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## **Goodness growing on Galiano** ~ Nicole Mouner

To experience a cascade of cucumber, bushes of basil and mountains of melon all you have to do is swing by the new Galiano Community Greenhouse located at the Galiano Community School. The doors have been open since summer solstice 2010 and things have taken off!

Over the past two years, the Galiano Food Program has been asking islanders what they need to become more self-sufficient with regards to feeding themselves. One resounding response was the desire to grow fresh food throughout the winter, or to extend the growing season in general. After a visit from Linda Gilkeson, author of *Year-Round Gardening*, and a cold-frame building workshop, we were ready for something big. With the financial support of Vancity, Galiano Trading, and Stevens Excavating, that opportunity has finally arrived on Galiano.

In January 2010, Genny Stirling and I were asked to coordinate the creation of the greenhouse. This was our first task as the Food Program's first youth interns. We dove in head first and six months later we emerged with dirt on our hands and life lessons in our pockets. Working with the school board, school staff, the CRD, the Galiano Club, our wonderful foreman John Parfitt, and all the fantastic volunteer labourers, taught us more than we could have imagined. Everywhere we turned we found support for the project and patience to walk with us through the process.

The greenhouse itself is 16' by 20', made of 3mm polycarbonate plastic and has an aluminum frame. It has four roof vents which open and close automatically depending on temperature and two doors on the south side. The structure was purchased as a kit from BC Greenhouse Builders who generously donated delivery. The inside perimeter of the greenhouse is lined with deep raised beds and there is one large work table standing in the centre. The greenhouse has a jungle-feel as many of

the vining plants have reach nearly to the roof on the trellises we have fashioned. The beds are fitted with irrigation from Irrigro and there is also a short hose for the potted plants. Our next big structural focus is devising a water catchment system.

Six people now use the greenhouse as a community garden space and are doing an amazing job. Summer crops have surpassed all expectations and preparation for the winter garden is underway. As the school children come back from the summer break they will be introduced to the greenhouse. There are plans to have greens growing all year round as well as the opportunity for kids to grow their favourite vegetables from seeds next spring. The Galiano Community School has chosen food as a focal point for the entire academic year and everyone is excited to have the greenhouse as a new learning tool.

The new Community Greenhouse is a true opportunity to grow gardeners with the skills to feed themselves throughout the season. It can also be a great place to experiment with more exotic fruits and vegetables that are generally shipped from afar. This year we are having great success growing luffa sponges, a plant belonging to the gourd family! Many of our community gardeners have already been inspired to build small greenhouses at home and I feel that this momentum will only grow.

Please come visit the greenhouse; you are personally invited. To learn more or join us in gardening, you can find us at [www.galianofoodprogram.ca](http://www.galianofoodprogram.ca) or call 250-539-2175. ✉

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