

Welcome to Session One of the **Durham Agricultural Commission's Food Friendly Yards Winter email course**. This first installment aims to inspire your imagination for what your property can become once you begin to use it as a place to grow food and forage for humans and wildlife.

Traditionally our yards have been settings for our houses. Our landscaping designed for "curb appeal", populated by ornamental plants and shrubbery. But, we can use our land more productively by making different choices about our plantings and about how we treat our soil. Growing organically without chemical fertilizers and pesticides, limiting the amount of lawn we maintain, and aligning our growing practices with nature are ways to improve plant diversity, aide beneficial insects and pollinators, and create a healthier landscape for everything to enjoy.

This week there are 4 videos chosen to explore the ways we can change our yards. The first, shows the difference between a typical suburban yard and one right next door designed as a wildlife and pollinator habitat with vegetables tucked in. The second "Homegrown Revolution" presents a rationale for joining the many who are using their land as a food source. The third, is a montage of many design options for small scale gardening and the fourth, filmed in the Netherlands, shows what can be grown in a very small space using a "Food Forest" approach. There is also a link to an article about "permaculture", a philosophy for life and gardening that promotes using nature as a guide. Two books that are useful: **Gaia's Garden** by Toby Hemenway, a guide to home-scale permaculture, and **Landscaping with Fruit** by Lee Reich.

Future emails will elaborate on the ideas and techniques presented in these first videos. They will explore Site Selection, Soil Development, Bed Design and Planting Options, Edible Landscaping, Backyard Livestock and more.

Finally, I'd like to introduce myself Ellen Karelitz and my fellow commissioner on the Durham Agricultural Commission, Bryan Cassidy. We are working together to present this information.

Ellen Karelitz has lived in Durham for 25+ years and taught at Moharimet Elementary School as well as serving as a literacy consultant at UNH. She is a floral designer, Master Gardener and serves on the Wagon Hill Community Garden Steering Committee, and on the Board of Seacoast Permaculture.

Bryan Cassidy, recently joined the Durham Agricultural Commission. Bryan, of the Piscataqua Watershed, finds rhythm within the changing seasons while gardening, paddling, cider pressing, cross country skiing, maple sugaring, and the continued making of daily living. A neighbor, an uncle, a community member.

Two Suburban Front Yards: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0FYpobb9p0>

Homegrown Revolution: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUlwHEp937o>

Design Montage: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xpUnitjdKZ0>

Food Forest Garden: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l294zaoLgoA>

Quick Guide to Permaculture:

<https://www.organicsociety.co/a-quick-guide-to-sustainable-gardening-through-permaculture/>

Happy New Year and Thanks for your interest!