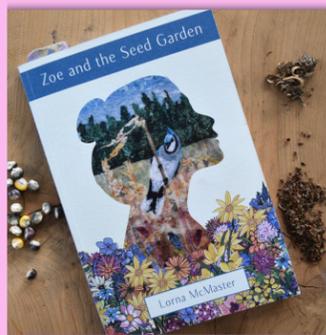




Grow Eat Learn Digest

Winter Edition 2026

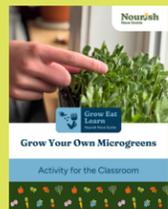


Book Review Zoe and the Seed Garden

by Lorna McMaster (2024)
Review by Raina McDonald,
Regional Garden Mentor

Zoe and the Seed Garden is written for young readers around grade six, but great for anyone interested in youth seed saving or environmental stewardship. PEI author Lorna McMaster is a seed grower and fiber artist who teaches and cares for sheep. Each chapter opens with a stunning felted wool illustration made from her own sheep's wool!

The story follows a growing bond between a girl and her aunt, who teaches her how to save seeds. The book gently helps readers face climate change and the emotions that come with it, while encouraging young people to explore climate actions that resonate with them. Readers will learn practical seed saving skills and appreciation for seeds. Zoe and her aunt show the garden as a place for healing, learning, and hopeful stewardship.



Grow Your Own Microgreens Resource

Check out this winter growing activity showing plant life cycles while growing a crunchy snack.



nourishns.ca/
learning-hub

Coming up...

Seedy Saturdays!

Seedy Saturdays are events where people share seeds, knowledge and plants. Local growers and community come together to sell and trade seeds.



Why local seeds matter:

- grow food that does well in our local climate
- local biodiversity
- make sure food stays in the hands of communities, not just big companies

Find us at one of these Seedy Saturdays:

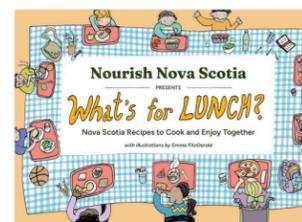
- Glasgow Square, New Glasgow: February 28th
- Antigonish Farmers Market: Mar. 22
- Halifax Brewery Market: April 4th
- Truro Farmers' Market: February 21
- Debrisay Museum Bridgewater: February 14th
- Spryfield's Seedy Saturday: TBD

Creamy POTATO SOUP

MAKES: 6-8 BOWLS



Illustration by Emma FitzGerald



This recipe is from Northumberland Regional High School's student-run Karma Closet Free Lunch Program.

What You Need

- 1 large onion
- 3 lb (1.36 kg) baking potatoes (about 6)
- 2 Tbsp (30 ml) margarine or oil
- 4 ½ cups (1.13 L) water
- 1 tsp (5 ml) salt
- ½ lb (225 g) cheddar cheese, 1 ½ cups grated
- ¼ cup (60 ml) chopped chives or green onions, for serving

Check out our new cookbook! Every copy purchased supports school food programs in Nova Scotia.



Start Cooking!

- 1 Peel and mince the onion. Peel, rinse, and chop the potatoes into 1" pieces.
- 2 In a large pot, heat the margarine or oil on medium-low. Add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until translucent, about five minutes. Stir in the potatoes, water, and salt and bring to a boil.
- 3 Reduce the heat, cover, and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the potatoes are very tender, 15-20 minutes. Remove the pot from the heat and carefully mash some of the potatoes.
- 4 Return the pan to the heat and add the cheese, stirring until melted. Remove the pan from the heat. Taste the soup and add more salt if needed. Serve the soup topped with the chives or green onions. Refrigerate leftovers promptly. Any leftover Potato Soup can be stored in the refrigerator for up to three days.



Colour, Draw & Food for Thought

What ingredients are in your favorite soup? Can they grow where you live?

Illustrated by Bria Miller-Chiome, Regional Garden Mentor (Kjipuktuk/HRM)



What is the Grow Eat Learn Digest?

This quarterly newspaper is for sharing tips about gardening and food, garden stories from schools and youth, and to promote upcoming events!

How to Winter Sow

Winter sowing is a fun and easy way to grow plants by planting seeds in jugs outside in winter, where they sprout in DIY mini greenhouses.

Sowing is a great method for starting pollinator plants to feed the butterflies, bees and moths!

Materials:

- recycled jugs (transparent)
- potting soil
- seeds
- scissors
- craft knife
- duct tape
- weatherproof marker

Words to Know:

Sow:

to plant seeds

Stratification:

a cold period that helps seeds wake up

Germination:

when a seed wakes up and starts growing

When to plant what:

Jan/Feb

- perennials that need stratification
- native plants

Mar/Apr

- cold-hardy plants
- kale
- spinach
- lettuce

May/Jun

- plant out the water jug seedlings into pots or beds

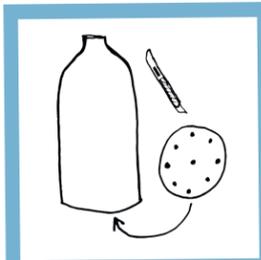


Check out our Winter Sowing Guide for more



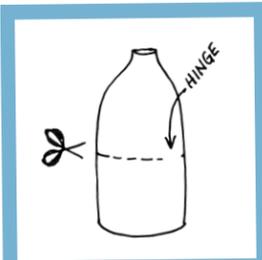
Illustrations & Guide by Raina McDonald, Garden Mentor

Step 1



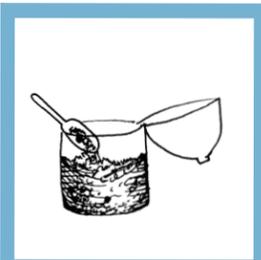
Wash jugs & make drainage holes.

Step 2



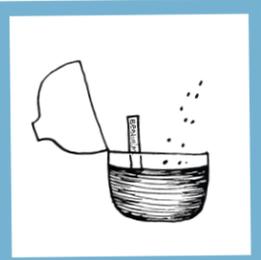
Cut jugs in half.

Step 3



Add pre-moistened soil.

Step 4



Plant seeds, water, & label.

Step 5



Close, seal with duct tape, & label jug.

Step 6



Set outside & observe.

Step 7



Vent & water if needed in Spring.

Step 8



Transplant seedlings into garden or pots.

Apuknajit (“ah-book-nah-jit”)

By Sakej Doucette, Indigenous Foods Coordinator (Unama'ki)

The Apuknajit Mi'kmaw feast marks the time when we have made it through the hardest point of winter (Kesik). Apuknajit means “snow blinding”. It is a moment of gratitude and prayer, giving thanks for surviving the most difficult days and welcoming the slow return of spring (Siwk). Traditionally, families and communities would gather to hold feasts and make offerings of food to the winter spirit, often eels (kataq), honoring the season that tested us. These gatherings are a time for sharing food, stories and games, nourishing not only our bodies but our hearts and minds as well.



Eel harvesting in our Youth Food Leaders program

Mi'kmaq Words to Learn



Winter (Kesik)



Spring (Siwk)



Eels (Kataq)

What are the bees up to this winter?



Honey Bees (*Apis mellifera*)

We do not hibernate. On days above zero, we'll briefly leave the hive for cleansing flights. In early winter, our queen often stops laying eggs altogether but as daylight begins to increase after the winter solstice, she slowly starts laying small amounts of eggs. This means we need to produce more heat. We all cluster tightly buzzing around our queen, heating the middle of the hive to 34-35 C.

Did You Know?

Bees born in late summer become winter bees and can live up to 6 months, while summer bees live only about 6 weeks.

A healthy hive needs 30-40 lbs. of honey to survive winter so bees can stay warm by buzzing their wings.



Even though a hive has thousands of bees, they work together like one living organism.

Virtual School Garden Support Drop-Ins!

We host a themed monthly virtual drop-in space for educators, youth & faculty working in school gardens. Bring your questions & learn! Find recordings after.

Coming up...

On Zoom from 3:30 - 4:30pm

- Winter Sowing & Pollinator Gardens | Jan 21
- Seeds & Garden Planning | Feb 25



Save the date and find the Zoom link here



Calling All: Youth, Students, Garden clubs, etc!

We'd love to share garden art and stories from Youth across Mi'kma'ki / NS. Share something and receive seeds in the mail.

Now Accepting Art & Story Submissions!

