CITY OF
GRANDE PRAIRIE

PROCEDURE

PROCEDURE NO:	212•2	**PAGE:**	**1 OF 3**
TITLE:	Edible Landscape Guidelines	**APPROVAL DATE:**	November 20, 2014
POLICY:	212, Community Garden/Edible Landscaping	**REVISION DATE:**	
SECTION:	Community Services		
RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT:	Parks Operations		

Purpose:

This procedure is created to:

1. Supplement the Community Garden/Edible Landscaping Policy 212, established by Council.

2. Create guidelines for the use of edible plants on municipal landscapes.

Background:

Edible landscaping is considered a Provisioning Ecosystem Service (*Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005*), meaning it supplies humanity with resources needed for existence. It also provides Cultural Services with its potential to build a sense of community. Edible landscapes, are just one facet of Urban Agriculture, along with urban bee keeping, animal husbandry, agroforestry, horticulture and aquaculture.

There are many benefits to increasing the amount of edible plants grown on public lands and also some risks:

Benefits:

1. Food Security
   a. Growing more local edible plants provides a small emergency food reserve should an infrastructure emergency occur and if local residents know how to utilize these food plants for immediate use and storage. Therefore, food security requires both a resource and a knowledge base.
   b. Edible landscape plants can be divided into two categories based on utility:
      i. Fresh use crops (ready to eat at maturity: i.e. raspberries, apples, hazelnuts);
      ii. Processed use crops (must be processed to consume: i.e. chokecherry jelly);

   Given the short time period that fresh crops are ripe and available it is advisable to plant a mix of both categories of food crops.

2. Environmental Awareness
   a. Connecting residents with their food supply has many health benefits;
   b. Edible landscapes would be maintained pesticide free and become part of the urban ecosystem;
   c. As many of these edible plants are native to this region we can expect these plants to support urban wildlife. Increasing native plantings results in increased species diversity. This is consistent with the ecological philosophy behind the Integrated Pest Management Plan.

Risks:

1. Accidental poisoning
   a. Plants have evolved defensive chemicals to deter animal feeding. These chemicals can be found in most plants, including common ornamental plants existing in yards and parks. These chemicals are often bitter tasting or even poisonous. As most poisonous plants and their fruit are unpleasant tasting, the risk that a resident would get sick is very low.

2. Wildlife conflicts/encouraging bears to enter residential neighbourhoods
   a. Most tree and bush fruit ripens in late summer through fall. This is also the time at which black bears seek out nutritious foods to store energy for winter hibernation. Planting guidelines are required to ensure wildlife conflicts don't occur.

General Guidelines:

Ecology:

All edible plants should be installed in organic mulched beds (not in turf), where decomposing fallen fruit can feed urban wildlife and replenish the soils.

Animal Conflicts:

No mass plantings of fruit crops within 200 meters of the Bear Creek Corridor.

Site Selection:

The selection of potential sites for the mass planting of edible plants will require:

a. Documented interest from the majority of adjacent landowners;
b. Suitable onsite soils;
c. No edible planting bed closer than 10 meters to a playground facility.

Implementation Procedures:

1. Annual tree planting
   The City currently plants about 120 per year, largely to replace trees that have died. On average about 20% of these trees have edible plant portions such as fruit or nuts:
   a. Replace a portion of these ornamental tree varieties with food crop varieties.
      For example: where site suitable, replace some ornamental flowering crab apples with eating apple varieties, replace some lodgepole pine with Swiss stone pine (which produces edible pine nuts).

2. Edible plant beds
   a. Should be comprised of only plants with edible fruit, nuts or other plant parts;
   b. Should include trees, shrubs and ground covers;
   c. Appropriate signage will be installed to indicate edible plant parts.

City Responsibilities:

The City will:

- Install and maintain the edible landscapes.
- Install resilient signage for defined edible landscape sites.
- Consult with neighbourhood groups during the site selection process to assess local interest.
- Provide edible crop use information to neighbourhood residents.
- Develop a process where local community group may participate at these defined sites provided they meet the requirements under Procedure 212•1 Community Garden Guidelines.
- Consider possible test projects, such as orchards and multi-crop beds.
- Provide project assessment.

Definitions:

- "Edible Landscape" means the use of food plants as design features in a landscape. Therefore, edible landscapes exist both for consumption and aesthetics. Sometimes called Foodscaping.

- "Urban Wildlife" means wildlife that can live or thrive in urban environments. For example, native and introduced insects, birds and mammals. The use of native plants will support native insects and every organism that feeds on these insects.

- "Project Assessment" means the documentation of crop success, resident acceptance, problems encountered and analysis of all this data and the production of future recommendations.