

World Crop Animation: Bringing Greenbelt Fresh to the City



The large wooden planters which frame the outer roof are filled with colourful ethnocultural crops which are fruits and vegetables particular to certain cultural cuisines. These crops are a part of a greater initiative both here in Toronto and on the farm lands of the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre. The World Crop project in Vineland is led by Dr. Ahmed Bilal. Dr. Bilal is working to determine which world crops can successfully be grown in Ontario, what is required for optimal production and how can pests be controlled biologically.

To give the project context, each year \$800,000,000 of ethnocultural crops are imported into Ontario alone. It has been suggested that if we can divert 10% of these imported crops, by growing them here in Ontario, it could result in upwards of \$80,000,000 remaining in Ontario horticulture. In addition, it would mean fresh, local produce for people in our city. This is a significant and important project bearing in mind the great diversity of Ontario, especially with in the GTA.

Peter Mitchell, funded by The Greenbelt Foundation, has initiated the, “World Crop Animation: Bringing Greenbelt fresh to the city”. This pilot involves introducing these world crops into various community spaces, or “learning gardens” in Toronto. The purpose is to gather interest and create connections between urban consumers, both familiar and unfamiliar with these crops, and our farmers, the producers of our local food. The Carrot Green Roof is one such “learning garden” site.

The World Crop Project is a collaborative between The Stop, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, and the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association.