

# BOWEN ISLAND FOOD RESILIENCE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Winter 2026

## COMING EVENTS



**February 14<sup>th</sup> Seedy Saturday**  
**10 am - 1 pm**  
**Community Centre**  
Drop by BIFS' tables:  
Farmers' Market  
Permaculture, &  
Soil Magic



**March 15th Seed Sowing Workshop**  
**1 pm - 3:00 Grafton Agricultural Commons**

*Left: : Trays planted at 2025 Workshop*

**April 12<sup>th</sup> BIF AGM**  
**2:00 pm - 3:30 pm**  
**726 Belterra Rd.**

*Right: Enjoying Refreshments at the 2025 AGM*



# GRAFTON AGRICULTURAL COMMONS

Thanks to the dedication and energy of our garden volunteers, Grafton Agricultural Commons enjoyed another rewarding year. Together, we continued building a regenerative agriculture garden rooted in healthy soil and healthy crops.

A major achievement this season was the continued growth of the food forest. What is a food forest? It's an ecosystem that's designed to mimic natural forests while producing food. By incorporating native plants, we're supporting biodiversity and the long-term health and resilience of the garden.



*Left: 2024, the beginnings of the food forest.*

*Below left: 2025, Jackie and Kaz adding to the food forest*

*Below right: Members of First Credit Union creating a fruit tree guild for the food forest*

**You're invited! Drop by the garden any time to see how the food forest has grown!**



Education remains at the heart of our work. This year, we hosted hands-on workshops on seed sowing, soil building, and food forest design using swales and guilds, sharing practical skills and inspiration.

## **Garden Boxes at Grafton Agricultural Commons**

With memories of beautiful sunny weather, it's hard not to start dreaming about the upcoming season in the box garden at Grafton Commons. The 2025 season was truly special, filled with growing, sharing, and reconnecting with old friends. As box holders, many of us volunteered in the main garden under the wonderful leadership of Jackie Bradley, where we continued learning about regenerative growing practices and the magic of creating food forests. Along the way, working side by side, we made plenty of new friends too.

With twenty-six boxes allocated in 2025, it was a delight to watch the garden thrive through everyone's care, energy, and enthusiasm. We are already looking forward to seeing many familiar faces and welcoming new ones at our spring clean-up in early spring, when boxes which aren't already assigned will be allocated for the 2026 season. We can't wait to grow again!

- Jennifer Allen

*Garden Table gathering, August 2025, sharing dishes made from their garden boxes.*



## Farmers' Market

- Ellie & Sophie Walters

As the days grow longer and the soil begins to warm, we're preparing to welcome a new farmers' market season. As sisters and co-managers of the market for the second year, this time of year always feels like a fresh start—bringing new harvests, returning vendors, and renewed energy into our community. The farmers' market is more than a place to shop. It's a weekly gathering space where people connect with the farmers, makers, and producers who grow and create our food. Working closely with local vendors has deepened our appreciation for the care and effort behind every stand, and supporting their livelihoods is one of the most rewarding parts of our role.



*Ellie and Sophie*

Running the market together allows us to balance organization and creativity while staying grounded in the values we grew up with: hard work, collaboration, and community. Each season, we aim to make the market welcoming, inclusive, and engaging for everyone who attends. This year, we're especially excited to create more opportunities for people to linger—whether that means chatting with farmers, bringing children to learn where food comes from, enjoying music or special events, or simply spending time with neighbours. We're grateful to our vendors, volunteers, and shoppers, and we look forward to another season of fresh food, friendly faces, and strong community connections.

## Low Hanging Fruit

Over the course of just three busy weeks in the fall of 2025, our apple-picking efforts took us to 10 different sites and resulted in an incredible harvest of about 1 ton of apples. These apples were put to good use: some were sold at the farmers' market, others went to the Bowen Cidery, many helped stock the annual Apple Fest, and those of lower quality fed farm animals or became excellent garden compost—so almost nothing went to waste.

Thanks to a call-out on Bowen Everything Else, about 10 enthusiastic volunteers joined in, sometimes forming two picking groups at once. Although the picks were scheduled only on weekdays this year, the response was overwhelmingly positive, with pickers reporting how much they loved being part of the harvest. The pickers included an enthusiastic group from Island Pacific School.

All the pickings were organized by Barb MacDonald, volunteer extraordinaire. Many thanks go to her for her energy and dedication to the project.



*Left: Barb watching picker.*

*Below: Pickers Carolyn and Marie-Claire readying another load of apples*



We're pleased to announce that the project will run again in 2026. We hope (intend!) to have picking on the weekends next season. Yay LHF!

## BOWEN ISLAND FOOD RESILIENCE SOCIETY (BIFS)

- Our mission is to contribute to building the skills, knowledge, networks and farms & gardens needed to create an inclusive, healthy, resilient, and humane, community-based food system that addresses the climate emergency and the realities of life on an island.
- We envision a thriving, local food ecosystem on Bowen/Nexwlexm.
- We value initiatives that restore biodiversity and support organic, regenerative, local food production.
- We believe that healthy food should be available to all.



## Thank you

Bowen Island Food Resilience Society receives support from many individuals in the community: Garden Volunteers, Board Members, our accountant, Low Hanging Fruit pickers and tree owners, and people who help us build soil with donations of manure and woodchips. Thank you!

We also want to thank the private donors and organizations who gave us financial support in 2025 .

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