

**Exit Report
Garden Coordinator Position
Campus Crops
Summer 2011**

Hi! My name is Alexandra Blair, and I was the garden coordinator for Campus Crops this summer. The following is an exit report, designed first to reflect on what was achieved during the summer, and second to counsel future garden coordinators on the position they are to fill.

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Summer Timeline and Work Plan , 2011

Coordinator's Weekly Plans:

- Meeting every week with MK folks: 2 hrs
- 2-3 gardening sets per week: (3 + 1 prep hrs/each) 12
- Email checking/Networking: 2
- Outreach: 5
- Research: 5
- Website/Blog/Photos: 1
- Garden upkeep (watering daily, pest control): 3
- Miscellaneous: 0-5

Total: 30-35 hours/week

May

- Keep watering seedlings in QPIRG until they're planted
- Start other seedlings if the others are dying
- Plant early, cold-resistant seedlings
- Brainstorm & research cool garden ideas
- Contact people for workshops/events; send out first emails
- Host Visioning meetings
- Recruit volunteers
- Catering for Anarchist Bookfair
- Finalize Budget
- Get collective training: anti-O + consensus
- Re-mix SWContainers
- Get materials for and build trellises
- Finalize details with THouse Project
- Get all the seedlings in the ground
- Build structures for cukes, beans—need wood, power tools, chicken wire
- Talk with MK: figure out what they need in terms of food for the months ahead.
- Be in touch with Santropol: workshops, gardening
- Have weekly collective meetings
- Liaise with QPIRG about the use of space

June

- Continue collective meetings
- Look into options for compost & rain catching
- Shopping: purchase all necessary materials
- Start 3 hour sessions in garden (3 times a week)
- 1-2 workshops: Food Politics 101 & Migrant Justice 101
- Work on alternative funding sources: start thinking about it.
- Receive info about McTavish street
- Volunteer Recruitment continues

July

- Continue collective meetings
- Continue 3 hour sessions in the garden: weeding, watering

- Start harvesting
- Start preserving
- 1-2 workshops
- Volunteer Recruitment continues

August

- continue collective meetings
- continue 3 hour sessions in the garden: weeding, watering
- Keep harvesting
- Keep preserving
- 1-2 workshops: preservation, fermentation, brewing
- Prepare for Rad Frosh
- Prepare for new volunteers

September

- Continue collective meetings
- Harvest Party with santropol
- Volunteer recruitment
- Volunteer training
- Rad Frosh workshops and events
- Plan fall crops
- Wrapping up & Knowledge Transfer starts
- Harvest (once/wk) to send to MK
- start putting things away

October/November

- Continue collective meetings
- Tend to fall crops
- Keep putting things away if possible
- Deal with compost container
- Apply for working-group status
- Train new collective members
- Put garden to bed
- Start working on Exit Report

Projects and Events, Summer 2011

- a) **Anarchist Bookfair Catering:** This is a task that is a key part of the garden coordinator's job in May. As coordinator for Campus Crops, I was expected to play a supporting role to my Midnight Kitchen co-workers. This translated into going to meetings, helping to prepare food, serving at the bookfair and doing shopping runs for the MK coordinators.

Catering at the bookfair is a great learning and networking experience. We fed about 2000 people throughout the weekend.

- b) **Trellis Building workshop:** At the beginning of the summer, I helped to coordinate a "Dig- In!" day at the garden. New and old volunteers were encouraged to come by the garden to help kick-start the growing season.

As part of this first big day of garden work, we built two beautiful wooden terraces for our tomato plants. I would recommend building another trellis next year* and encouraging volunteers to skill-share carpentry skills. Volunteers really enjoyed learning how to cut the wood & put the trellis together. I thought it was really empowering.

*In the crawl space below the stairs of the MSE we have a few saws and lots of remaining screws and nails. We also have a little bit of left over lumber, so future garden coordinator(s) should do an inventory check before buying new supplies.

About 25 people came to this event.

- c) **Campus Crops Library Project:** After noticing that most libraries around McGill's downtown campus were lacking in solid agriculture texts, I did some research in order to start a Campus Crops library. Though most of our resources can be easily found online, it can be useful to have a hard-copy text in the garden to look at as we collectively learn about pests and plants and growing techniques.

The two books I bought were the following:

The Square Foot Gardner by Mel Bartholomew

The Toolbox for Sustainable Living by Scott Kellogg

I would recommend investing in more books in years to come. Topics to look out for to compliment our library so far could be some of the following: medicinal plants and herbs, pest identification and control, permaculture design.

Currently, the books I purchased are in a yellow driesack under the MSE stairs. As a collective we might want to think about starting a Campus Crops section in the QPIRG library.

- d) Welcome Party BBQ:** This year was a tricky year for Campus Crops, specifically because many of its old-time members were itching to move on to new projects in Montreal and beyond. It was thus one of my tasks to do some serious outreach and volunteer recruitment.

The Welcome Party BBQ was designed as an event to welcome old and new volunteers to the garden space for a relaxing, mingling BBQ. We used a BBQ that belonged to Akshat (aknagpal3@gmail.com), one of the Campus Crops volunteers. We bought some coals, some tin foil and some food to roast. Attendees were invited to bring their own 'grillables.'

About 30-40 people came out to the BBQ. Many of the attendees came to the garden and did work throughout the summer. This BBQ was a very successful (and fun!) event.

- e) Urban Garden Bike Tour:** The "Urban Garden Bike Tour" was designed as a way to bridge campus and community, and to explore various urban gardening initiatives around Montreal.

There were 4 stops on the tour, this took up a full afternoon from 1 to 5 pm:

- *The Pheonix Garden in NDG, run by Actioncommuniterre.* I personally worked at this garden during the summer and thus had contacts with the coordinator there, Wanda O'Connor (wanoconnor@gmail.com).
- *Le Champs Des Possibles.* This Plateau/Mile End garden was run as a collective community squat garden. The contact for this garden space was Alex Briggs, a Campus Crops collective member (ajhbriggs@gmail.com).
- *The Santropol Rooftop Garden.* This garden in the Plateau was a total treat to visit. The contact was Tim Murphy (tim@santropolroulant.org).
- *A land-share garden in NDG, where gardeners were using a community member's backyard to grow their food.* The contact person for this garden was Caytee Lush, also a Campus Crops member (caytee13@hotmail.com).

I would really recommend doing bike tours again. It was so much fun, and folks really enjoyed seeing all the various ways of growing food in the city.

If I were to do it again, I would contact the Eco-Quartier CDN, which runs community gardens in Cote des Neiges. I think having the tour pass through Little Italy, Parc Extension and Cote des Neiges would be a really solid idea to bridge different communities. A lot of people had never been to NDG or through Cote des Neiges before this bike tour.

Approximately 15-20 folks came out to this bike tour.

- f) Migrant Justice Workshop:** The goal of this workshop was to learn more about temporary foreign worker programs and issues around race and class as they intersect with food politics.

During this workshop, members of the Immigrant Workers Centre and Dignidad Migrante discussed the intersections between food production and the racist and exploitative nature of Canada's immigration policies. This workshop offered information and testimonials about Canadian Temporary Foreign Worker Programs. It focused particularly on the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) with the aim of uncovering a side of "food politics" that often goes under-examined; this workshop complicated the discourse that *local is always better*.

We needed to get a translator to do Spanish to English translation. I contacted Julien Malard (julien.malard@yahoo.com).

This was a really rad workshop. I even got interviewed by the Mirror and got to put the word out about Campus Crops. The workshop was also video-recorded by Concordia University TV, and should be in their archives. Though the Mirror and CUTV came to us, I would suggest future garden coordinators get in touch with these media resources to do publicity for our events.

Approximately 15 people came to this workshop.

- g) Increasing accessibility in the garden:** After participating in a few anti-ableism workshops, I started thinking hard this summer about ways to make the Campus Crops gardens more accessible to people with disabilities—specifically for folks who use wheelchairs or have mobility difficulties.

I did some research into ways to make a gardening space more accessible, and found many interesting resources:

- <http://www.apparelyzed.com/accessible-gardens/accessible-garden.html>
- <http://www.inthecountrygardenandgifts.com/jspece/gardening/accessible.html>

The main technique we used in the terrace garden was to elevate all the self-watering containers by a foot or so, using extra recycling bins. This elevated the containers to a height that would be easily accessible by someone using a walker or a wheelchair.

This initiative got the attention of AQEIPS, Quebec Association for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities.

The director of this organization contacted me to include a segment on Campus Crops in their seasonal bulletin. Her contact information is here if ever future coordinators would like more information:

Yolanda Muñoz González, yolandamg@sympatico.ca

- h) Santropol Harvest Party:** This year, Campus Crops participating in Santropol's Harvest Party, the Iron Chef cookoff. We bought about 200 ears of corn for \$120, about 4 pounds of butter and rented two large propane burners, two large pots and two propane tanks from Location Gervais:
<http://www.locationgervais.com/diaporama-BBQ-et-accessoires.php>

We also made a big pot of soup and a few cakes with the help of the Midnight Kitchen. Santropol provided us with tables, bowls and utensils.

I recommend having a float of \$50-75, which lots of small change. You can borrow cash boxes from the SSMU. Tell the desk you are interested in borrowing one; you can say that you are part of the Midnight Kitchen collective.

Having us there is a huge help for Santropol. It's a bit of work on our end because we have to run around town picking up equipment and corn. For this activity, it was really helpful to have access to a car the day of the event *as well as* the morning after (to return the equipment to the rental place).

Because it's a lot of work, I would encourage the collective to ask if there is enough interest AND availability in the collective to put on the corn roast. Availability made this event a little tricky to swing. In the end, it all worked out. We almost broke even (we were under by about \$50). However, this is NOT an event the coordinator can put on solo.

In future years, I would recommend having lots of publicity flyers and maybe a banner for the table. I couldn't find the banner we've used in the past—it may have been lost in a QPIRG cleaning session. I would thus recommend that the collective make a new banner for next year, as well as publicity materials for both Campus Crops and QPIRG.

I would estimate that we spoke to 150-200 people that night.

- i) Rad Frosh Workshops:** This year, Campus Crops put on two workshops for Rad Frosh: Permaculture & Urban Agriculture 101 and Food Politics 101. As a coordinator, I helped write up both of them but only facilitated the one Food Politics—with the help of the outreach coordinators for Midnight Kitchen.

Facilitating workshops for Rad Frosh is an excellent way to recruit new volunteers and new collective members. During Rad Frosh, I can estimate we spoke to about 200 first years, many of which came to the garden during gardening hours once they started school.

- j) Rad Frosh Scavenger Hunt:** The Scavenger Hunt was a separate activity from the Rad Frosh workshops. The Campus Crops garden was a location on the scavenger hunt map that the froshies were encouraged to explore. We were two collective members at the garden for around 2.5 hours, and were able to give a brief tour of

the garden and of the work that Campus Crops does as a collective to around 300 new McGill students. Around 175 of those signed up for our listserv, and several came by the garden to work in the weeks that followed.

I would encourage our collective to participate in the scavenger hunt in future years, as it is an excellent recruitment tool. Just get in touch with the Rad Frosh coordinators between June and July to make sure the garden is on the tour.

k) Fermentation Workshop: Campus Crops partnered with Midnight Kitchen to host a fermentation workshop in MK's kitchen. Collective member Alex Briggs facilitated the workshop, with the help of a friend, Lmar (whose contact information I do not know, unfortunately). Participants learned how to make kombucha and sauerkraut. The entire workshop was filmed by Concordia University TV and should be in their archives.

Around 30 people attended this workshop. It was very successful.

l) Thomson House Permaculture Garden: The THPG was a new project this year that was started by a few undergraduate students (namely Sami Fink), with the help of Christopher Wrobel, the PGSS, the Thomson House kitchen staff, and the SPF. The container/bed garden was set up on the north side of the THouse and grew mostly herbs. From what I could observe throughout the summer, the garden was beautifully successful.

Campus Crops did not serve as a *partner* in this project, but rather as a resource. We provided opinions on growing strategies, pest control, and permaculture design. We filled in for Sami Fink on days that she could not attend to the garden, and harvested herbs to bring to the chef. Moreover, a collective member of Campus Crops, Caytee Lush was independently hired as part-time staff for the project.

I would encourage future Campus Crops members to stay in touch with Chris Wrobel and the THPG project, as I find it a good idea for food-producing projects on Campus to work together. However, I don't think it's feasible for Campus Crops to help *run* the THPG – mainly because it is so far away from our main garden, and we don't have enough volunteers as it is to always run our own garden in the heat of summer.

m) Greening McTavish Project: This project was initiated by McGill in partnership with sustainable-design architects. Their aim was to create a textured, living surface to cover McTavish street. Campus Crops was invited to a meeting in early summer in order to meet the coordinators of the project, and see if we would want to plug in as the "student" component of the project. That is, the GMProject was hoping that students would help set up the designs on the ground, and possibly offer opinions on the project as well.

Curious, three Campus Crops members went to this first meeting: Alex Briggs, Tim

Sider and me. We had offered some suggestions around food-producing species to be planted in the ground, but our suggestions were met with (extremely valid) hesitations—mainly along lines of food safety.

In subsequent emails with the project coordinators it became clear that a) the timeline for this project was not extremely feasible, nor it did fit with our schedule or volunteer capacity, and b) many Campus Crops members held political reservations to this project (i.e. What are the *goals* of this project, and do they fit our political and environmental mandate?).

Mid-summer we realized that we did not have consensus as a collective as to whether we should participate in this project or not. Therefore, we held a meeting, had a long conversation about it, and decided by consensus that we would not longer be working with the Greening McTavish project. Instead, collective members would participate on an individual-basis.

n) Partnership with RECON Prisoner Support Project: A small project that I worked on this summer that did not come to fruition but could hopefully take place in future years, now that the groundwork has been laid down, is a partnership with local organization RECON. The latter is a QPIRG Concordia working group that does support work with prisoners serving life-sentences at the Federal Training Centre prison in Laval. The group aims, in part, to support re-integration efforts for the guys once they come back outside.

RECON members were interested in participating in a workshop on urban agriculture as part of their re-integration strategy. I met some of the outside volunteers and some of the guys inside, and everyone is really sweet and really interested. A workshop of this kind could potentially reach 20 people or so.

I believe it to be a good opportunity to share our knowledge with a community we do not often have access to, but which, politically speaking, is a community often shunned and lacking in support. If future collective members are interested in this idea, they should get in touch with me (amsblair@gmail.com)

o) Activities Night: As per usual, Campus Crops hosted a table at SSMU's Activities Night in September. We chatted with several hundreds of eager new students and had many sign up for our listserv. It's always a good idea to have a table at Activities Night for recruitment purposes –though next year I would recommend bringing food to lure in the passers by.

p) Putting Garden to Sleep: Late this fall, new and old volunteers got together to put the garden to sleep for the winter. This consisted of moving all the containers on the terrace to the north side, under the cover of the tall retaining wall. The containers were tilted so they could drain out more easily. We then covered the entire garden with about 8 inches of leaf mulch so as to keep it protected from the winter's harm. This is a permaculture technique. We used it this year so as to improve the health of

our soil. We also planted garlic, and put away the trellises and all the other tools. This was a lovely, collective way of finishing the growing season—and one that will hopefully improve yields next year. I would encourage future generations of Croppers to do the same.

- q) Knowledge Transfer:** In the fall, old Campus Crops members facilitated a meeting for new collective members. We had discussions about collective, consensus-based decision making, anti-oppression, knowledge and skill transfer, timelines, and plans for the future (drip irrigation systems, dismantling the knotweed patch, access to campus compost, soil testing. We established a google document that would become the group's "Master Document":

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qzo9OYN8DnD0h2pdwWna_nj6fX99EEe8G248e0apaho/edit?hl=en_US

Future collective members are encouraged to look to this document for any questions they may have.

- r) Working Group Application to QPIRG McGill:** An important task to do in the fall is also to re-apply to be a working group of QPIRG McGill. As a collective, we decided that we would still like to be a working group at QPIRG, mainly because we appreciate being able to use their space and photocopying machine. We submitted our proposal and got accepted again as a working group. *And* because we appreciate their mandate and their resources.

If future collective members ever have any questions about QPIRG or its space, they should get in touch with the staff members: qpirg@ssmu.mcgill.ca

- s) QPIRG Referendum:** This year was a special year for QPIRG and its working groups because it was a referendum year – that is, every 5 years the organization has to run a referendum question to the student body to confirm that students do indeed appreciate its existence. This year, working groups were thus expected to put in more energy than usual to support its mother organization in campaigning. Though my contract was technically over, I made sure to write an endorsement letter for QPIRG (which was published in the McGill Daily, and is currently on the I <3 QPIRG website). I also worked to obtain endorsements from other groups, namely from Santropol. The work done by the members of Campus Crops was invaluable to QPIRG's success in their referendum campaign.
- t) Media and Blog Updates:** This summer and fall I put a lot of energy into beefing up our internet presence. That meant adding a lot of pictures and writing to our facebook group's page, and to our blog. I recommend future Campus Crops folk to do the same, as I was told that many people referred to it for resources and links to events.

It was also through our website that many people came to contact us. For instance, I

was contacted by journalists from UdeM's student newspaper (PAGE 13: http://quartierlibre.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/QLvol19no3_5oct2011.pdf), and from the Mirror (<http://iwc-cti.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/THE-FRONT--Montreal-Mirror.pdf>).

Funding Strategies

Here are some ideas we came up with as a collective to raise funds for our collective:

- Apply for more funds from the Green Fund
- Samosa Sales
- Mushroom Sales
- Seed Sales
- T-shirt Sales (silkscreened at the Ste-Emilie Skillshare)
- Apply for more funds from QPIRG McGill
- Apply for government grants
- Establish a paid position through Emploi Quebec
- Apply for stipends from Midnight Kitchen
- Continue to apply for funds from the SPF
- Sell produce to the McGill cafeterias and to the Thomson House
- Have collective members donate a few dollars
- Offer workshops and ask for honorariums

Outreach and Media Information

Email, Blog, Listservs and People to Know

email: campuscrops@gmail.com

password: rightnow

Facebook: Campus Crops

Blog: campuscropsmcgill.blog.com

To sign into blog use same email and password as Google (you can't be logged into a different Google account if you want to sign into the blog because blogspot and google are connected or something)

Using the blog is relatively self-explanatory, but if you do get stuck, just Google search the question and it normally leads to a helpful response pretty quick

To add people to the general listserv go to <https://lists.riseup.net/www/> then sign in with the same email account and password, under 'Your Lists' choose campus crops, choose 'Review Members' and you can then add, delete or search for emails!

To add people to the Google Group 'Campus Crops' choose 'Groups' from the menu on the top right hand corner of the Inbox page (you must be logged into the account), then click on campuscrops.active under 'My Groups', on the list on the right hand click on 'Invite Members' and you can then either add them directly or invite them by email!

If you want to publicize an event in a big way, send the callout to Le Frigo Vert, QPIRG McGill, QPIRG Concordia, Greening McGill, SSMU EnvrioComm, Organic Campus, McGill Farmer's Market, The Concordia Greenhouse, Midnight Kitchen, The People's Potato, Gorilla Composting and anyone else you can think of!

Useful Contacts:

- Maddie Guerlain, summer garden coordinator in 2010 and long-time Campus Crops member: mguerlain@gmail.com
- Alexandra Blair, summer garden coordinator in 2011: amsblair@gmail.com
- Alex Briggs, long-time Campus Crops member: ajhbriggs@gmail.com
- Lilith Wyatt, SPF Coordinator: Lilith.wyatt@mcgill.ca
- Eric Champagne, Horticulture Supervisor for McGill and key person to speak to in terms of work on McGill Grounds: eric.champagne@mcgill.ca
- Concordia Greenhouse, which has a huge listserv potential: concordiagreenhouse@gmail.com
- Shannon Scott, who runs the MSE building and is in charge of anything space-related behind the MSE: Shannon.scott@mcgill.ca
- Rosemary Cooke, contact for the James Administration building: rosemary.cooke@mcgill.ca
- Chris Wrobel, key player in the Thomson House Permaculture garden, member of the PGSS Environment Committee: christopher.wrobel@mail.mcgill.ca
- Sami Fink, garden coordinator for the Thomson House Permaculture garden: samifink.is@gmail.com
- Tim Murphy, garden coordinator at Santropol Roulant: tim@santropolroulant.org
- UQAM garden project, CRAPAUD (Collectif de recherché en aménagement paysagiste et agriculture urbaine durable): contact@crapaud.info

- Eco-Quartier Peter McGill, which can offer resources, including access to composting units and rain barrels: 514-933-1069