

# INTERCONNECTED



*2024 EFAO Conference*

**December 3-5, 2024 | Kingston**

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# WELCOME TO THE 2024 EFAO CONFERENCE

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We are so happy that you could join us for the **11th Annual EFAO Conference** in Kingston. How wonderful it is to be able to learn, celebrate and weave even more connections, together.

The theme of this year's conference, **Interconnected**, is designed to celebrate the vast network of ecological relationships that make farming possible, where many processes and organisms work together to sustain growth. The sessions are filled with some amazing speakers who will generously share experiences, ideas and stories that can further connect us to each other as well as to the Earth that sustains us.

Monday's **Farmer-led Research Symposium** highlighted how curiosity can be a powerful catalyst for connecting ideas together in a way that helps farmers answer challenging on-farm questions. We hope this conference helps you answer a few of your own questions and also leaves you with new ideas and curiosities.

Tuesday's **Earth & Sky Indigenous Gathering** helped to create a more interconnected community of support for thriving Indigenous food systems, and drew inspiration from the incredible initiatives taking place in communities both near and far.

Thank you to the speakers, exhibitors, sponsors, partners and participants who help make this conference possible. May you be inspired to find new and deeper connections to this community, to your work and to the natural world. Here's to acting on what we learn this week and to staying interconnected as we grow food and community over the coming year!

- The EFAO Team

**Thank you to EFAO members and supporters for another great year!**

Curious about your membership status or renewal date?  
Thinking about becoming an EFAO member?  
You can check your account online at [efao.ca/membership](http://efao.ca/membership) or ask at the conference registration desk.

# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE - AT A GLANCE

| Monday, December 2nd    |                                                                                                          |                                                        |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 9:30 AM-12:30 PM        | ONLINE - Farmer-Led Research Symposium                                                                   |                                                        |
| Tuesday, December 3rd   |                                                                                                          |                                                        |
| 9:00-10:00 AM           | BALLROOM - Arrival   Registration   Refreshments                                                         |                                                        |
| 10:00 AM-5:00 PM        | BALLROOM - Earth & Sky Indigenous Growers Gathering                                                      |                                                        |
| 3:30-5:00 PM            | FARM TOURS - Paper Kite Farm, Doublejay Farms                                                            |                                                        |
| 5:00-6:30 PM            | BALLROOM - Makers Marketplace   Conference Registration                                                  |                                                        |
| 6:30 PM                 | BALLROOM - Welcome Dinner                                                                                |                                                        |
| Wednesday, December 4th |                                                                                                          |                                                        |
| 7:30-8:30 AM            | BALLROOM - Breakfast                                                                                     |                                                        |
| 7:30-9:00 AM            | BALLROOM & TRADE SHOW HALL - Arrival   Registration   Refreshments                                       |                                                        |
| 8:45-10:00 AM           | BALLROOM - Welcome & Keynote Panel: Protecting Relationships with Land                                   |                                                        |
| 10:00-10:30 AM          | BALLROOM & TRADE SHOW HALL - Break   Refreshments   Trade Show                                           |                                                        |
| 10:30 AM-12:00 PM       | BALLROOM - Sharing Land: Stories and perspectives                                                        |                                                        |
|                         | REGAL - Digging Deep: All about Alliums                                                                  |                                                        |
|                         | RIDEAU - Honouring Women's Relationship with Maize                                                       |                                                        |
|                         | OTTAWA - Making Gains: Your farm's financial wellness year over year                                     |                                                        |
|                         | LISBON - Small Mills for Small Grains                                                                    |                                                        |
| 12:00-1:30 PM           | BALLROOM - Lunch   Trade Show                                                                            |                                                        |
| 12:15-1:15 PM           | REGAL - Meet-up for 2SLGBTQIA+ Farmers and Land Stewards                                                 | OTTAWA - Book Launch: The Seed Farmer by Dan Brisebois |
| 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM       | BALLROOM - New Tools for Farm Financial Decision Making: Vegetable benchmarking summary and introduction |                                                        |
|                         | REGAL - Raising Sheep and Growing Grass for Long-term Sustainability and Profit                          |                                                        |
|                         | RIDEAU - Grain Goals: Small grains sourcing and variety selection                                        |                                                        |
|                         | OTTAWA - Profitable Pairings: Prepared food and primary products                                         |                                                        |
|                         | LISBON - Ag Issues in Ontario: What's happening and how to get involved                                  |                                                        |
| 3:00-3:30 PM            | BALLROOM & TRADE SHOW HALL - Break   Refreshments   Trade Show                                           |                                                        |

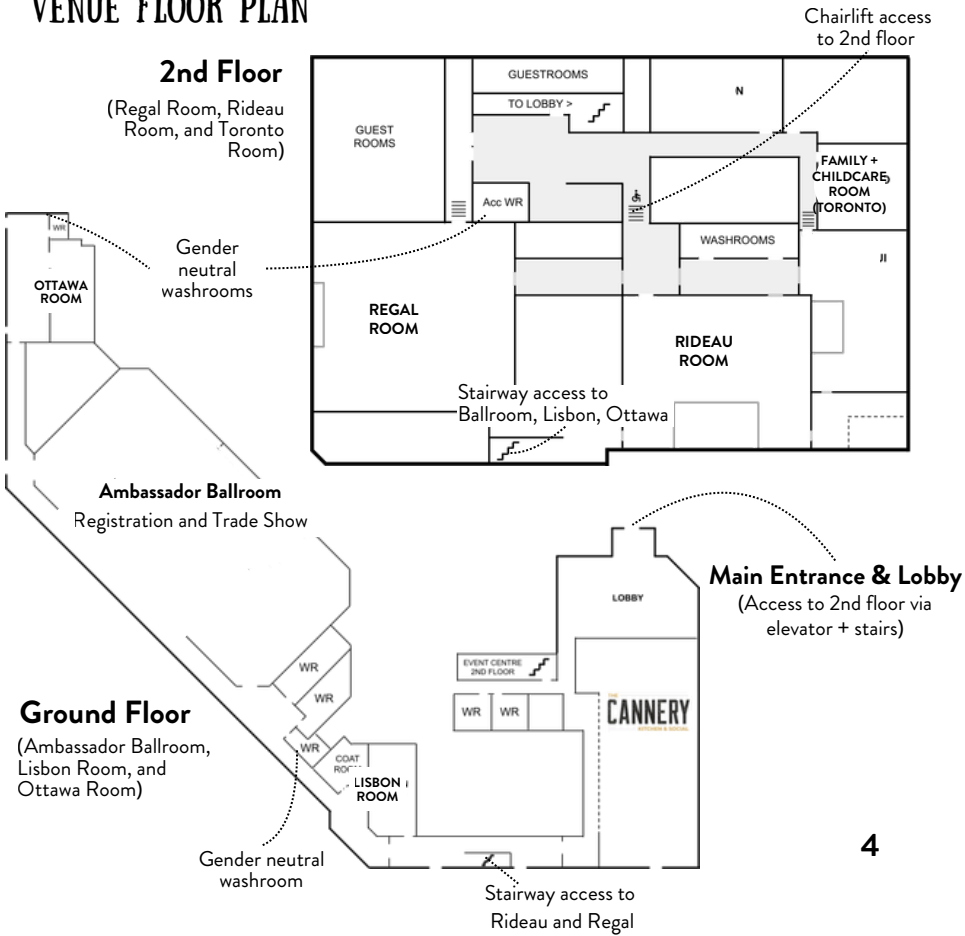


# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE - AT A GLANCE

| Wednesday, December 4th |                                                                                                              |                                     |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 3:30 PM - 5:00 PM       | BALLROOM - Native Fruit & Nut Cultivation                                                                    |                                     |
|                         | REGAL - Real Talk for Mutual Flourishing                                                                     |                                     |
|                         | RIDEAU - Exploring the Organic Seed Landscape: A Q&A with seed experts                                       |                                     |
|                         | OTTAWA - Pasture Renovation: Taking your pasture production to the next level                                |                                     |
|                         | LISBON - Making the Most of Your Wool Clip                                                                   |                                     |
| 5:00-6:30 PM            | BALLROOM & TRADE SHOW HALL - Trade Show Reception   Variety Tasting Showcase   Seed Show-and-Swap            |                                     |
| 6:30 PM                 | BALLROOM - Banquet Dinner                                                                                    |                                     |
| 8:30 PM                 | BALLROOM - Campfire Jam & Sing-along   Craft Corner                                                          |                                     |
| Thursday, December 5th  |                                                                                                              |                                     |
| 7:30-8:30 AM            | BALLROOM - Breakfast                                                                                         |                                     |
| 7:30-9:00 AM            | BALLROOM & TRADE SHOW HALL - Arrival   Registration   Refreshments                                           |                                     |
| 8:45-10:00 AM           | BALLROOM - Keynote: Black Earth Wisdom - Afro-Ecological Survival Strategies                                 |                                     |
| 10:00-10:30 AM          | BALLROOM & TRADE SHOW HALL - Break   Refreshments   Trade Show                                               |                                     |
| 10:30 AM-12:00 PM       | BALLROOM - Seeding Interconnection Through Your Farm Work: In conversation with Leah Penniman                |                                     |
|                         | REGAL - Non-native Fruit & Nut Cultivation                                                                   |                                     |
|                         | RIDEAU - Digging Deep: Asparagus                                                                             |                                     |
|                         | OTTAWA - Breeding for Biomass and Beyond: Cover crop breeding progress, potentials, and farmer participation |                                     |
|                         | LISBON - Creating a Mutually Beneficial Work Environment                                                     |                                     |
| 12:00-1:30 PM           | BALLROOM - Lunch   Trade Show                                                                                |                                     |
| 12:00-1:30 PM           | BALLROOM - Meet-up for the Farmers Network for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour                        | BALLROOM - Meet-up for Seed Growers |

| Thursday, December 5th |                                                                                             |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM      | <b>BALLROOM</b> - On-Farm Research In Action                                                |
|                        | <b>REGAL</b> - A Bloom for Every Season                                                     |
|                        | <b>RIDEAU</b> - Facilitation Fundamentals: Running a great farm (team) meeting              |
|                        | <b>LISBON</b> - Get Yer Goat: The ins and outs of adding goats to your farm                 |
| 3:00-3:30 PM           | <b>BALLROOM &amp; TRADE SHOW HALL</b> - Break   Refreshments   Trade Show                   |
| 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM      | <b>BALLROOM</b> - A Conversation About Collaboration, Creativity and Compromise on the Farm |
|                        | <b>REGAL</b> - Growing Your Business: Telling stories and counting beans                    |
|                        | <b>RIDEAU</b> - The Cows Are Out AGAIN? Livestock Mishaps Turned Opportunities              |
|                        | <b>OTTAWA</b> - Lessons From Urban Ag: Creating efficiencies at the micro scale             |
|                        | <b>LISBON</b> - Social Networks for Healthy Soils                                           |

VENUE FLOOR PLAN



# WEDNESDAY KEYNOTE

Wednesday, December 4

8:45 AM - 10:00 AM

## Protecting Relationships with Land

Ballroom

Join Becky Big Canoe of Mno Aki Land Trust (King, ON), Kaitlyn Patterson of All Our Relations Land Trust (Kingston, ON), and Dave Skene of The Wisahkotewinowak Collective (Waterloo-Wellington, ON) for a conversation about protecting and strengthening relationships with lands and waters through the work they do within their Indigenous-led organizations. This panel will explore connections to land through various pathways including land trust models, community collectives, and grassroots activism. Speakers will also share stories about their land-based and community-centered activities to illustrate the critical importance of land access for the holistic health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. Participants are invited to consider how ideas shared might apply in their own communities, and how they might pick up their responsibilities to collaboratively care for Shkaskmigkwe (Mother Earth) as a beloved relative.

**Kaitlyn Patterson** is mixed-ancestry Algonquin (Mattawa, 817 General List/Sudbury) from the Loon Clan. She has lived most of her life in Katarokwi (greater Kingston area), and she is the Chair of the Board and a co-founder of All Our Relations Land Trust.

**Becky Big Canoe** is an accomplished Anishinaabekwe mother, sustainable housing proponent, writer, artist, activist and powwow dancer. She lives on Georgina Island. She is actively involved in the Mno Aki Land Trust.

**Dave Skene** is an urban Métis farmer and co-Executive Director of the White Owl Native Ancestry Association. In 2015 Dave and several other Indigenous community members formed the Wisahkotewinowak garden collective.

**Shawn Melnyk** is of Métis heritage and was born in southern Saskatchewan. Currently residing in Kingston, Shawn continues to expand his understanding of Indigenous culture and practices through land based learning and taking part in ceremony. Shawn currently supports the All Our Relations Land Trust.

# SESSIONS

Wednesday, December 4

10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

## Digging Deep: All about Alliums

Regal Room

Consistently growing quality Alliums can be difficult. This workshop will focus on properly identifying unfamiliar pests and pathogens and management strategies that can be implemented to prevent outbreaks. Management of onion maggot in dry bulb onions, leek moth control in garlic, leeks and onions and fusarium and bacterial rot management in garlic will be highlighted. We will also discuss curing techniques and how they are impacting storage quality and next year's crop. Learn about the pests that hindered Allium yields in Ontario in 2024 and how to slow them down in 2025.

**Travis Cranmer** is a Vegetable Crop Specialist with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness. Travis received his M.Sc. in Plant Production Systems with an emphasis on plant pathology from the University of Guelph. He works with growers, consultants, industry, and researchers to improve production and pest management strategies for Alliums, Brassicas, and leafy greens

## Sharing Land: Stories and perspectives

Ballroom

As we continue the dialogue about land access in Ontario, participants are invited to join this conversation highlighting successful relationships of land sharing. Hear from farmers who are sharing land with other residents and farmers — and what makes this work. They will offer ideas, insights, practical tools and share experiences to inform those who may be considering sharing land in some way, in order that more folks can access land to farm.

**Shiying Lu** raises pastured chicken, pork, duck and eggs and grows a wide range of vegetables (including many Asian specialties) at Brilliant Meadows, a regenerative mixed livestock and vegetable farm that serves the Chinese and broader market in the GTA.

**Stuart Oke** is the co-owner of Rooted Oak Farm, a certified organic CSA and Market Farm located in North Augusta. Together with his partner Nikki they market produce and flowers in the Kingston and Capital Region of Ontario. He is an active member of the National Farmers Union and is the former Youth President.

**Angel Beyde** guides EFAO's work in building strategic partnerships across the ecological ag and ag-adjacent sectors, with a focus on initiatives that serve Black, Indigenous and other farmers of colour. Angel also oversees EFAO's land access work, through the Land Access Coalition (in collaboration with NFU-O), as well as educational events and helping develop recommendations for new farmer policies and programs.

**Jess Tong** is a first-generation, young, queer farmer. She has familial roots in China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Scarborough, ON. After studying agriculture, Jess worked on several farms and co-operated a small market-garden that sold at Farmers' Markets, a Food Co-op, and through a small CSA program. She has experience leasing land, growing via incubatorships, as well as purchasing/stewarding (and losing) farmland.



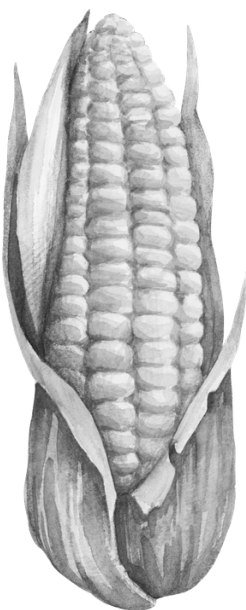
## Small Mills for Small Grains

Lisbon Room

Farm to table food can be relatively straightforward with veggies or animal products, but field crops tend to be a little more complicated. Hear from farmers who are bringing the bread to your table using local mills and bakeries!

**Josh Suppan** has been working on and off in agriculture since he was 13. He started Fat Chance Farmstead in 2013, concentrating on a small vegetable CSA, eventually adding pick your own strawberries. In 2021 Josh planted his first crop of rye with the intention of milling it into flour. Today, the farm supplies multiple bakeries, grocery stores and households throughout eastern Ontario with their whole flour needs.

**Gabrielle Prud'homme** is the founder and miller at Almanac Urban Mill & Bakery in Ottawa. Almanac works closely with local producers to source organically grown heritage grains farmed with integrity, transforming them into fresh stone-milled flour with purpose and intention. Gabrielle is a graduate of the Canadian School of Natural Nutrition and spent over a decade in hospitality before launching her business.



### Honouring Women's Relationship with Maize Rideau Room

Join Kahehtoktha, Janice Brant as she shares her lifetime of experience and insight into the profound relationship between Haudenosaunee women and maize. Janice draws on nearly fifty years of farming knowledge and her extensive work with Mohawk and Haudenosaunee seedkeepers to illuminate how traditional practices continue to thrive and adapt today. This session will explore the role of women in corn stewardship, distinctive Haudenosaunee maize varieties, how to grow maize in harmony with wildlife, and community involvement in maize growing. Designed for everyone, this interactive session encourages open dialogue and participation. Bring your questions, and engage in a Q&A to connect more deeply with Janice's teachings.

**Kahehtoktha, Janice Brant** is a Kanyen'kehá (Mohawk) woman from Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory and a member of the Bear Clan. She is a dedicated language and culture teacher, seedkeeper, artist, and ecological farmer, known widely for her contributions to Haudenosaunee agricultural knowledge and cultural preservation. Janice played a foundational role in establishing the Kenhte:ke Seed Sanctuary & Learning Centre (KSSLC) in 2018, which hosts a living collection of over 300 Indigenous and heirloom seed varieties in the heart of her community. KSSLC is Canada's first known Indigenous Seed Sanctuary.

### Making Gains: Your farm's financial wellness year over year Ottawa Room

This participatory session is for both new and experienced farmers. The session will cover how to shape your business operations and financial decisions around your strengths and preferences, what benchmarks and statistics to use to measure success, how to access capital and talk to lenders, and much more. (If the words "financial wellness" make you gulp, don't fear- the session will also tackle the fears and emotions that often come up around financial planning!)

*This session is offered in collaboration with the Fair Finance Fund.*

**Sally Miller** (MA/ PhD; MES), is the Project Manager for the Fair Finance Fund. She has worked in sustainable food and agriculture and co-ops for over twenty-five years, including the Local Food and Farm Co-ops, Ontario Natural Food Co-op, Organic Meadow, Fourth Pig Worker Co-op, West End Food Co-op in Toronto, and Finger Lakes Organic Growers' Co-op in the U.S. She sits on various Boards.

**Hannah Atkinson Renglich** is a facilitator, coach, and consultant who accompanies those dedicated to leaving this place better than they found it. Kid friends in Hannah's life say she's silly. She's really good at building forts, has lots of time to play, and she's funny. A former colleague describes Hannah using the Anishinaabemowin word, "ZAAGIDIWIN" or "a true embodiment of what I've known as the teaching of unconditional love and kindness." Adult friends say that Hannah is a wonderful friend, facilitator, convener and connector of people. Hannah educates on equity and diversity in a way that helps people to face hard questions, engage in self- and organizational transformation, and be in true solidarity.

# LUNCH-TIME EVENTS

Wednesday, December 4

12:15 - 1:15 PM

**Meet-Up for Queer Farmers & Land Stewards**  
Regal Room

Welcome all 2SLGBTQIA+ farmers, farm-workers, ag enthusiasts and anyone who lives and or works at the intersection of queerness, food and farming! Grab your lunch and come meet other queer and trans folks, chat about farming, and have fun. This is a casual, unstructured time to make connections with other farmers. An optional, affirmation-writing activity will be available to help lift the spirits of next-season you! For anyone who identifies as member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

**Book Launch: The Seed Farmer by Dan Brisebois**  
Ottawa Room

The Seed Farmer is required reading for any grower who cares about being part of a truly sustainable local food system. Whether you're interested in growing your own seeds for on-farm use, or scaling up for retail or commercial sales, this comprehensive manual will help you protect yourself from supply chain disruptions while ensuring reliable access to quality seed stock adapted to your own climate and bioregion. This unique and exciting guide proves that going to seed is easier than you think!

## SESSIONS

Wednesday, December 4

1:30 - 3:00 PM

**Grain Goals: Small grains sourcing and variety selection**  
Rideau Room

The first step to a successful small grain crop is selecting a variety and sourcing seed. This panel brings together Ontario Seed Growers Association directors and experienced farmers to talk through that process. Whether you're wondering which certified varieties have good disease resistance or seeking out a rare heirloom, all questions welcome!

**Reuben Stone's** passion for agriculture grew from engineering and aeronautics background, lending him a unique perspective for finding and applying innovative farming and business practices. As owner of Stone Farms and Valley Bio Limited, which he operates with his wife Keanan, he grows and processes pedigreed seed for Canadian and international customers.

**Chris Wooding** runs Ironwood Organics, a small farm located in eastern Ontario, growing nutrient dense heritage grains while supporting a strong baking and brewing community. Ironwood has recently expanded and produce various cereals including wheat, rye, oats and barley. Their primary passion is landrace wheat. They believe that a mixed farm model and organic agriculture practices will provide a stable sustainable farming model that enhances biodiversity, produces premium products, and minimizes ecological impact.

**Shannon Bieman** grew up on her family's cash crop farm in Prince Edward County, where teaching agriculture became a passion early on. After graduating with honours from Ridgetown College with a business diploma in Agriculture, she worked for W.G.Thompson & Sons Ltd., Snobelen Farms Ltd., and SeCan in sales, marketing, and educational roles. Shannon, her husband Blair, and their two children run Maitland Lane Farms near Belgrave, where they grow pedigreed soybean and cereal crops, run a beef cow-calf operation and keep a flock of sheep. Currently, Shannon represents the Canadian Seed Growers' Association as their 1st Vice President.





## New Tools for Farm Financial Decision Making: Vegetable benchmarking summary and introduction

Ballroom

Tired of glossy stories on social media of easy profits, a group of EFAO farmers came together to dig deep on farm financials and get transparent on the profit potential for ecological vegetable production. Their meeting sparked a new pilot benchmarking pilot study at EFAO, with the goal to expand the collective knowledge of the factors that influence the financial resilience on ecological farms. Join us in conversation with John, OMAFA's Business Analysis and Cost of Production Specialist, and Jasmine, Carl, and Angie - three of the farmer-institigators of this project, to discuss the use of financial benchmarks for your farm, share the knowledge we are learning, and how you can participate in a larger benchmark study.

**Carl Leslie** is the Farm Operations Manager at Earth to Table: The Farm in Flamborough, northwest of Hamilton. Previously, Carl has managed several other vegetable farms as well as his own urban farm business. Throughout, Carl has wrestled with vegetable farm financial realities, and is excited to see the conversation expanding, helping everyone make more informed, reasonable, and realistic financial plans.

**Jasmine Bustard** is a Farm Manager at Common Ground Farm, a certified organic mixed-vegetable farm outside St. Thomas. The farm grows on 20 acres and 17,000 sq. ft. of covered structures, and for her last 3 years as a part of the team, Jasmine has helped to serve a year-round vegetable subscription (customizable CSA), farmers markets and wholesale customers.

**Angie Koch's** passion for vegetable production is rivalled only by her passion for spreadsheets and profitability analyses - a point of both pride and discomfort. She is excited by the potential to better understand the factors that contribute to farm viability and financial resilience. Angie also keeps her fingers in the world of seeds, coordinating Seeds of Diversity's Seed Library and hosting EFAO's Seed Demonstration Garden at her farm Fertile Ground.

**John Molenhuis** has been with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness as the Business Analysis and Cost of Production Specialist for the past 23 years. He leads financial benchmarking projects and cost of production budgeting information for the Ontario agriculture sector. John has a degree in Agricultural Business from the University of Guelph.

**Heather Newman** is Research Coordinator at EFAO, supporting the Vegetable Benchmarking Study. She grew up on an organic mixed farm in Bruce County. After completing her B.Sc., she returned home to raise a family and grow a farm and food business. Heather is passionate about growing heritage varieties ecologically, growing the local food economy, and creating unique, delicious food products from local ingredients through her co-owned food company, Two Birds One Stone.

## Profitable Pairings: Prepared food and primary products

Ottawa Room

Are you considering adding prepared foods to your roster of products? Join this session to learn from farms who have incorporated a prepared food product line into their business. They will share their experiences, lessons learned and advice (and maybe some tastes!) for those who are interested in doing the same.

**Judy and Hans Ning** run Paper Kite Farm, a small family farm in Prince Edward County. They steward the land using mindful ecological growing practices in their Market Garden and Food Forest, along with a small flock of chickens and sheep. They recently expanded their prepared food business with The Dumpling Club, celebrating flavours rooted in their Hmong and Chinese heritages.

Since 2011, **Audrey McDonald** has been growing organic vegetables, culinary herbs, tropical plants, and flowers at The Greenhouse Eatery on rented land in Brampton. Beyond growing vibrant Jamaican callaloo and marketing Greenhouse Eatery's Garlic Bar products (including some seriously delicious black garlic!), Audrey is also a passionate advocate for local foods and educating her community about environmental stewardship. Audrey loves playing in the dirt and experimenting with the viability of diverse crops in Canadian soil.

**Jason Hayes** farms at Burdock Grove Farm in Williamsford, Grey County. He raises chicken, pork, sometimes duck, sometimes lamb, and sometimes vegetables. Recently he established the foodio, a farm store with a commercial kitchen, to add value to the ingredients the farm produces.

## Raising Sheep and Growing Grass for Long-term Sustainability and Profit

Regal Room

Join Wesley Godden from Fairside Farm for an in-depth look at their business journey and production methods. Currently in their ninth breeding season, Wesley will share how they got into the sheep business without any prior farming experience. He'll also speak to how their farm has grown and changed, and go into detail about their production techniques and why they chose certain sales channels, grazing, and breeding strategies. This session offers valuable insights and the opportunity to benefit from the practical knowledge and lessons of an experienced livestock farmer.

**Wesley Godden** and his partner run Fairside Farm, a family-owned sheep farm in the Ottawa Valley. They have a flock of 160 purebred Katahdin hair sheep and their crosses, sell their lamb directly to customers, and are registered breeders of Katahdin hair sheep. Wesley currently sits on the board of Farmers for Climate Solutions and Ontario Sheep Farmers.

## Ag Issues in Ontario: What's happening and how to get involved

Lisbon Room

Moderated by EFAO's Ali English, this panel will be a valuable opportunity to get details on the projects, policies, and advocacy work being done by various agricultural organizations in Ontario. Come to this session if you want to be involved and informed on topics like farmland protection, food regulation, genetically modified organisms in food and farming, land access, climate policy, environmental protections projects and bills, and more.

**Brent Preston** and his wife Gillian Flies own and operate The New Farm, an organic vegetable operation near Creemore. He is the President of Farmers for Climate Solutions, a pan-Canadian coalition of farm organizations that advocates for better climate policy in agriculture.

**Dr. Erica Shelley** has been at the forefront of agricultural innovation for over 15 years as the CEO of Best for Bees and was recently appointed Executive Director for the Organic Council of Ontario. Dr. Shelley brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to advancing sustainable agriculture and organic practices across Ontario.

**Lucy Sharratt** works in Halifax as the Coordinator of the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN). CBAN brings together 15 groups to research, monitor and raise awareness about issues relating to genetic engineering in food and farming. CBAN members include farmers associations, environmental and social justice organizations, and regional groups.

**David Thompson** is an experienced community organizer, a researcher with a PhD in Canadian history, and is passionate about building grassroots, people-centered social movements that are dedicated to sustainable local farming, cultural and social diversity, and economic equality and security. He believes growing food is a political act. David is currently Farm Labour & Special Projects Manager with the National Farmers Union - Ontario.

**Ayla Fenton** is a first-generation farmer and community organizer. She graduated from Queen's in 2011 with a B.ScH in Biology, and since 2013 has been working on local organic farms, learning regenerative production methods for vegetables, livestock, cereal grains and dairy. Ayla has also been a board member of the National Farmers Union, has been involved with organizing young farmers and farmworkers nationally and internationally, and was the Agriculture Manager at Loving Spoonful until 2024. She is currently the Policy Jam Coordinator with Young Agrarians.

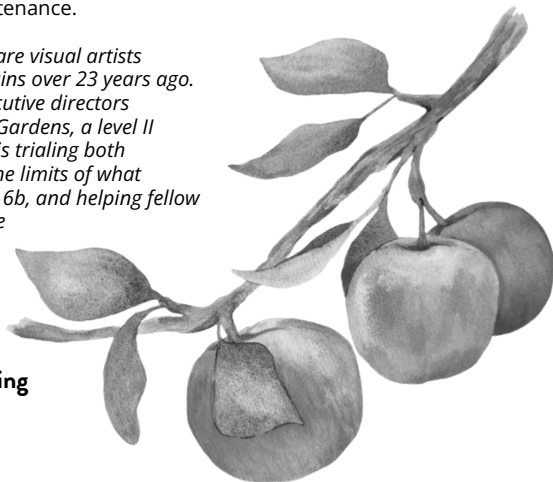
**Ali English** guides EFAO's work, ensures the organization's financial sustainability, and fosters relationships to support the interests and needs of ecological farmers. Ali holds a B.Sc. in Food Production and the Environment from McGill University and a M.Sc. in Agroecology from the Norwegian University of Life Sciences. Prior to working with EFAO, Ali spent a number of years working on farms and 6 years working at FarmStart, where she developed training opportunities and resources for new farmers across Ontario.

## Native Fruit & Nut Cultivation

Ballroom

In this session, the authors of *Cold-Hardy Fruits and Nuts* will cover a short list of productive and edible fruit- and nut-bearing crops that push the boundaries of what can survive winters in cold-temperate growing regions, with an emphasis on species native to Ontario's bioregions. The session will focus on crops with fewer pest and disease problems and overall higher levels of resilience than many common orchard crops. In-depth profiles of each species will be provided, and the session will also touch lightly on propagation, pruning, and maintenance.

**Allyson Levy and Scott Serrano** are visual artists who moved to the Catskill Mountains over 23 years ago. They are the co-founders and executive directors of *Hortus Arboretum & Botanical Gardens*, a level II accredited arboretum. Their goal is trialing both native and exotic plants to push the limits of what can be successfully grown in Zone 6b, and helping fellow gardeners expand their knowledge base and incorporate some of these garden-worthy plants at home.



## Real Talk for Mutual Flourishing

Regal Room

"All flourishing is mutual."

– Robin Wall Kimmerer

We welcome you to a Mutual Flourishing Forum, where we gather to name and face the systemic barriers that face ecological farmers from Grey to Frontenac Counties — from the challenges of saving for retirement to the struggle for access to land. Through small group dialogue with farmers from across generations and geographies, this forum hopes to ignite the collective radical and moral imagination required to turn adversity into abundance. We will explore together what each of us truly needs and what we (and EFAO!) can offer in return.

**Madeline Marmor** is currently based in Tkaronto/Toronto and is a first generation, landless farmer, facilitator and Circle keeper. Having organized at the intersection of food, land, climate and justice for just under a decade, Madeline works with other movement witches, educators, farmers and community hosts to hold space for the emergence of a just, more equitable (food) future, which she thinks is completely possible, if not inevitable!

**Heather Thoma** loves bringing her listening, questions, caring and practicality into groups to support learning, growth, and social change. She has worked as a community educator, facilitator, and project coordinator in non-profits locally, regionally, and provincially for 25 years. She currently works with *Farms at Work* and the *Coalition for Healthy School Food*, and she and her partner run *LoonSong Farm* near Cobourg.

See page 7 for **Hannah Atkinson Renglich's** bio.

## Exploring the Organic Seed Landscape: A Q&A with seed experts

Rideau Room

Join us for an interactive "Ask Me Anything" session, where the audience will have the chance to engage directly with representatives from local and international seed companies. This session is designed to foster an open dialogue around the organic and ecological seed industry, allowing growers to dive deep into the questions that matter most to them, such as:

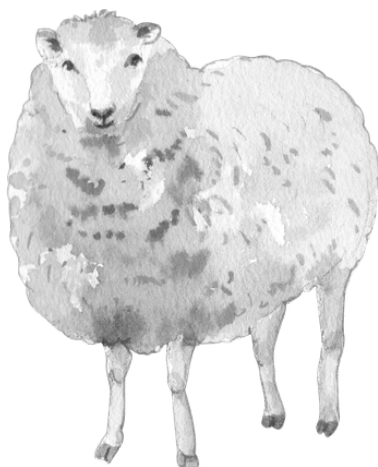
- Where do new seed varieties come from, and how are they developed?
- Why do certain varieties become commercially available while others disappear?
- What steps are involved in the seed production processes?
- Which crops are the most challenging to source as organic, and what factors drive these challenges?
- And so much more!

**Kathy Rothermel** is a gardener, organic seed producer and mother. She is a founding member of the Kingston and Area Seed System Initiative (KASSI), co-founder of Kitchen Table Seed House and is active in National Farmers Union Local 316. This work has been a natural extension of her socially active family and community life, and her strong belief in the importance of gathering to share good food around the kitchen table.

**Dan Brisebois** wants market gardeners to grow some of their own seed, which is why he hosts the Seed Growers Podcast and blogs about seed. Dan is a seed farmer and founding member at Tourne-Sol Co-operative Farm in Les Cèdres, Quebec, where they also grow vegetables for 500 weekly vegetable baskets. He also runs the Farmer Spreadsheet Academy to help farmers learn to be better farm managers.

**Paul Betz** grew 2.5 acres of vegetables for a farmers market and CSA for 17 seasons in the hills of Woodbury, Vermont. He began in sales at High Mowing Seeds in 2007, working with commercial growers in the US and Canada. In his work at High Mowing, he has participated in product development, marketing, trials, quality control, and is a pretty solid seed packer and order picker as well.

See page 9 for **Angie Koch's** bio.



## Making the Most of Your Wool Clip

Lisbon Room

Get your hands dirty in this introductory workshop on assessing the quality and condition of your wool and improving its marketability. We will compare a range of raw fleeces by breed and type, identify common wool contaminants and flaws, and practice basic skirting and wool handling techniques that will improve fleece presentation and value.

**Helen Knibb** teaches part-time in the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems (SAFS) program at Trent University. Her research interests include early sheep farming and wool processing in Ontario, the re-emergence of the wool industry at the small- to mid-scale internationally, and skill development in wool assessment and handling. She runs a small fibre flock on a farm east of Peterborough and is a wool handler on many local shearing crews.

## SESSIONS

Wednesday, December 4

3:00 - 5:00 PM

### Pasture Renovation: Taking your pasture production to the next level

Ottawa Room

Join four seasoned graziers for an insightful discussion as they reveal their proven strategies and hard-earned lessons on boosting pasture production. Each expert will dive into their personal experiences, sharing the why, how, and benefits of renovating pasture land. Get ready for practical tips and valuable insights that will elevate your pasture management and take your production to new heights!

***This session is presented in partnership with Farmers for Climate Solutions, Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association and the On-Farm Climate Action Fund.***

**Ken Laing** of Orchard Hill Farm has farmed with his wife Martha near St. Thomas since 1979 when he graduated from the University of Guelph with a B.Sc. in Agriculture. From 1979 until 1996 they produced pick-your-own fruit, and they transitioned to organic in 1989. From 1997 until 2017 they operated a CSA for up to 250 members. Pasture has been a part of their farm rotation for 44 years in terms of draft horses and more recently since 2015 also with cattle and custom grazing

**Joshua Noiseux** is the founder of Evermeadow Farms. Since 2020 Evermeadow has been using mixed-species rotational grazing to improve the soils and protect and restore grassland ecosystems across the 170 acres they manage. Before farming, Josh was an academic, studying and teaching about the philosophy of ecology, and also worked in various natural resource industries.

**Katrina McQuail**, with assistance from her husband Ben and support from other family members, owns and operates Meeting Place Organic Farm. They raise certified organic pastured pigs, grass-fed cattle, meat chickens and laying hens. They farm with Suffolk-Punch draft horses, have a few quail, some ducks and an old apple orchard from which they make their apple butter. They also have a pet pig named Pickle. They are committed to experiential and practical education for prospective farmers. Katrina is also the President of EFAO's Board.

See page 9 for **Jason Hayes'** bio.

## TRADE SHOW RECEPTION

Wednesday, December 4

5:00 - 6:30 PM

Ballroom/Trade Show Hall

Finish your day with refreshments and conversation as you enjoy the Trade Show.

## VARIETY TASTING SHOWCASE

Wednesday, December 4

5:00 - 6:30 PM

### Discover the Flavourful Diversity that Comes from Regional Seed & Grain

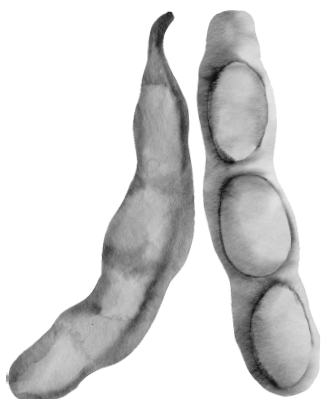
Ballroom

This year's tasting, open to all conference participants, will highlight vegetables and grains in Ontario. Participants will savour an array of squash varieties grown in the Showcase Gardens, coordinated by EFAO in partnership with the Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security. Sample the rich variety of squashes, explore their diverse flavours, and share your thoughts on which ones you love most. As you taste, engage with other seed enthusiasts, learn about the significance of local seed diversity, and gain inspiration for your own garden next season. In addition, conference attendees can taste some examples of foods and beverages crafted from local, ecologically grown grains including bread, beer, and whiskey. This tasting event highlights the unique flavours, textures, and colours of varieties produced in our local regions!

# SEED SHOW-AND-SWAP

Wednesday, December 4

5:00 - 6:30 PM



## Ballroom

Join us for a time of connection and learning at our Seed Swap and Show-and-Tell event! This gathering celebrates the power of seeds, inviting seedkeepers, farmers, and market gardeners to share unique varieties, swap seeds, and exchange stories. We'll have a few tables out for people to showcase regional seeds that they've worked with and you can connect with the growers about them and perhaps exchange some seeds you have been stewarding! Bring your favourite seeds, stories, and any insights into traits, adaptations, or cultural significance. Connect with fellow growers, discover new varieties, and contribute to resilient local seed systems.

# BANQUET DINNER, CAMPFIRE JAM & SINGALONG, AND CRAFT CORNER

Wednesday, December 4

6:30 PM

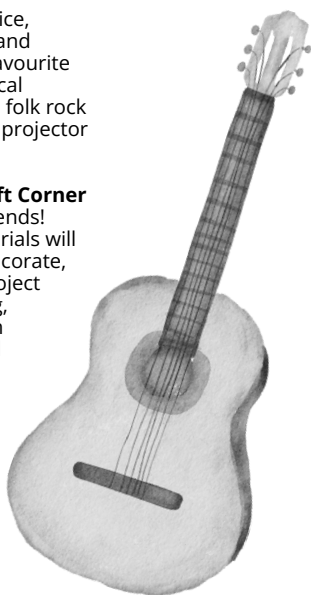
## Ballroom

Join us for the EFAO Conference Banquet Dinner! A delicious, buffet-style meal highlighting local ecological growers, followed by a campfire-style jam session, community art activities and good conversation with new and old friends.

Following dinner, all are invited to join in for songs around the proverbial campfire!

The **Campfire Jam** is participatory! Bring your singing voice, acoustic instruments and enthusiasm for sharing music and community. Songs can be led by anyone, so bring your favourite tune to share and sing together, regardless of your musical background. Call-and-response, a capella choir anthems, folk rock favourites and regional or cultural songs are welcome! A projector screen will be set up to provide chords and lyrics.

Feeling crafty? All attendees are welcome to join the **Craft Corner** for an evening of making, mending, and meeting new friends! Folks will be able to choose between a few options. Materials will be provided for DIY seed packets, where you can fold, decorate, and label a little packet for your seeds. Do you have a project you're working on? All are welcome to bring their knitting, crochet, collages, drawings and whatever else to work on while in the company of other friendly crafters. Just need to darn a hole in your sock? We'll be doing that too! All in all, a cozy creative time for winding down after a long day of learning and socializing.



# THURSDAY KEYNOTE

Thursday, December 5  
8:45 - 10:00 AM

## Black Earth Wisdom- Afro-Ecological Survival Strategies Ballroom

Ecological humility is part of the cultural heritage of Black people. While our 400+ years immersion in racial capitalism has attempted to squash that inter-connection to the sacred earth, there are those who persist in believing that the land and waters are family members, and who act accordingly. In Black Earth Wisdom, Leah Penniman weaves together the lessons from today's most respected Black environmentalists, those who have cultivated the skill of listening to the lessons that Earth has whispered to them. In this time, we are acutely aware of the fractures in our system of runaway consumption and corporate insatiability. The path forward demands that we take our rightful places as the younger siblings in creation, deferring to the oceans, forests, and mountains as our teachers. Those whose skin is the color of soil are reviving their ancestral and ancient practice of listening to the Earth to know which way to go. As Dr. Carver explained, "How do I talk to a little flower? Through it I talk to the Infinite. And what is the Infinite? It is that silent, small force... that still small voice."

**Leah Penniman** is a Black Kreyol farmer, mother, soil nerd, author, and food justice activist from Soul Fire Farm in Grafton, New York. She co-founded Soul Fire Farm in 2010 with the mission to end racism in the food system and reclaim our ancestral connection to land. As Co-ED and Farm Director, Leah is part of a team that facilitates powerful food sovereignty programs. The work of Leah and Soul Fire Farm has been recognized by the Soros Racial Justice Fellowship, Fulbright, Heinz Prize, Pritzker Environmental Genius Award, Grist 50, and James Beard Leadership Award, among others. Her books, *Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land* (2018) and *Black Earth Wisdom: Soulful Conversations with Black Environmentalists* (2023) are love songs for the land and her people.

## SESSIONS

Thursday, December 5  
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

### Digging Deep: Asparagus Rideau Room

Agricola Cooperative Farm relies on organic asparagus as an early season crop. In addition to 10 acres of mixed vegetables and cut flowers, they have been farming three acres of asparagus since 2019. The asparagus crop draws clientele to their on-farm kiosk and annual asparagus festival. Join Heather from Agricola for a deep dive into all things asparagus: maintaining older beds, establishing new ones, seed and crown sourcing, dealing with weeds and pests, harvesting, and marketing.

**Heather Syposz** is a part of Agricola Cooperative Farm, a certified organic vegetable, flower and asparagus farm in Papineauville, Quebec on unceded Algonquin Anishinaabe, Mohawk and Huron-Wendat territory. Agricola sells directly to customers through a weekly 275-family CSA, on-farm kiosk, 2 weekly farmer's markets and a producer's cooperative. Founded in 2019 by four friends, the cooperative has since grown to include two new cooperative members and an additional team of six seasonal employees.



### Non-native Fruit and Nut Cultivation Regal Room

In this session, the authors of *Cold-Hardy Fruits and Nuts* will cover a shortlist of productive and edible fruit- and nut-bearing crops that push the boundaries of what can survive winters in cold-temperate growing regions. The session will focus on crops with fewer pest and disease problems and overall higher levels of resilience than many common orchard crops. This session will focus on non-native fruits and nuts.

See page 11 for **Allyson Levy** and **Scott Serrano's** bio.



## Seeding Interconnection Through Your Farm Work: In conversation with Leah Penniman Ballroom

Join Soul Fire Farm's Leah Penniman to dive deeper into the themes of inter-connection presented in the "Black Earth Wisdom Keynote." Come prepared to share how you aspire to embody ecological humility on your farm or land project. We will share some practical ideas for implementing earth-wisdom on the farm - from cycles of fallow, to "rights of nature" clauses, to offerings and divination. This will be a conversational session.

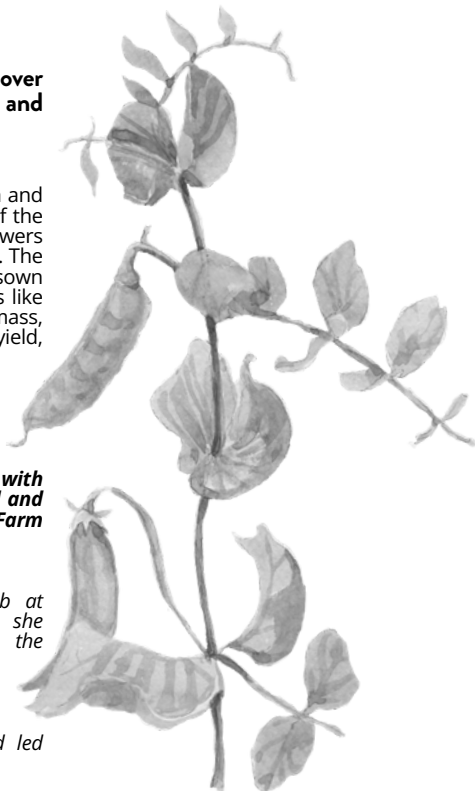
See page 15 for **Leah Penniman's** bio.

## Breeding for Biomass and Beyond: Cover crop breeding progress, potentials, and farmer participation Ottawa Room

Cover cropping offers an array of soil health and farm-system resiliency benefits, but much of the seed is of unidentified origin, such that growers cannot rely on its suitability for their climate. The Cover Crop Breeding Network develops fall-sown legume cover crops and cereal rye for traits like winter hardiness, early vigor, high biomass, disease resistance, early flowering, seed yield, and soft seed. Solveig will describe the network's progress in breeding winter pea, hairy vetch, crimson clover, and cereal rye for traits that optimize cover cropping systems.

***This session is presented in partnership with Farmers for Climate Solutions, Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association and the On-Farm Climate Action Fund.***

**Solveig Hanson** joined Virginia Moore's Sustainable Cropping Systems Breeding Lab at Cornell University in January 2023, where she coordinates research and outreach for the nationwide Cover Crop Breeding Network. In a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of British Columbia, she coordinated a Canada-wide farmer variety trialing network (which included many EFAO members!) and led participatory breeding efforts in carrot.



## Creating a Mutually Beneficial Work Environment Lisbon Room

Cultivating a positive work environment on the farm is as important as, say, maximizing efficiencies. In fact the two are inextricably linked. Join Renée Primeau from Tourne-sol Co-operative Farm to hear how she and her team work to foster a positive work environment where employees return year after year resulting in more streamlined operations and a broader sharing of responsibilities.

**Renée Primeau** is one of the 5 founding members of Tourne-sol Co-operative Farm, which produces organic vegetables, seeds and cut flowers on 15 acres in Les Cèdres, Quebec. The farm is in its 19th season and has now grown to 9 co-op members. Renée co-manages the vegetable team on the farm where she strives to create a space where new and returning employees can find fulfillment, satisfaction and joy at work.

# LUNCHTIME EVENTS

Thursday, December 5  
12:00 - 1:30 PM

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## Meet-up for the Farmers Network for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour Ballroom

Let's catch up after a busy season! Grab your lunch and join us for some in-person time, build community, relax, share stories, challenges and laughter with new and old friends. For current / former / aspiring farmers, food growers or producers and land stewards. Look for our tables with signage. Folks interested in also attending the Meet-up for Seed Growers are very welcome to drop into both spaces.

## Meet-up for Seed Growers Ballroom

This informal lunch gathering is a unique opportunity for seed growers, on-farm breeders, and anyone passionate about seed work to connect face-to-face. Whether you're a seasoned grower or just starting out, this meet-up is a chance to learn from each other, celebrate the joys and challenges of seed saving, breeding, and production, and discuss the vital role we play in building resilient seed systems. Let's enjoy a shared meal, foster lasting connections, and support one another in cultivating high-quality, diverse seeds to meet the needs of our communities! Folks interested in also attending the Meet-up for the Farmers Network for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour are welcome to drop by both spaces over the lunch hour.

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# SESSIONS

Thursday, December 5  
1:30 - 3:00 PM

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## On-Farm Research In Action Ballroom

Learn about some of the latest innovations from on-farm research in Ontario in cooperation with EFAO's farmer-led research program and the province-wide Living Lab-Ontario project. Kara Tremblay will give an overview of Leading Cloud Garden at Apitipi Anicinapek Nation; Eric Barnhorst will share about his trial looking at regenerating fallow fields for vegetable production; and Hailey Mayfield will share two multi-farm endeavours trialing no-till potatoes using deep mulch and measuring plant available nitrogen from cover crops.

***Eric Barnhorst** grows vegetables for a CSA and for local markets through Eva Mae Farm in Brighton, which has been operating since 2014. In addition, Eric conducted several research trials in cooperation with EFAO's Farmer-led Research Program, including comparing different methods for restoring land for organic vegetable production.*

***Hailey Mayfield** farms in Northumberland County, where she currently manages alongside the owner of Cold Springs Organics. Together they oversee the crop planning, field and harvest productions, and the crew. Hailey has a deep interest in improving crop productivity through plant breeding, soil enriching, and infrastructure changes, thus participating in two EFAO Farmer-Led Research trials this season.*

***Kara Tremblay** is an Algonquin Cree woman and leads the Apitipi Anicinapek Nation Food Initiative, Leading Cloud Gardens, which provides the community with veggies, fruit, starter plants in the spring and standing planters to promote growing food at home. Kara's vision for Leading Cloud Gardens is to establish a hydroponics center, a cold storage room, and a three-season greenhouse to extend the growing season and provide ample space for cultivating food. She envisions community members coming together to engage in all aspects of gardening. Through these activities, Kara hopes to instill a strong sense of ownership, pride, and connection to the land, creating a resilient and sustainable food system for future generations.*

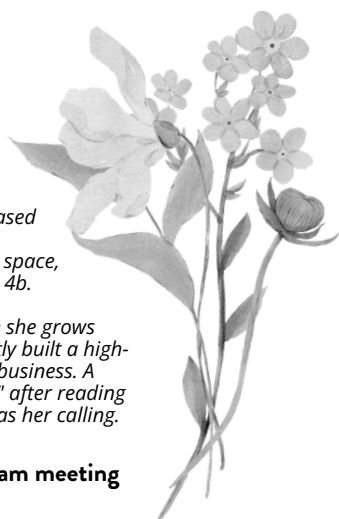
## A Bloom for Every Season

### Regal Room

Learn how cut flowers can be a year-round income generator for you. Join two experienced Ontario flower growers who will share their tips for season extension, early blooms and when/how you might use greenery to extend the flower income stream.

**Akosua Asare** runs re.Planted Farm, an urban flower farm based in Deep River. She cultivates cut flowers for weddings, a CSA, retail and wholesale on less than 2200 sq ft of growing space, using organic and regenerative agricultural practices, in Zone 4b.

**Brenda Visser** runs Flowers of the Field near Brockville where she grows thousands of field flowers, from Astilbes to Zinnias and recently built a high-yield passive solar greenhouse to expand her award-winning business. A former master gardener, she left her "administrative desk life" after reading the *The Flower Farmer* by Lynn Byczynski and knowing that was her calling.



## Facilitation Fundamentals: Running a great (farm) team meeting

### Rideau Room

Meetings don't have to be painful! Come learn how to plan, structure and run a team meeting that is effective, productive and joyful! In this workshop, we will work through scenarios so that you leave equipped with practical skills to build morale and team cohesion on your farm. You will receive a template of how to run a meeting as well as tips and strategies to keep a meeting moving towards concrete and achievable next steps.

**This session is sponsored by Agriculture Wellness Ontario.**

See page 11 for **Madeline Marmor** and **Heather Thoma's** bios.

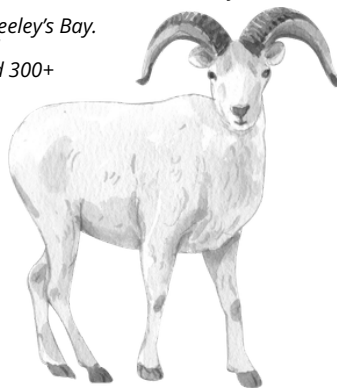
## Get Yer Goat: The ins and outs of raising goats on a mixed farm

### Lisbon Room

Adding goats into a mixed farm can provide many benefits and also present some challenges. Both Lindsay and Lauren have been raising goats as part of their operations for diverse purposes - customer experiences, dairy, meat, soil benefits - and have a lot to share about their experience. If you already raise goats, are thinking about introducing goats to your farm or want to learn more about what this might entail, this session is for you.

**Lindsay Hadcock** is an engineer turned goat farmer in Seeley's Bay. Along with a herd of Nubian goats, Lindsay and husband Dan grow garlic and hay. Goat Ridge Farm is on a rugged 300+ acres in the Frontenac Arch Biosphere where trees, rocks and wetlands are more plentiful than cultivated land. Spring through fall they invite visitors to walk the property with their herd of very friendly goats, offering a unique agricultural experience.

**Lauren Nurse** runs Small Spade Farm, a no-till, regenerative, 7-acre CSA farm located on unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishnaabeg and Mississauga First Nations, north of Stirling. Small Spade Farm was established in 2011. Lauren and Eric grow regionally adapted heirloom crops using organic principles and have a herd of very spoiled Dwarf Nigerian dairy goats and a flock of (also spoiled) heritage breed laying hens.



## A Conversation About Collaboration, Creativity and Compromise on the Farm Ballroom

Does the word "collaboration" light you up or make you shudder? Come hear a range of experiences from farms and farmers who cooperate - what's worked, what's irked, and what would they do differently if they could try it all over again? After a brief introduction to a few co-op experiences, you'll have the opportunity to join a smaller group conversation to dive deeper into a particular theme.

**Hannah Hunter** is a part of Agricola Cooperative Farm, a certified organic vegetable, flower and asparagus farm in Papineauville, Quebec on unceded Algonquin Anishinaabe, Mohawk and Huron-Wendat territory. Agricola sells directly to customers through a weekly 275-family CSA, on-farm kiosk, 2 weekly farmer's markets and a producer's cooperative. Founded in 2019 by 4 friends, the cooperative has since grown to include two new cooperative members and an additional team of 6 seasonal employees.

See page 7 for **Hannah Atkinson Renglich's** bio, page 11 for **Madeline Marmor's** bio, and page 12 for **Dan Brisebois's** bio.



## Growing Your Business: Telling stories and counting beans Regal Room

A growing business needs resonant stories to give it loft as well as solid metrics to keep it grounded. In this interactive session, Brent will talk a bit about how Heartwood Farm & Cidery thinks about marketing and growth, leaving room to focus on the areas most interesting to attendees.

**Brent Klassen** and his wife Val Steinmann have lived at Heartwood Farm in Erin since moving from Toronto many years ago. During that time, they've raised a variety of grass-fed livestock, made maple syrup, and planted fruit and nut orchards. In 2015 Heartwood Farm & Cidery was born and now produces a variety of hard ciders that are commercially available at Heartwood's farm store, a few farmers' markets, and at selected local restaurants. Prior to establishing the cidery, Brent was the founding partner of a couple marketing firms.

## The Cows Are Out AGAIN? Livestock Mishaps Turned Opportunities Rideau Room

Join Katrina McQuail and Sarah Martin-Mills as they share mistakes and challenges from their experience raising mixed livestock - cattle, pigs and poultry. From fencing and feed, to disease and breeding, and everything in between, Sarah and Katrina will share stories of their journey and how things that may have seemed insurmountable in the moment turned out to be incredible lessons and even sometimes blessings in disguise.

**Sarah Martin-Mills** moved with her family from New Hamburg to Cambridge in 2016 and founded a nonprofit called Growing Hope Farm, which employed at-risk youth and other marginalized people. She was behind such creative revenue-earning offerings as goat yoga and lamb bottle-feeding! In 2023, Sarah and her family made the move to Creemore, where she currently farms at The New Farm.

See page 13 for **Katrina McQuail's** bio.

**Lessons From Urban Ag: Micro scale efficiencies**

Ottawa Room

Did you know that Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) has two rooftop farms, 80 crops in production, and distributes an average of 3,000 kg of produce annually, all in less than ½ an acre? The campus rooftops are dynamic spaces where the community can engage in ecological farming practices, research collaborations and hands-on learning opportunities, such as the Black Food Sovereignty initiative, the Indigenous Foodways program, and the Ecological Market Garden. Come learn how the TMU Urban Farm produces a considerable amount of food on a limited footprint and how micro scale farming can support food sovereignty when land access is limited.

**Samantha Williams** is the Indigenous-led Programs Coordinator at Toronto Metropolitan University. Samantha has contributed to the research and design of new programs for Indigenous Initiatives across TMU. While completing her degree in Professional Communications at TMU in 2019, Samantha volunteered at the Urban Farm harvesting tobacco. She suggested the idea of an Indigenous medicine garden, which inspired the beginning of the Indigenous Foodways Program.

**Ines Lacarne** is the Field Engagement Coordinator at Toronto Metropolitan University. Ines began her career in ecological market gardening eight years ago and has been overseeing field activities and leading crews of students and volunteers on the rooftop farm at TMU for the past five years. Ines is passionate about getting to know and working with local ecosystems, and has completed training on permaculture, living soils, and nature connection.

**Nicole Austin** is the Black-led Programs Coordinator at Toronto Metropolitan University. Nicole is an ardent food justice advocate who knows nutrition and food are central to individual and community health and well-being. Nicole firmly believes positive, sustainable food system transformation comes through collaboration, intentional reconciliation, knowledge reclamation and knowledge-sharing.

**Arlene Throness** is the Urban Farm Manager at Toronto Metropolitan University. Arlene is passionate about growing, sharing and enjoying food. Prior to TMU, Arlene was the Coordinator of Concordia University's Rooftop Greenhouse and a founder of its City Farm School. Arlene was a recipient of the Toronto Botanical Garden's 2015 Aster Awards, given to individuals who embody the mission to transform our city by connecting people to plants and the natural world.

**Social Networks for Healthy Soils**

Lisbon Room

This workshop will focus on developing recommendations for how policymakers can support farmer-led research and other farmer knowledge-exchange networks that facilitate adoption of ecological farming practices. Come learn about the research that has been taking place since 2019 as part of the University of Guelph's Social Networks for Healthy Soils project. Funded by OMAFA, this research was done in partnership with EFAO and Ontario Soil Network. This participatory workshop is targeted at farmers, food and farming organizations, and anyone with an interest in agrifood policy. We will present research findings and invite participants to help shape policy recommendations for OMAFA.

**Baran Karsak** is a Postdoctoral Scholar in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Guelph. He holds a PhD degree in Sociology from Northeastern University, and his research focuses on the sociology of food and agriculture.

**Erin Nelson** is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Guelph. Her research explores ecological farming initiatives in Canada and Latin America, including how they can be strengthened through knowledge-exchange and the role they play in enhancing ecological resilience and community wellbeing. As a community engaged scholar, Dr Nelson works in close collaboration with a wide range of partners, including civil society organizations and farmer networks.

# TRADE SHOW EXHIBITORS

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Take time to visit the Trade Show. These exhibitors are all invested members of Ontario's ecological agriculture community; suppliers of equipment and inputs, consultants and educators, and community and industry organizations.

- Acti-Sol
- Agricultural Wellness Ontario (AgWO)
- Alfalfa Green Organic Fertilizers
- Brass Point Farm
- Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN)
- Canadian Organic Growers (COG)
- E&F Sauder Sales and Service
- EcoCert
- Field & Fleece
- Fleming College
- Grow Insight Consulting Inc.
- High Mowing Organic Seeds
- Ignatius Farm
- Kingston Area Seed System Initiative (KASSI)
- MD Micros
- Multi-Shelter Solutions
- National Capital Commission (NCC)
- National Farmers Union - Ontario (NFU-O)
- Neudorff North America
- New Society Publishers
- Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA)
- Organic Council of Ontario (OCO)
- Orisha
- PlusPost
- Sustain Ontario, staffed with Just Food and Farms at Work
- Water Farmers

# REFLECTION WALL & EVALUATION

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We really value hearing your thoughts and feedback on this year's conference. It helps us plan for next year! Please take a moment to share a Blossom and Bur from your conference experience on the collective reflection wall. Follow the sticky notes posted in the main conference areas...

**Blossom:** Something wonderful or appreciated about the conference

**Bur:** Something that is sticking with you from the conference (an idea, a curiosity, a next step...)

A paper conference evaluation form can also be found in your conference folder. Fill it out, tear out the bottom and include your contact information for a chance to win a full conference pass and 2-nights accommodation at next year's conference!

# MEALTIME ACCOMMODATIONS

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EFAO has reserved the **Lisbon Room** for use during conference meals (does not include breakfast) with the purpose of offering a space with a HEPA filter to attendees who need to take extra precautions against illnesses. This room has a mealtime capacity limit of 15 people. Therefore, we ask folks accessing this space to only use the room for time needed to eat, in order to allow more space and time for others to use the room. Please visit the registration desk if you have questions.

# CHILDCARE AND FAMILY ROOM

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Run by dedicated volunteers, childcare is available on both Wednesday and Thursday, during sessions from 8:30AM -12:00PM and 1:30-5:15PM in the **Toronto Room**. Please come to the registration desk if you have not already inquired about childcare. You will only need to pay for your child's meals. Payment can be made at the registration desk. Families can feel free to access and spend time in the childcare/family room even if they choose not to use the conference childcare option.

# CARROT CACHE INNOVATION PRIZE

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Carrot Cache is offering their annual \$1,000 prize for innovative, low-cost solutions to planting, harvesting and managing food grown on an Ontario urban or rural organic farm. Ideas submitted by conference participants will be displayed by the registration desk starting Wednesday morning and winners will be selected by conference attendees. Don't forget to come and vote for your favourite!



## CALL FOR CURIOSITY

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Engage your curiosities with on-farm research!  
Become a farmer-led researcher in 2025.

Attend the drop-in virtual office hours in January and discuss your research questions with EFAO staff! Visit [efao.ca/events](https://efao.ca/events) to register.

**Application deadline: Jan. 17, 2025, 11:59pm.**  
**Visit [efao.ca/funding](https://efao.ca/funding) to apply.**

## ABOUT EFAO

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### What We Do

Established in 1979 by farmers for farmers, the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO) is a membership organization that focuses on farmer-led education, research and community building. EFAO brings farmers together so they can learn from each other and improve the health of their soils, crops, livestock and the environment, to steward resilient ecological farms.

### Board Members

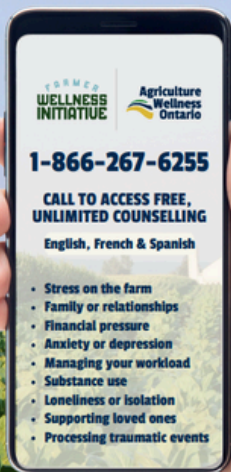
Anan Lololi  
Annette Peltier-Flamand  
Brent Klassen  
Denise Miller  
Isabelle Rodé

Katrina McQuail  
Melissa Watkins  
Ricardo Ramírez  
Rav Singh  
Sarah Martin-Mills

### Staff

Ali English, Executive Director  
Allison Muckle, Northern Outreach, New Farmer Programs & Operations Director  
Angel Beyde, Strategic Partnerships & Eastern Outreach Director  
Cassie Weaver, Education Coordinator  
Chloe Rodriguez, Events & Communication Coordinator  
Heather Newman, Research Coordinator  
Jackie Clark, Small Grains Program Manager  
Katie Baikie, Education & Policy Director  
Laura Northey, Communications & Engagement Director  
Martina Schaefer, Administrative & Membership Manager  
Rachel Lachance, Northern Events & Outreach Manager  
Rebecca Ivanoff, Seed Program Manager  
Sarah Larsen, Research & Small Grains Program Director

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