

# ***Community Orchard Presentation***

Committee of the Whole Meeting, March 21, 2022

# What is a community orchard?

A community orchard is a collection of fruit producing trees and shrubs in a public space planted with the goal of providing the community with access to fresh locally-grown fruit. In an urban setting an orchard won't appear like a typical commercial orchard with rows of apple trees. Rather, "edible landscapes" are created within the urban park system as either stand-alone plantings or in combination with other more traditional shrub bed features.

# Why develop community orchards?

Small scale community orchards won't solve larger issues around food insecurity but they can still benefit the community by:

- Encouraging local residents to live more sustainably and grow their own food
- Getting people outdoors and into the park system
- Educating the community about how fruit grows
- Providing fresh fruit to low-income communities
- Building community within a neighbourhood
- Animating green spaces by providing activities for children and adults
- Creating visual interest in parks and increasing biodiversity

# Who has community orchards?

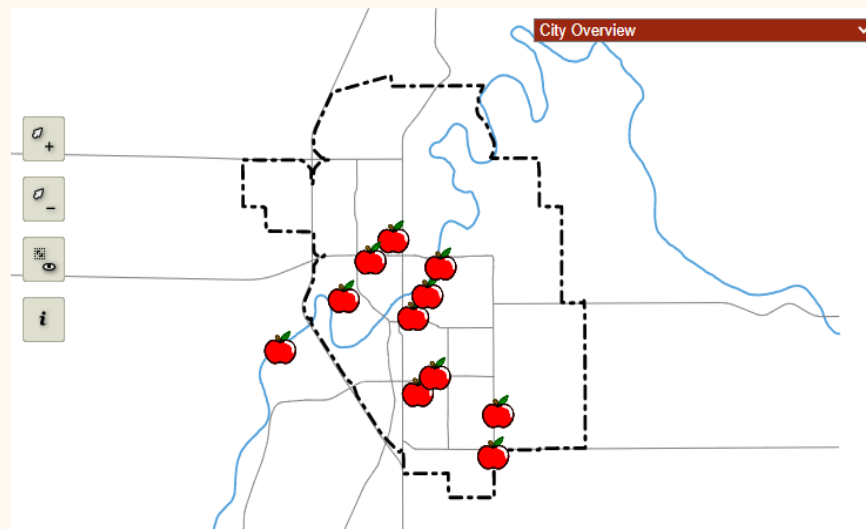
There are examples of community orchards across Canada and internationally. Red Deer, Calgary, and Grande Prairie are three examples of Cities in Alberta that provide Community orchards in their communities.



## Red Deer Community Orchard



We are proud to provide concentrated edible landscape plantings across our City. Many of these initiatives are managed in partnership with community groups. All fruits and nuts grown on parkland are fair game to the public. Please harvest respectfully, being sure to leave some for others. Public access and harvest does not extend to other gardening sites including Garden Plots and Community Gardens. The public is not permitted to pick from privately grown annual gardens.



## Grande Prairie Community Orchard



*Mountview's apple orchard in Mike Fedyna Park was planted in 2015.*

The Evan's cherry, the very first Prairie-hardy sour cherry, has been around since the 1920s.

Other edible cherries for this area include Nanking cherries, chokecherries and pin cherries, although most people would say they're best in jelly or syrup.

### Where to harvest:

- Dave Barr
- Mike Fedyna Park
- Crystal Heights
- Avondale
- O'Brien Park
- Dalen Park- North Patterson



# What are communities growing in their orchards?

Grande Prairie lists several cold hardy fruits growing successfully in their community orchards including:

- Haskaps
- Cherries
- Apples
- Raspberries
- Plums
- Rhubarb
- Goji Berries
- Grapes
- Pears
- Currants, Gooseberries, & Jostaberries
- Sea Buckthorn

They also maintain a “not-recommended” list for their residents to educate on plants that have previously not done well locally.



## How are community orchards developed?

In most examples it is the City that has taken the lead on developing community orchards. This involves matching appropriate locations with the plant that is to be grown. When selecting a site consideration is given to soil type, shelter, sunlight exposure and ongoing maintenance needs.

## Is there a role for residents?

While every City has developed community orchards in their own way, most models leave the door open to community stewardship roles where groups or individuals are welcomed to take on a basic maintenance role.



## What are the operating costs to develop and maintain a community orchard?

It is estimated that a community orchard program could be gradually developed through the creation of 3 to 4 sites annually with labour and material costs of \$5,000.00 per year.



Questions?