



Project Story: Fruit and Nut Tree-Pruning Skills Workshops

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Bowen Island Food Resilience Society has now wrapped up the third year of its very successful Low Hanging Fruit (LHF) project. In 2023 we substantially increased the size of the harvest, gleaning over 1500 pounds of fruit compared to ~150 pounds in 2021 and ~400 pounds in 2022.



The purpose of the project is to add resilience to our island's food system and decrease food waste. Many property owners (donors) on Bowen have fruit and nut trees that do not get harvested due to either lack of time, equipment or sometimes overabundance. LHF brings volunteers (pickers) to harvest the fruit from these trees. The fruit is then distributed between donors, pickers, the Bowen Island Food Bank and offered for sale at the Bowen Farmers' Market. Some of the proceeds from market sales this year have been donated to the Bowen Food Bank.

Since starting this program, we observed that many of these trees have been neglected for years (and even decades) and require renovation through careful pruning to become healthier and more productive. Accordingly, with the support of the Neighbourhood Small Grants program, we initiated pruning workshops to start training folks so that they can better care for their fruit trees and orchards.

Matthew Ramsay, professional biologist, guided us in two three-hour pruning workshops. Alastair Johnstone, owner of the Bowen Cider House, hosted the workshops at his apple orchard and assisted in the demonstration/pruning. The first, demonstration, workshop was on a cool February morning where 25 people watched and learned how to prune apple trees of all shapes and sizes. The second, hands-on,





Neighbourhood
Small Grants
Bowen Island

workshop was on a warm March morning. Ten folks pruned away on the sunny day. Knowledge and fun were had by all.

The \$350 funding from the Neighbourhood Small Grants was used towards the professional biologists' fee of \$500, with Bowen Island Food Resilience contributing the remaining \$150.

We are planning to continue to promote skill-sharing and connecting people socially through giving pruning workshops in the future, depending on resources available.

Many thanks to Bowen Island Community Foundation, Vancouver Foundation, Bowen Island Neighbourhood Small Grants, and Bowen Island Food Resilience Society. And a special thanks to Bowen Islanders!!

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