



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario Launches New Food Forest Program for Indigenous Farmers, Growers and Communities

Guelph, ON (November 19, 2025) – Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO) is launching a new Food Forest Program for Indigenous farmers, growers and communities through funding of up to \$1.4 million received from the governments of Canada and Ontario under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP).

The Indigenous Food Forest Program equips Indigenous farmers, growers and communities across Ontario with the **funding, knowledge, and mentorship** needed to design, establish, and care for resilient food forests that strengthen ecological health, food sovereignty, and cultural continuity. This program supports those living knowledge systems by resourcing Indigenous growers and communities to begin new food forest projects rooted in these ways of knowing and caring for the land.

“This investment honours Indigenous knowledge and helps strengthen food sovereignty, ecological health and well-being in communities across Ontario,” said the Honourable Heath MacDonald, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. “Supporting the Indigenous Food Forest Program empowers Indigenous farmers, growers and communities to build thriving, resilient food systems for future generations.”

“Our government appreciates the enormous value of food forests as a key element in Indigenous food sovereignty and as a support for strengthening resilience within Ontario’s agricultural sector,” said Trevor Jones, Ontario’s Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness. “The Indigenous Food Forest Program has terrific potential to bolster food supply and culture in areas of this province and to make a unique, grassroots contribution to our Grow Ontario agri-food strategy.”

“EFAO is honoured to have this opportunity to collaborate with Indigenous farmers, land stewards and communities to establish food forest projects. Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island have long cultivated food forest systems as part of ongoing land stewardship and food cultivation practices that sustain both people and ecosystems,” said Ali English, Executive Director of Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario.

For more information on the Food Forest Program and to apply please visit:

efao.ca/food-forests.

About Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario

Established in 1979, the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO) is a not-for-profit and membership organization that brings farmers, growers and land stewards 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 and ecosystems.

Over the past several years EFAO has been prioritizing working in collaboration with First Nation communities, Indigenous groups and individuals on knowledge-sharing events, mentorship and soil testing initiatives.

About Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership

The Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership is a 5-year, \$3.5-billion investment by federal, provincial and territorial governments to strengthen competitiveness, innovation, and resiliency of Canada's agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products sector. This includes \$1 billion in federal programs and activities and a \$2.5-billion commitment that is cost-shared 60% federally and 40% provincially/territorially for programs that are designed and delivered by provinces and territories.

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