

Yukon Agricultural Association Suite 203-302 Steele Street, Whitehorse, YT, Y1A 2C5



The Right Tool for the Job



Rob Hettler of Pilgrim's Produce has good advice for gardeners moving from growing a family garden to farming vegetables for market. Usually, that means finding the right tool so you can work smarter rather than harder. Many gardeners spend much of their gardening time on their knees bent over or twisting sideways. your body, choose tools that to complete a job while rather than crawling.

For many, the first job that needs to change is seeding. All know that careful spacing of seeds means less thinning and vegetable production later. Careful spacing is also a matter economics. A packet of seeds will go much farther and many more vegetables if you don't need to pull half of them seedling stage. Less thinning also means the young plants disturbed and will mature more quickly. Stan-Hay, Nibex, Earthway and Gramore make hand push models of seeders for market gardeners.



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The next job in the gardener's year is weeding. The proper progression for weeding is to start with mechanization – either a rototiller or hand push cultivator – in the alleys, then use a hoe between the rows, and only then resort to hand pulling weeds next to the plants. By making the tools easily accessible and the job less onerous, it is possible to catch weeds while they're less than a couple of inches tall. At this stage, a co-linear hoe will cut through them easily. It takes time and discipline to learn to use a new tool effectively. Give yourself that time. The time and strain on your body that you save will

be worth the effort.

Harvest time usually means cutting. A huge assortment of knives from around the world is available in garden centres and seed catalogues. Test several types to see what kind best fits the job you have to do and the way you like to work.

Set up a washing area where you can wash and package while standing up. Greens can be harvested in a mesh bag, dipped bag-and-all through several rinses and then spun dry in an old washing machine before final packaging for sale.

Sometimes, the tool you know you need is not available from a commercial source. Here is where a stash of old parts and a creative flair with welding can yield remarkable results. Rob has created many of his own wheeled tools.

This transplanter/harvester allows Rob to work in all weather. It was



built to straddle the three foot beds and allows the operator to work without twisting or crawling while transplanting or harvesting.

Hello Yukon Agricultural Association Members,

Rose Drury

As most of you know my last day is April 28th, and saying goodbye is harder than I thought it would be. I have learned a lot in my time working here, and I hope that I have passed on some good of myself to the association which has given a lot to me over the years. I started out in volunteering at the Klondike Harvest Fair with my mum, and then moved on to be the Administrative Assistant in 1999 under the tutelage of Deborah Nibecker, and ultimately in 2005 becoming Executive Director.

I appreciate the board taking a leap of faith in hiring me, as I didn't have experience in working as an Executive Director, and I had



a big job ahead of me! The prospect was a little daunting to say the least, and I was a new person, in a new job, with a new bookkeeper...thank god for the old board of directors who helped me through the first six months, which was one of the steepest learning curves I've ever been on!

I have had the opportunity to get to know a great many people while working for the association, and I appreciated everyone. I was inspired by many of you, with your passion, drive, determination in the face of so many impediments, generosity and love of working the land. Others of you challenged me and gave me the chance to gain wisdom and grow by teaching me, patience, dedication, introspection and tolerance.

I have come to admire so many people and am thankful for my time here,
Thank you all so much,

Out with the Old, In with the New

by Rick tone

I was born in 1948, raised on a farm in southwest Saskatchewan, proud to be a farmer's son, proud to be part of that agricultural community which was then known as the bread basket of the world. Imagine! The bread basket of the world! The very thought of sharing in that title was to me like stepping onto an Olympic podium to receive the Game's highest honours.

After high school, I attended the University of Saskatchewan where I completed a degree in Agriculture followed by a Post Graduate Diploma in Continuing Education. I worked for a technical college for one season teaching agricultural short courses to farmers following which I joined the staff of a Community College as a program coordinator where my duties included administration of the college's agricultural courses. My next career move was to the Human Resources Office of Agriculture Canada in Calgary where I was engaged as a management trainer teaching and facilitating courses such as basic supervision and problem solving and decision making. Thus began my 17 year career in human resources with the federal government

during which I worked for three departments including Agriculture Canada in Calgary, the Atmospheric Environment Service of Environment Canada in Toronto and, lastly, Indian and Northern Affairs in Vancouver.

I married my wife, Francine in Toronto. Together we raised four children, the youngest of whom is 17 and still with us here in the Yukon. Francine is a Financial Planner and it was her decision to buy out Johanne Gauthier, another financial planner in Whitehorse, which led to our move here from Delta in the lower mainland. Prior to this, Francine had been doing long distance business in the Yukon for some 10 years during which time she got to know many people and much of the Territory, and she fell in love with the place. Yukon is now our home and we expect to retire here. After all, like Hank Carr sings, "Where do you go after Yukon?".

During all this time, my interest in agriculture and my heart for farmers and rural communities has never waned. But over these same years, It seemed the public at large has virtually lost its appreciation for agriculture. Today it is hard to imagine a public which would think of Saskatchewan and its farms as the 'breadbasket of the world.' Rather many people think bread comes from Superstore, doesn't it?... and don't bother them with the details of how it got there just as long as it is cheap and plentiful.

The truth is agriculture is as important as it ever was but it has lost influence and public support as rural populations declined and the distance from farm to consumer has grown to the point where many consumers are as apt to believe that turnips grow on trees as believe that what happens to farmers and agriculture has any relevance to their lives.

Even within the farming community, where our children once viewed farming as an honorable profession and a desirable lifestyle, today it seems fewer and fewer want to farm.

Yet agriculture in the Yukon has been growing. The number of farms and farmers as well as the value of agricultural products produced is increasing. We are finding ways to positively influence public perception and public policy. We are working with agriculture professionals in the Territorial and Federal governments who are supporting our efforts to improve our farming methods and abilities, grow our farm markets and incomes and develop our industry. And central to all of this is the work of the Yukon Agricultural Association and its individual members, as well as the efforts of other groups working together to make agriculture a viable, sustainable, respectable, diverse and indispensable part of our economy and community.

Perhaps agriculture here may yet become known as the "food basket of the Yukon". May it be so.

I am delighted to join the Yukon Agricultural Association as your new Executive Director and look forward to working with and for you to accomplish our goals.
Best Regards to all,
Rick Tone



EAT LOCAL-by Mary Girouard, Rivendell Farms

As a child living in southern Ontario most of the food I ate was locally grown. With our own family garden, the neighbor's fruit trees and farms of all types around our town; as well as Dad's hunting and fishing, we ate very well, and mostly organic. Mom took seasonal work in the berry fields and

orchards nearby and the family enjoyed fabulous treats and deserts in season. Of course Mom would jam, can and preserve all she could to make the seasons last.

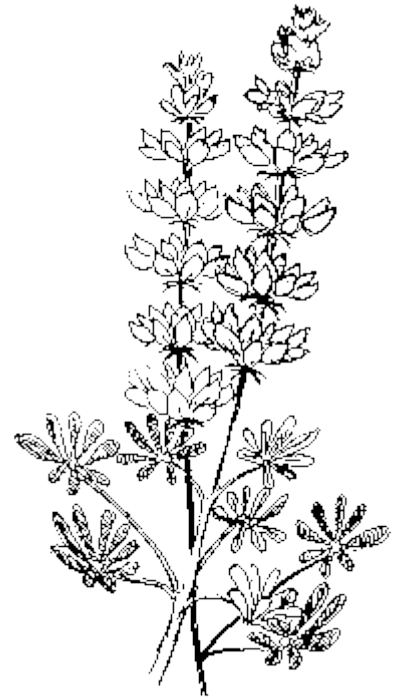
As time went by I moved further north and west and my food came from further away. By the time I arrived in the Yukon in 1975 virtually nothing I ate was grown within 1000 miles of here. My first spring in the Yukon saw several road closures on the Alaska Highway, and within three days the territory was out of fresh milk. I later learned the Yukon has about a two week supply of food on hand at any given time.

My first summer in the Yukon, I eyed my neighbor's garden longingly, and he generously gave me a head of lettuce. I ate it on the short walk home and thought it the best veggie I'd had in years. OF COURSE IT WAS!! This was also part of my motivation to become a gardener and a supporter and promoter of locally grown foods.

At the Certified Organic Associations of BC conference in Armstrong, Jen Gamble of the Shuswap Eat Local Project (created by Shuswap Food Action), informed our interest group about some ways they are creating an awareness of the benefits of eating locally produced foods. A local chef volunteered to lead local youth in cooking classes as well as preparing appetizers for a local artist's show as part of their program.

The benefits of eating locally produced food are many. First it tastes better, and it is better for you as it is fresher. Purchasing local foods supports local farm families and builds the local economy. By reducing the freighting of foods we support a clean environment that benefits wildlife. And local food helps to preserve genetic diversity.

The Yukon is still far away from the day we can say most of our food is produced locally, but if we keep on supporting local farmers, some day we may be a lot closer to sustainability, and eating locally might be the norm instead of the novelty.



GMO – Say NO for the Yukon –by Cain Vangel

At the recent Certified Organic Association of BC conference, a lot of interesting material was presented relating to organic agriculture. National Organic Standards have been prepared and are available from the Canadian General Standards Board. Apparently the organic industry is boasting growth rates of 20-40% per year. Presenters and participants discussed everything from pasture management to brewing organic ales.

From the information presented, organic agriculture is increasing, national standards are in the works and more and more information is available to farmers interested in this area. Organic agriculture aims for sustainability and quality above all else and encourages local production.

Interesting information was presented on Genetic Engineering (GE) or Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO). GMO are not acceptable in organic agriculture. The new national standards prohibit "all materials and products produced from genetic engineering as these are not compatible with the principles of organic production (growing, preparing and selling) and therefore are not accepted under this standard."

Dag Falck of GE FREE BC and Organic Program Manager for Nature's Path Food Inc, North America's biggest organic breakfast cereal producer posed the question: Are these products actually safe?

According to Dag all farms using GE products increased chemical use within 3 years.



BT corn and BT potatoes are genetically modified to have a pesticide built right into the plant. The question of food safety and whether these products are being rushed to market without adequate testing or controls is of concern. The use of BT corn caused an 80% decrease in hog reproduction rates on the various farms feeding this product.

The difference between GMO and pesticide/toxic contamination is that toxic contamination tends to dilute or dissipate over time whereas GMO crossbreed and multiply over time.

GMO usually contain a dominant trait and therefore, if action is not taken, contamination percentages will increase over time. Examples were given of test plots contaminating surrounding areas and GMO escaping into the environment.

GE Contamination already exists and if action is not taken to reduce or eliminate GE contamination, the percentage in crops will keep increasing over time. Once these GE products are released, it is difficult to contain them especially when considering factors such as wind spread pollination. This will potentially reduce markets in areas requiring low or no GMO content. GMO has forced larger food companies looking for non-GMO contaminated products to purchase non local and source their purchases from farther away in order to avoid GMO contaminated areas.

Non-GMO producers should not have to bear the cost of contamination. For example, there are farmers being taken to court for unknowingly growing GMO or having to sell premium organic grain as conventional because of GMO contamination. The problem with studies which prove GMO are harmful or are unsafe, is the GMO companies can afford to skew results on 10 others that show the opposite. The funds available for legal battles also favour the large companies as opposed to farmer groups.

Who knows if we can steer clear of GMO contamination in the Yukon? If we can, we can avoid the associated problems and be able to demand a premium for our non-contaminated products. We may even be able to provide a pristine environment for a repository of non-GMO contaminated seeds.

Jokes

Calgary, Canada (AP) -A seven year old boy was at the center of a Calgary courtroom drama yesterday when he challenged a court ruling over who should have custody of him. The boy has a history of being beaten by his parents and the judge initially awarded custody to his aunt, in keeping with the child custody law and regulations requiring that family unity be maintained to the degree possible. The boy surprised the court when he proclaimed that his aunt beat him more than his parents and he adamantly refused to live with her. When the judge suggested that he live with his grandparents, the boy cried out that they also beat him. After considering the remainder of the immediate family and learning that domestic violence was apparently a way of life among them, the judge took the unprecedented step of allowing the boy to propose who should have custody of him. After two recesses to check legal references and confer with child welfare officials, the judge granted temporary custody to the Calgary Flames, whom the boy firmly believes are not capable of beating anyone.



Last year I replaced all the windows in my house with those expensive double-pane energy efficient kind. But this week I got a call from the contractor complaining that his work had been completed a whole year ago and I had yet to pay for them.

Boy oh boy, did we go around! Just because I'm blonde doesn't mean that I am automatically stupid. So, I proceeded to tell him just what his fast-talking sales guy had told me last year - that in one year the windows would pay for themselves.

There was silence on the other end of the line so I just hung up and I haven't heard back.

Guess I won that stupid argument.

We all eat for a living.

By Joan Norberg

A catchy phrase but it is true. What we choose to eat is another story. While most of us try to make healthy choices and some of us are able to get local food, how many of us can say we are able to eat local in a restaurant? In the Yukon it is almost unheard of, although it can happen. The Yukon Grain Farm supplies potatoes to some of the restaurants. And some other farms have been able to sell their vegetables too. But for them to have a constant supply of local produce something else has to happen.

A few weeks ago, I attended a conference put on by the Certified Organic Associations of BC. I was really inspired by one particular speaker. He was David Mincey from the Island Chef's Collaborative. Ten years ago the collaborative was formed by chefs who were frustrated with the fact that most farmers were either retiring or going out of business. By sitting down with a group of farmers they were able to come up with a plan that would work for both sides. By partnering with new farmers, they not only guarantee a sale for what the farmer grows

(therefore removing some of the risk) they also will walk the fields with the farmer. By learning the cycles of a growing season a chef learns what to expect locally. A farmer also learns how to grow for the restaurant market and that big isn't always better. A 40lb cabbage is impressive to look at but the only thing that can be done with it in a restaurant would be soup or maybe cabbage rolls. But baby cabbage or any other baby vegetable makes a nice side dish or can be used in stir-fry. This collaboration between farmer and chef has caused each group to stretch outside their comfort zone. It has also resulted in the chefs becoming more creative in menu planning and the farmers learning what really constitutes a valuable crop. It also creates a community that works together.

As a culture we have been spoiled into thinking that the world is our grocery store. Anything we want, we expect to have - whether or not it is in season. By eating locally and in season, we will learn a new appreciation for the foods we eat. Nothing tastes as good as fresh picked peas, new potatoes or corn on the cob picked after the pot was put on to boil. We don't realize how much we can do until we try. After all, we do all eat for a living - and what a living it could be if we all worked together.



Riparian Setbacks: Understanding Policy and Regulations for Agriculture Setbacks

Written April 2007: By Matt Ball and David Murray

There has been considerable confusion in the last few years over what is an appropriate setback for a new piece of agricultural property and what the standards are that must be followed. This document explains the various laws that apply to setbacks in Yukon.

There are various municipal, territorial and federal laws that govern the distance between titled agriculture lands and water bodies (ie: setbacks). During the application process for a new piece of property care is taken not to contravene any of these laws.

There are two Territorial Acts which apply to setbacks: the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act and the Municipal Act. The Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act states that a strip 30.5 m in width measured from the ordinary high-water mark shall be reserved. Some of the reasons for this setback are to allow for the navigation of the water body, the landing of boats on the shore, temporary use of the shoreline, and general public access.

The Municipal Act provides for local area planning. A major focus of local plans is to determine appropriate setbacks for valued ecological components. Around the Whitehorse area there are a number of local area plans and each emphasizes values which are important to their communities. The setbacks specified in the plans vary greatly within plans and between the different plans. For example, the Hamlet of Ibex Valley Area Plan has setbacks of 100 m from the ordinary high-water mark along the Takhini River, whereas the Deep Creek Community Plan states 30 m from the vegetation break along Deep Creek, and then the Golden Horn Local Area Plan has setbacks of 200 m along the Yukon River. These specified setbacks are part of the Yukon Government land disposition decision.



There are two Federal Acts which apply to setbacks: the Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Act (YESAA) and, in rare circumstances, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA). YESAA, made law in 2003, is the most important process determining appropriate setbacks by following guidelines and consulting with various stakeholders. There are a number of factors that can alter the setback from the minimums stated in the examples above. Some of these factors are: the slope of the bank to the water body, the condition of the land, the future use of the land, the existing cultural or scenic value along the water body, corridors for animal movement, and to facilitate other land uses and management considerations.

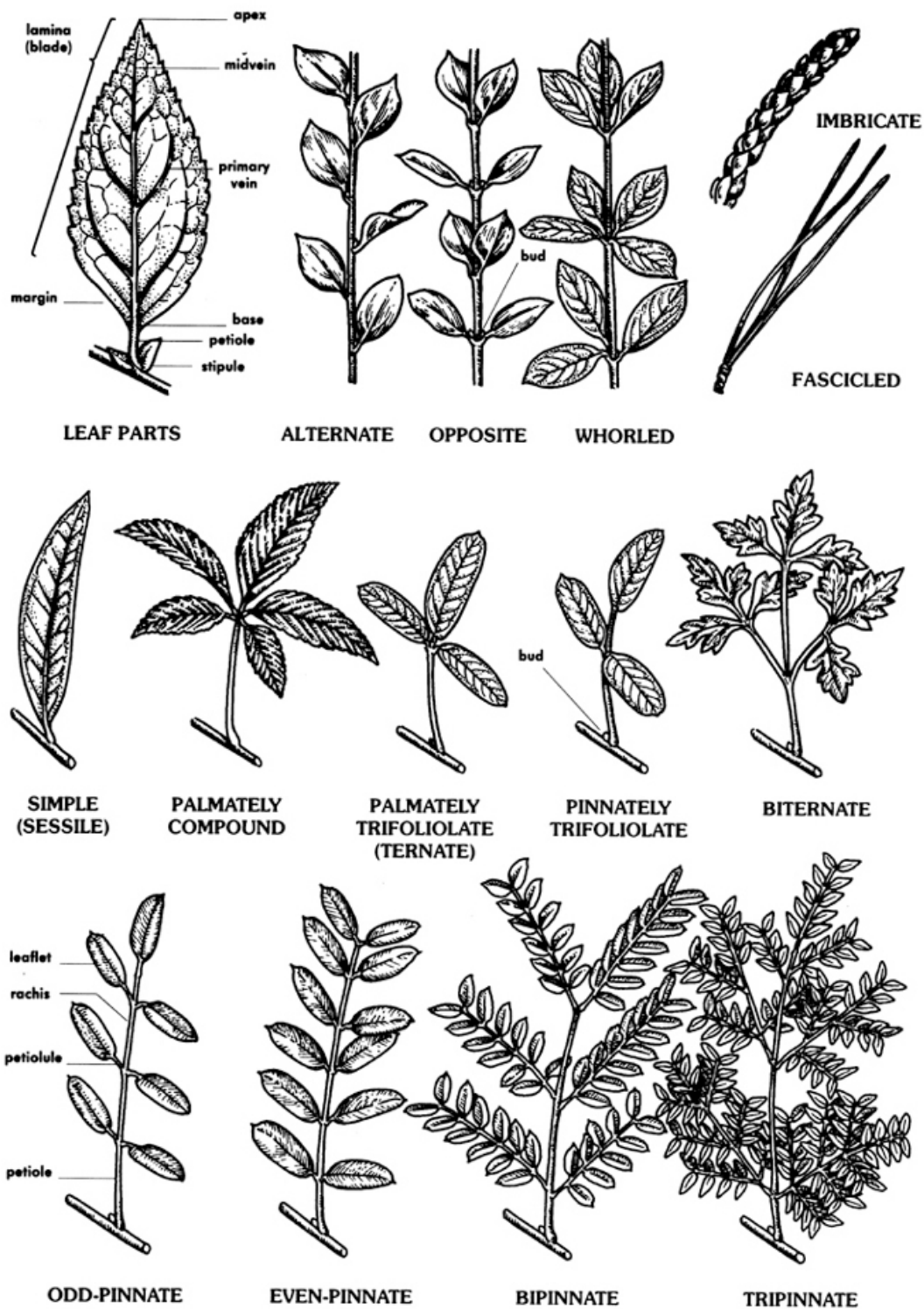
There is no formula for setbacks, as listed above, a number of factors are taken into account when determining the appropriate width between the water body and the titled agriculture property. Every land application is looked at on a case by case basis considering all applicable laws and land uses.

The avenue for an applicant, or other interested parties, to provide positive input is through the YESAA public registry. When your project goes into the Designated Office and into the assessment process it is very important for you to provide your reasons for smaller setbacks including the economic impact on your farm operation, the need for irrigation, and if possible your local knowledge of the area.

Equine Information

The Midnight Sun Equestrian team, a youth based organization spearheaded by Britney Schmidt and Stephanie Choquette, is hosting an Equine Extravaganza July 15 (time to be announced) at the Yukon Horse and Rider Association (YHRA) Show Grounds. For more information about this event please contact Stephanie at 668-5884 or via email at msequestrianteam@hotmail.com

PLATE 2. LEAF COMPOSITION, PARTS, AND TYPES



as published in Swink, F. and G. Wilhelm. 1994. *Plants of the Chicago region*. 4th ed. Indianapolis: Indiana Academy of Science.