

COYOTE LAKE LODGE GARDENS AND ORCHARDS 2019 - END OF YEAR NEWS



NOVEMBER 13, 2019 was a big day in that we made our final 400 lb contribution of potatoes to the Leduc and District Food Bank. Food banks that also received part of our estimated 4,000 lb of vegetables included the Edmonton Food Bank, Garneau/Strathcona Food Security, and the Youth Empowerment & Support Services (YESS). Two tons of vegetables may not seem like much but this was a contribution to 16,000 meal servings!

We started a small garden in 2015 on the areas where the former inmates grew mostly potatoes. Then over the next two years we planted raspberries, rhubarb, and horse radish - but we were at the mercy of marauding elk, deer, and moose. Late in the gardening season of 2018 our neighbours constructed a fence around our south garden. The vegetables were saved! 2019 was a special year with the North Garden and Fruit Orchard expanded to a total of over 2 acres, planted, and fenced. As with all gardeners, we look forward to increased yields next year when the elk will stay out of the gardens so the raspberries, currants, and other berries will start to produce. In another few years, the apples, pears, cherries, and plums will add to the variety of produce for lodge programming and food banks.

How will we operate with the increasing workloads? As you know, we operate exclusively with volunteers who are dedicated to lodge programming and contributing to food banks, New Canadians, and other social societies. Hopefully, there will be volunteer and financial support from social groups, as well as seniors and persons with a disability. We recognize with thanks the generous supporters over the past four years who bought the property, plowed and rototilled the soil, built fences, planted, weeded, irrigated, and finally harvested and distributed the produce. Of special mention are the Gilbert, Petrie, Scragg, and Wein families – but many individuals enjoyed the fun-in-the-sun with good humour. The future is bright, especially since we just purchased a small garden tractor and attachments that will replace much of the hand labour!

COYOTE LAKE LODGE GARDENS AND ORCHARDS GOALS FOR 2020

General Goals:

All is set for meeting our mandate of reducing poverty that is part of our society and charity visions. Assuming the weather cooperates, generous volunteers contribute labour and ideas, and machinery (tractor and implements) continues to reduce labour, more produce will be delivered to food banks and be used in garden-to-table programming at the lodge. Specific goals follow:

Fruit shrubs:

- With fences in place around expanded gardens, we will extend rows of raspberries, currants, and rhubarb.
- Weekly weeding and irrigating will continue as needed.
- Planting of strawberries will be expanded.

Vegetables:

- Staggered time plantings through the growing season will give a longer season of harvests for food banks.

Fruit trees:

- Replace any winter-killed trees.
- Weed, prune, and irrigate as needed.
- Fencing needs to be upgraded.
- We will attempt to attract an apiarist to place beehives inside our orchard fence.

Programs:

- We will welcome volunteers and will cooperate with partners, agencies, and group homes so persons can benefit by the pleasure of working outdoors.
- Weekly produce will be transported to food banks in last summer and autumn.
- Freezing, canning, and other processing fruit and vegetables events will be scheduled during the summer and autumn.