

# Organic Land Care *with*



SOUL Member Newsletter Fall 2018

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## SOUL News

**2018 AGM** Our AGM, the last one for SOUL BC and first for the Canadian Society for Organic Urban Land Care, took place on October 23. This meeting was our opportunity to wrap up the provincial society and launched our federal not-for-profit. Thank you to everyone who joined the meeting and contributed to our successful year. You can view the 2018 Annual Report and AGM minutes are available on our [website](#).

**2018 Board of Directors** Thank you to all those who put their names forward as directors of the board. The first board meeting will be on November 13 to determine officers of the board (President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer). If you are still interested in joining the board, we can accept nominations to fill one vacant position.

### **Congratulations to our newest Professional Members**

Laurie Balch (Regina, SK) - Certified Professional  
Nicholas Johnson (High River, AB) - Accredited Practitioner

### **Upcoming Projects**

**Organic Land Care study in Toronto Parks** Our Executive Director recently met with a few Toronto landscape professionals that are managing public places using organic land care practices. To demonstrate their success, Sundaura is busy compiling data on inputs and outputs when public spaces are converted to organic land care practices. Read more about this in our Featured Article and keep an eye on our website for the full results!

**Information sheets about alternatives to pesticide use for land care centers** RoundUp is being sold in Ontario garden centers, and not always for its approved use. In an effort to reduce the amount of pesticides sold, SOUL will be developing informational materials so customers can easily discover alternatives to pesticide use.

**Outreach to communities to implement organic land care** We've received some feedback on our Organic Land Care for Your Community Guide. The next step is to connect with community organizations and municipalities and encourage them to adopt organic land care practices. If you would like us to contact someone in your community, please let us know so we can get in touch with them. We also encourage our members to reach out in person.

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**Member Submission** Karen Cummins opened her garden up to the Cross Canada Cycling Tours Society while on a tour through the Comox Valley.



Several people wanted to know the secret to such bountiful blueberry plants. Karen's answer was simple - compost, winter seaweed, and arbor chips. Hopefully they have a new appreciation for organic land care practices.

## Organic Land Care in Public Spaces

Managing the health of soils is the future of landscape care and maintenance, leading to improved ecosystem resilience, plant health, and reducing or eliminating the need for off-site inputs. Happily, there is an increasing number of sites where soil health centered maintenance practices have been in place for several years. These can act as a guides and examples as more communities choose to adopt sustainable practices.

The [Organic Land Care for Your Community](#) guide that is now available on the SOUL website provides a road map for SOUL members and members of the public, who want to encourage municipalities to adopt organic land care practices. It is a step by step guide through the process of finding out what your community's current practices are, assembling the tools and contacts that you will need to encourage the adoption of organic practices and tips on getting organized and staying motivated.

The next tool we are working on is a supporting document with information about how existing public sites have successfully converted to organic maintenance practices This document will include details about the changes in labour and equipment requirements as well as what products and practices were used on each site.

At the moment we are working with Toronto Parks on this project, both at parks that have a long history of conventional maintenance prior to transitioning to organic care and at Corkstown Commons, a site that was developed using the organic land care principals from the beginning. We are also working with Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, where Rohan Harrison has been documenting inputs, labour and equipment hours in detail for several years. Compilation of these details will provide quantitative information to back up the common observation that organic land care practices lead to a reduction in labour and costs once the transition phase is completed.

The report will be available on the SOUL website early in the new year and we would love to hear from any of our members about sites in your communities that have transitioned to organic maintenance.