative," she said. "And things we can change or behaviours we can celebrate and share with each other."

She said climate change is something people have come

to recognize and that people have to start taking seriously.

"It's a topic that often we end up feeling bad about because we don't know what we can do and it seems a little out of our hands," she said.

"But I think Earth Week is an important chance to remember there is something each and every one of us can do about it."

She said people will have to adapt to climate change – the effects of which are more visible in the North.

"This winter has been really mild but there are also species that are changing," she said. "We know it's happening and so I think it's just a matter of finding ways and

pressuring our governments to make policies that will protect our environment into the future."

What she is most looking forward to about this week is watching people have fun at all the events.

"The coffee house always brings out a lot of people because it's really family friendly," she said. "It's always good to see people sharing and learning and enjoying themselves."

Coffee house marks 45th

The coffee house is at Northern United Place on Saturday between 6:30 and 9:30 p.m., and marks Ecology North's 45th birthday.

Yellowknife resident Bill Hill has been to about two or three Earth Week celebrations in his life.

"Earth Week is important to help create a better consciousness of the environment," said Hill.

He said he might attend some of the events for this year's Earth Week.

"I don't celebrate Earth Week by doing anything in particular," Hill said. "Because turning off the light when you leave the room, not running the water ... are things I am already doing."

"I guess the main purpose of Earth Week is to reach the people who don't already do that."

In 2014, houses in Range Lake received Curbside Organics Collection. Service expanded to Old Town, Niven & School Draw Avenue in 2015.

Since then, the Curbside Organics Collection Program has diverted over 164 tonnes of organics from landfill!

This compost is then used by the City and sold to local gardeners to make Yellowknife even more beautiful and to grow food.

This Fall, single family dwellings in Frame Lake, Grace Lake and Hall Crescent will be getting Green Carts!

To make this program a success, we all need to work together!

Just a small amount of contamination can effect the quality of Yellowknife's compost.

Look for these symbols when choosing bags:

Use only compostable bags and paper bags in your Green Cart and Kitchen Catcher.

Plastic, biodegradable and oxo-biodegradable bags don't break down into compost.

Visit yellowknife.ca to learn more about how to use your Green Cart.

The average Yellowknife home produces 185 kgs of organic material per single family household per year. It's been estimated that 40% of garbage can be composted.* Right now, participating households are at 25%.

*Garner Lee Waste Audit, 2007

NAPEG Office, Council and the Environment Committee challenge other offices and committees in the Northwest Territories to make their environment greener.

We made these easy changes and you can, too!

- Turn off lights when a room is not in use
- Reuse the same mug for coffee/tea/water
- Recycle paper, glass, plastic and cans
- Use only washable dishes and stainless steel cutlery
- Compost food that is appropriate for composting (*no meat or dairy*)
- Only print paper documents when absolutely necessary
- Attempt to conduct paperless meetings
- Purchase appliances and electronics that are certified energy efficient
- Use water jugs and washable glasses (*instead of plastic bottles*)

Happy Earth Day 2016
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Ecology North | April 18-24, 2016

EARTH WEEK Celebration

►MONDAY, APRIL 18

Fish Fry

In front of the Post Office (Franklin Ave.), Noon-1:00pm

Think Global; Eat Local! Join us for some tasty Great Slave Lake fish and some spring sunshine.

Bike Tune-up

Somba K'e Civic Plaza, 5:00pm-7:00pm

Gear-up for summer by giving your cranky and tired bike a good tune-up!

►TUESDAY, APRIL 19

Food Charter 101

Library Meeting room, Noon-1:00pm

What is a Food Charter? Did you know that Yellowknife has one? Come learn all about it!

Film Night Amnesty International:

We call them Intruders

Northern United Place (NUP) Auditorium, 7:30pm-9:00pm

We call them Intruders: Financing Canadian Mining in Africa, takes a hard look at why communities, governments and corporations are often pitted against each other over mining, plus solutions for the average Canadian.

►WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20

Carbon Tax 101

Somba K'e Plaza (Ecology North office if raining.) Noon-1:00pm

A carbon tax for the NWT! Is it a good idea? How would it work? Is this the best approach to tackle greenhouse gas emissions in the NWT? Come learn and add your voice to this debate.

Annual Downtown

Litter Pick-up

Meet at Javaroma, 5:00pm

Time for some spring-cleaning! Bags, gloves, and vests will be provided. Free coffee or tea for all participants.

Solid Waste Forum

City Hall Council Chambers, 7:00pm-9:00pm

Join the City of Yellowknife for an informative and fun environmental-focused evening including an awards ceremony and waste management presentations.

►THURSDAY, APRIL 21

Monitoring Your Power Bills

Arctic Energy Alliance (AEA), 5102 51st Street Noon-1:00pm

Bring your utility bills and learn to interpret them with a representative from Arctic Energy Alliance.

Bilingual Bash : Soirée Bilingue

Film Night L'Association Franco-Culturelle de Yellowknife (AFCY) : En quête de sens NUP Auditorium, 7:00pm-9:00pm

Come see two films in two languages! First the animated short *The Oldest Stone/La Plus Vieille Pierre*. Followed by the feature length French film, with English subtitles and interviews.

En quête de sens est une invitation à reconsidérer notre rapport à la nature, au bonheur et au sens de la vie. (Travelogue style film inviting us to reconsider our relationship to nature, happiness, and the meaning of life.)



All events are FREE. Donations are kindly accepted.

ECOLOGY NORTH CONTACT INFO:

5013 51st Street (beside the Tree of Peace), Yellowknife
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- Kopykat North
- Yellowknife Book Cellar
- Associated Environmental Consultants Inc.



►THURSDAY, APRIL 21 Cont'd

Earth Week Swap

Library Meeting room, 7:00pm-8:00pm

Bring your garden things like seeds, books, and equipment to trade for something new to you! (Not a donation station.)

►FRIDAY, APRIL 22

Solar Power

Greenstone Building (Outside in the back by the solar panels), Noon - 1:00pm

Did you know Yellowknife is one of the sunniest cities in Canada! Get on the solar wagon, learn about net-metering, solar buying collectives, and saving money on your power bill!

Film Night Ecology North: Polyfaces

Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (PWNHC aka the museum), 6:30pm-8:30pm

Polyfaces: A World of Many Choices explores a style of farming that will help save humanity! A joyful film about connecting to the land and the community. It follows the Salatin family as they produce food in a way that works with nature, not against it.

►SATURDAY, APRIL 23

Compost 4 kids!

NUP, 9:00am-10:00am

Great event for kids aged 5 to 10. Compost-themed story-time, worms and games for kid-friendly fun! Bring your parents.

Pre-loved Clothing Swap

NUP, 10:00am-Noon

Keep clothes out of the landfill by giving them away to a good home! Men, women, and children's clothes are all accepted provided they are clean and in good shape.

Make Your Own!

NUP, 10:30am-12:30pm

Have you ever wondered how to make your own laundry detergent, deodorant or soap? Come check it out, and try it out. Une collaboration avec l'AFCY. Vient fabriquer vos propres produits ménagers! Materials provided. Maximum 30 people, first come first serve.

Ecology North Coffee House and Auction

NUP, 6:30pm-9:30pm

Celebrate Ecology North's 45th birthday at our annual fundraising event! Family fun and entertainment for everyone. Great silent and live auction items await you.

►SUNDAY, APRIL 24

Respect the Land

PWNHC, 2:00pm-4:00pm

A collaboration with Dene Nahjo to highlight indigenous perspectives on respecting the land, and storytelling with an elder.



ECOLOGY NORTH



Joyce Gilchrist led a workshop for the Yellowknife Gardening Collective earlier this month on how to grow tomatoes.

Raising tomatoes in Yellowknife

Gardening collective holds planting workshop at library

by Evan Kiyoshi French
Northern News Services

Joyce Gilchrist says gardeners are getting set to take advantage of the little arable soil available in the city to grow their own tomatoes.

The volunteer teacher for the Yellowknife Gardening Collective gave a workshop on tomato seed planting at the library early April, where 16 attendees learned to plant and raise their own

Red Alert tomatoes – a type of short-season tomato which grows from seeds produced at Veseys Seeds in Prince Edward Island. Gilchrist said the fast-growing orbs do well in Yellowknife.

"It's a bush tomato but it does well even outdoors in Yellowknife," said Gilchrist. "It takes longer of course than it would in a greenhouse."

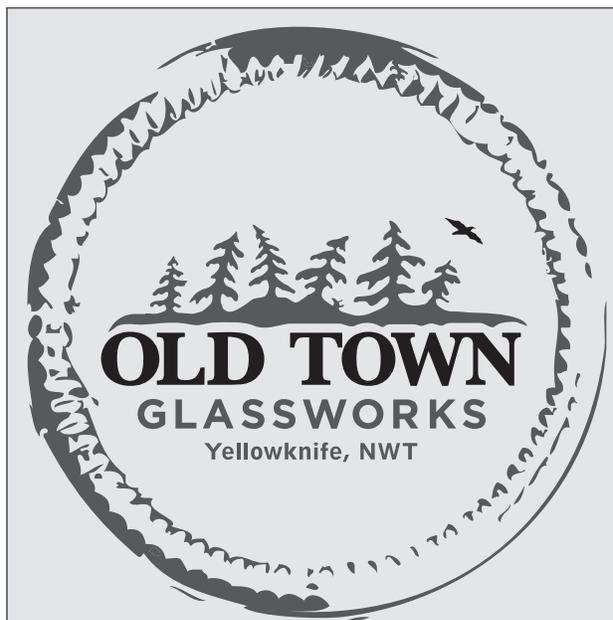
Gilchrist says she grew up in the rural Maritimes

and moved to Yellowknife in 1989.

"We lived in a little rented house on School Draw (Avenue) when we first came to Yellowknife, and there was a little area there that I could start putting a garden in, so I started the first year we came," she said.

Gardening was a big deal for residents in the early days

Please see 'Serious', page 8



What's old becomes new again

'It's good soil,' says one city councillor of program that collects food scraps and resells as compost

by **Evan Kiyoshi French**
Northern News Services

Reducing input at the landfill and making best use of the city's organic waste are the chief reasons the city is working toward a complete rollout of its composting program in 2017, according to one city councillor.

Niels Konge told *Yellowknife* running the landfill is costly and expanding it in the future will be even more expensive, so any program that takes pressure off Yellowknife's dump is a boon.

"Anything that can reduce our garbage flow into the dump is a good thing," said Konge. "Dumps are not cheap to operate and they're not cheap to expand and it certainly doesn't make a lot of sense to put all of our organic material into a dump."

Wendy Alexander, acting as the city's director of public works, said the first two phases of a four-year, phased program starting in 2014 offering compost bins and pick-up services to residents have already rolled out in the Range Lake, Niven-Old Town and School Draw areas. She said phase three will roll out the program to Frame Lake, Grace Lake and Hull Crescent with the rest of the downtown and phase four will bring any other single family homes on board in 2017.

"In September and October green bins are delivered with an information package on the dates of collection and what's put in the green bins," she said.

The city's Green Cart Handout, which describes the items suitable for composting in the green bins lists food scraps including meat, bones and dairy products, as well as soiled napkins, used tissues and pizza boxes among acceptable items.

Alexander said residents don't pay. The green bins are provided by the city as part of the program, she said. When bins are collected the contents go to the city's solid waste facility for processing. Alexander said the product goes on sale on June 6 – from 12

a.m. to 5 p.m. – at the solid waste facility.

"The compost sale is the finished product. So the green bin collects all of your organic waste and the final product we then sell for use in your gardens," she said. "And it's class-A compost – it's the highest quality you can get, because we're only putting high quality organics into the process."

Konge says he is no gardener – and has never purchased any of the city's compost at the annual sales – but has heard good things.

"Apparently it's good soil," he said.

Alexander said residents need to bring their own containers and the compost is generally sold in one of three quantities. She said the prices for this year's sale will be determined closer to the date but last year residents bought 15-litre pails of compost for \$3.50, 90 litre garbage cans for \$21 and purchased cubic yards for \$80 each.

She said she could not recall how much compost was sold by the city last year, but almost all of it went.

"Usually there's not much left at the end of the sale period," she said.

"Dumps are not cheap to operate."

Niels Konge



Peter Houweling, superintendent of the Yellowknife Solid Waste Facility, displays the 120-litre organic waste cart, 240-litre trash cart and the kitchen-catcher organic waste bucket being distributed by the city in 2014.

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'Serious about gardening'

Raising, from page 6

after the city was founded, said Gilchrist. She said she has seen photographs of Fritz Thiel Park when it was a community garden. Gardens were also lovingly tended at Con Mine and elsewhere in the city, she said.

"Certainly from the pictures we see it looks like the people in those days were serious about gardening," she said. "And I can see why, it was a lot harder to get fresh food up in those days."

These days good food is

not cheap or nearby, and Gilchrist said anything residents can do to produce food with the land available would be of benefit.

"I think the fact that we're able to grow food locally and not have it shipped from many miles with trucks or planes or whatever, that does a bit for our environment right there," she said. "But, I think also the fact that we can grow it organically and know what we're putting into the soil. It's really healthy. A lot of the food that comes in, it has pesticides. Most of it is

healthy I know but it's kind of nice to have fresh organic food to eat."

Fiona McGregor, a board member with the collective who helped Gilchrist teach the planting workshop, said the group has been offering the session for the past three years. She said she and Gilchrist were teaching people to make biodegradable seed-planters with scraps of old newsprint.

McGregor said the collective manages planting in more than 200 plots around the city. Gilchrist said attendees

left the workshop with plans to plant their budding tomato plants near their homes.

"What we're suggesting they do is to plant them in big pots and put them on their decks or put them in sheltered pails they can find. Or find a sunny corner near their house," she said.

15-year-old Luke Heal said he thought the newspaper pots were "pretty neat."

Heal said he has gardened before and enjoys it.

"I like being able to spend time outside," he said. "I like growing my own food."



Sean Kipathi/Frederic/NISL photo

Luke Heal, 15, works on a tomato seed planter fashioned out of scrap newspaper during a tomato planting seminar at the library earlier this month, run by the Yellowknife Community Garden Collective.



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