



# 2019 Fractal Farm Season Report

Prepared for Britannia Community Services Centre



## 2019 Fractal Farm Season Report

On behalf of the volunteers, staff, and owners of Fractal Farm, we wish to acknowledge the Coast Salish land upon which our market operates, and the Stó:lō land upon which we grow vegetables. Without this connection to the land, none of this farm would be possible. We also wish to thank our partners at the Britannia Community Services Society. It is through the generous support of Britannia, and its commitment to food security, that our third year has been our most successful year thus far.

We present this report of our collaboration for your consideration. It has been prepared with the intention of informing the Britannia community on the successes of the 2019 growing season. We welcome the dissemination of this report to wherever you see fit. We are also available to answer further questions, present this report orally, and provide more specific information per your request.

Finally, given the successes that this collaboration has present to both the Britannia community and to our farm, we propose that we continue our collaboration into the 2020 growing season.

With gratitude,



Piotr Majkowski

With gratitude,



Daniel Edmond

### Highlights

- An estimated 120 households were provided with free, low cost, or full cost local, sustainable, nutritious foods.
- Britannia's food programs were provided \$2,737.22 worth of food at no cost.
- Attention was paid to ensure the dignity of food recipients and the larger community.
- The support of Britannia Community Centre in many cases "saved the day" but also supported the farm's operations throughout the season.
- Thanks to the support of Britannia Community Centre, Fractal Farm will be able to continue to support the local community in new and innovative ways.

## Food Distributed to Greater Britannia Community

Ethical food costs more to produce than the conventional standard, but this does not mean that sustainably produced, nutritious food should be out of reach of those who need it most. That’s why we have committed to the multiple methods of food distribution that are described below.



### Subsidized Direct Distribution

In order to ensure that the farm’s produce is available to everyone, we asked our CSA members to contribute to a fund that would provide food to the community. We raised \$1,250 in this way. Over the course of the year, the farm added an additional \$1,487.22 to this fund, in order to provide \$2,737.22 worth of vegetables to the Britannia Community Centre. Rather than seeing the food itself as a charitable donation (which in many cases means that community members are left with “sloppy seconds”), we see this as food sold at cost. This raises the quality of the food provided and the dignity of the recipients. It also means that the farm is having some of the production cost subsidized, allowing us to maintain and expand this program.

### Food Provided to Britannia Community Centre

| Item         | Unit    | Amount | Item         | Unit    | Amount | Item        | Unit | Amount |
|--------------|---------|--------|--------------|---------|--------|-------------|------|--------|
| Cucumbers    | ea      | 215    | Tomatoes     | pints   | 54     | Peppers     | lb   | 23.8   |
| Herbs/Spices | bunches | 166    | Asian Greens | bunches | 45     | Cabbage     | lb   | 20     |
| Light Greens | lb      | 116.5  | Mushrooms    | Bag     | 37     | Eggplants   | ea   | 11     |
| Zucchini     | ea      | 102    | Squash       | lb      | 35     | Beans       | Lb   | 8      |
| Root Bunches | bunches | 95     | Potatoes     | lb      | 33.44  | Watermelons | ea   | 4      |
| Heavy Greens | bunches | 88     | Peas         | pint    | 24     | Broccoli    | ea   | 1      |

### Community Supported Agriculture Box

Community Supported Agriculture, or CSA, is an innovative approach that supports the farmer and the community. CSA members purchase a weekly vegetable box from the farm for the entire season. This takes much of the risk out of the equation for the farm, meaning that we can focus on growing rather than marketing. In a market model, if the weather is particularly bad or particularly good, people may be less likely to visit the market and as such vegetables may be wasted. This is not the case with CSA, which is good for the farm and the sustainability of food production. In return, the CSA box is

the cheapest way to get local and sustainable vegetables. It means that healthy produce becomes accessible to more people, and not just based on their income.

*Facts About the Fractal Farm CSA Box*

|                             |        |                          |                                    |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Total CSA Members           | 55     | Top 3 Favourite Products | Strawberries,<br>Tomatoes, Garlic  |
| Average Member Household    | 2.39   | Top 3 Unliked Products   | Fava Beans,<br>Turnips, Tomatillos |
| Overall Satisfaction Rating | 4.7/5  |                          |                                    |
| Vegetables Quality Rating   | 93.33% |                          |                                    |

Market

Fractal Farm operated 18 public markets in the main plaza at Britannia Community Services Centre. The market offers most flexibility to the community, allowing any amount of vegetables to be purchased based on availability. Because of this flexibility, it is difficult to estimate how many households were able to gain access to how much food. We do know that a roughly similar amount of food moved through the market as the CSA. Since the CSA fed 55 households, we can estimate that an equivalent number of households were fed by the market.



## Non-Food Community Impacts

Non-food impacts are difficult to measure for the farm, because food systems vary widely. While we know what our farm contributes generally, there's no "average" method of food consumption, and so no benchmark to measure against. The following are key ways that our farm contributes to the community.

- Smaller scale growing allows for closer attention to sustainability and respect for the earth
- Local food security has been strengthened through increased knowledge and capacity in food production and distribution
- Local production has reduced the carbon impact of food consumption
- Local food culture has been strengthened by the presence of a local producer, who is ready to answer questions and teach
- Children in the area have had an opportunity to learn about farming and food markets
- Access to local vegetables means access to fresh vegetables – fresh vegetables tend to be tastier and hence displace unhealthy options
- Various volunteer opportunities have been provided to the community
- One intern and one staff member was hired for the summer, strengthening the local economy

## Britannia Community Centre Making Things Possible

Thanks to the supports provided by the Britannia Community Centre, the growth and development of Fractal Farm was made possible. On behalf of the people receiving vegetables, our volunteers, staff, and the owners, we gratefully acknowledge and give thanks to Britannia for providing the following invaluable support:

- Participating in the Direct Distribution program
- The weekly use of the main plaza to set up the market
- The use of market furniture, including tables and tents
- Support from facilities and front desk staff
- Accommodation of the Fractal Farm fridge trailer
- Guidance and support from Britannia staff, particularly Ian Marcuse

## Lessons & Improvements

For the most part, the collaboration between Britannia Community Services Society and Fractal Farm was remarkably smooth and productive. Two minor items have been identified in our end-of-season analysis for improvement in the coming year:

1. **Set up on Main Plaza.** A community volunteer noted that the market tents were uncomfortably close to some of the trees on the main plaza. We had attempted to be as snug as possible to the South side of the Plaza in order to minimize space. In order to ensure the safety of the trees, we started placing the market tents more centrally in the market, and this was well received. In conjunction to any direction we receive from Britannia, we will attempt to ensure a more central placement for the market tents.
2. **Communication.** At some points in the later season, breakdowns in communication occurred where market tents had been booked for other events, front of desk staff didn't know that the

market day had changed, etc. These were all minor issues and easily resolved. Also, this highlighted that there is a community of people at Britannia who need to know about farm issues, including schedule changes, etc. To ameliorate this, we propose that we create an email list for relevant parties, including: Community Food Developer, Front Desk, Facilities Desk, 55+ program, and any other parties as needed. Emails would be sent to this group to give updates about schedule, set up needs, etc.