

# YREA summer 2020 news & views



## Green roofs need to be the law everywhere



Green roof laws in all cities & municipalities would help to cool streets by mitigating the urban heat island thereby cutting air conditioning costs, reducing water, air pollution & GHGE. Added benefits are a place to grow local, organic food while providing ecosystems for birds, bees & other species.

Toronto's Green Standard addresses this issue well, as does France's green roof law requiring rooftops of all new buildings in commercial zones to be fully or partially covered in plants or solar panels. This has become so popular in cities like Paris that even the owners of old buildings are voluntarily embracing the law, building giant rooftop farms, meadows & apiaries.

Yet the Quebec construction association is falling behind the times, challenging Gatineau's new environmental building standards which requires green roofs on any building larger than 2000 sq. metres. We must move forward on many fronts to tackle climate change & we need buy in from all sectors. Push back on what needs to be done only hinders our progress.

## GMO labelling petition (again)

We have genetically modified organism (GMO), genetically engineered (GE) & now thanks to USA wordsmithing – bioengineered, all referring to the same process. See the benign looking label they want to use. It is buyer beware without proper labels. All the hype about GMOs saving the world from hunger has been refuted as critics maintain that the real intent of GE crops is not to solve agricultural problems, but instead to increase sales of seeds & pesticides, companies' profits & stock prices all at the expense of struggling farmers. YREA's Pesticide & GMO Truths informs consumers of the harm these foods cause but we need proper labelling to completely avoid such products. Which of course is the reason there has been such opposition, we just wouldn't buy them if we knew. Sign the petition to the Government of Canada & don't be fooled by the deceptive logos the USA wants to introduce. In the meantime look for the non GMO label. Or be safest by buying organic.



## Say it with local, organically grown flowers



Back in 2007 YREA did an article drawing attention to the vast amounts of pesticides used in most imported cut flowers. It is still the case, although some Canadian growers seem to use less, often employing biological controls using soap, fungi & natural predators or integrated pest management practices. Even better of course would be local, organically grown flowers, so we were THRILLED to learn Joyfully Organic Farm does just that. Liz & Matt also have a farm share program for pickup in Markham, Stouffville & 3 locations in Toronto. Treat yourself to pesticide free cut flowers when they become available.

Ask your local flower seller how their products are grown & how much pesticides are used.

It was great to chat recently with Justin Lee, co-founder of Tavos Industries. This company's goal is to replace plastic disposables with eco-friendly, compostable products & they have made a start by manufacturing paper straws right here in Richmond Hill Ontario. They welcome anyone with a green



idea to replace existing packaging to come to their offices for a chat. During this pandemic & in an attempt to further reduce plastic, they are offering a [hand sanitizer refill station](#) if you bring your own bottle. We need refill stations for shampoo, detergent, soap & cleaners – wherever these products are sold.

## The future of food is local organic

As climate change & drought reduce agricultural capacity in the US & elsewhere & this pandemic has shown us what can happen when supply chains are compromised it is imperative that we expand local organic agricultural. We will only live to regret paving over prime farmland. To this end YREA has begun talks with community leaders to seek out landowners & benevolent developers who would be willing to protect properties through a farmland conservation easement that would transition to organic. The property would be designated agricultural in perpetuity, donor would receive a tax receipt for the value of the land & could lease it out to young farmers. Additionally, farming provides jobs & reduces by 14% agricultural GHGE by avoiding distant transportation of food.

Local leaders who would like to discuss possibilities further, please [contact YREA](#).



### Provincial pesticide regulation update

YREA submitted comments to the government regarding the spraying of crown land with glyphosate; the overuse of agricultural pesticides; readily available Roundup that any homeowner can buy even though there is a ban on cosmetic use; dangers to human health; opposition to expanding use to cemeteries: To allow pesticides in cemeteries is ludicrous when instead we should be looking at more sustainable groundskeeping practices. There is a growing movement towards more eco sensitive considerations with [natural burials](#) and [green burials](#). We suggest that relatives may not wish to see loved ones buried in a place sprayed with the toxic chemicals that may have contributed to their deaths or to risk exposure themselves, thereby joining them prematurely. Ludicrous is right & we will now have more chemicals joining formaldehyde to contaminate soil as the province chose not to listen to environmentalists.

## YREA fundraiser

### Moroccan Berber Tribal Kilim

This vintage rug, circa 1970s is 5' x 8' & was purchased in Marrakech in 2007. It has been cleaned and not used since 2016. We are asking \$700, picked up in Richmond Hill. [Contact us](#) for more details.



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