

# Northern SUN

Stories of growing & gathering



Food Matters  
MANITOBA  
*Parlons alimentation*

Fall 2016

Maxine Lam, Van Doan, Gerry Dube, and community members of Pine Dock headed outside during the Fish Composting Training Workshop held in April to discuss the components of the in-vessel drum.



## Turning Waste into a Community Resource

*Samantha Bailey, NHFI Project Coordinator, Northern Association of Community Councils*

**In the fishing communities of Pine Dock and Dawson Bay,** residents are testing an innovative new composting system that is turning a would-be waste product into a valuable resource. These aren't your average composts of kitchen scraps and dead leaves. Instead they're making use of something that both communities have in abundance—fish waste! By converting fish waste into nutrient rich soil,



Wood chips are mixed with the fish waste to create balanced compost.

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Fish waste, ready to be added to the composter.

fish composting is meeting the needs of the community's gardeners and fishers alike.

Dawson Bay's compost was started in the early summer and Pine Dock is starting theirs up this fall. To get the project going, the first steps were to design the composter and secure a location for it outside of the main residential area of the community. One of the main concerns for communities was that the compost would smell and attract bears, but the in-vessel composters don't let out any smell at all.

Once those pieces were in place, and some tests were conducted to determine a recipe for the perfect compost, training was held in each community. Gerry Dube, the compost site manager of Overton Environmental, and Van Doan of Manitoba Agriculture, helped tremendously with the local training and continue to offer their support with this project. Local volunteers in the communities are diligently tending to this project and hope for a rich harvest into the future. ●



Students get involved in planting the community garden outside the greenhouse.

## Negginan Food Producers Co-op

*Leon Simard, Manitoba First Nations Food Security Coordinator, Four Arrows Regional Health Authority*

**This summer marked the grand opening of Poplar River First Nation's new greenhouse.** The celebration was well attended by community members and we're happy to announce that the greenhouse had an excellent first season.

The greenhouse is part of the Negginan Food Producers Co-op, a social enterprise that began in 2015 with support from Northern Healthy Foods Initiative's Social Enterprise Development. The food production co-operative is working to build on and sustain food security efforts within the community. The Co-op's short term goals are to start up a regular local farmers' market and increase the number of family gardens. By doing this, they hope that more community members will realize the health and economic benefits of growing your own food. They also plan to create a school gardening program to increase the involvement of youth, educators and parents in gardening.

Unfortunately, late this fall the greenhouse was badly damaged by vandalism. This type of vandalism is not unique to Poplar River – it is a common challenge in many communities with greenhouses. Anyone who has put time and sweat into building a greenhouse knows how devastating this can be, and



ADI worker Rosalie Franklin, Mary Bruce, Chief Russell L., and Leon Simard at the Greenhouse.





## Back to School Means Learning on the Land in Northern Saskatchewan

*Christine Ravenis, Northern Lifestyles Teacher, Churchill Community High School, La Ronge, SK.*

**Imagine a school year** that starts off with students and local Elders travelling over 10 hours by vehicle, boat and quad to spend days camping, canoeing, setting and lifting fishing nets, hunting, gathering berries and medicines, processing fish, preparing their own meals and learning traditional Dene teachings. For six days in September, that's exactly what 17 Grade 10 students from Churchill Community High School in La Ronge, SK and Father Porte Memorial Dene School in Black Lake, SK had the chance to do.

With the guidance of Traditional Knowledge Keepers, Freddie Throassie and Ambrose Sandypoint, students had a chance to immerse themselves in the ways of their ancestors and experience the traditional Dene lifestyle. Each morning the group gathered at the main tent to cook breakfast together and hear what everyone had planned for the day. Activities ranged from checking the trap line, to chopping fire wood, to processing meat for dinner.

The trip was also a unique opportunity to bring Dene, Cree, Metis, and non-Indigenous community members together, helping youth gain a better understanding of cultural similarities that exist between communities. It was a great success and we hope the partnership will continue for years to come, making the trek an annual event that kicks off each new school year.



Plants for sale at the greenhouse grand opening.

Health Director Lambert and Grand Opening.

for the team who worked hard on the greenhouse in Poplar River, this setback came as a tough blow after such a successful first season.

But the Co-op intends to continue on with their efforts. A marketing plan is being developed to further ensure the sustainability of the project – also ways will be developed to further involve youth and young adults in the operation and care of the gardens and greenhouse. Classroom based workshops will be held in the spring to inspire and develop a sense of pride and community ownership.

The continued efforts of the Co-op show the great strength and resilience that exists in our communities. Projects are not always easy or successful, but that doesn't mean they aren't worth trying. For the Co-op, the goals of helping to create greater self-reliance within the community and enabling community members to provide local organic food for their families are worth the effort. ●





# Wild Rice Casserole

**Total time:** 2 hours

**Serves:** 6



## Ingredients:

- |                            |                                 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 cup wild rice (uncooked) | ½ cup butter                    |
| ¼ tsp salt                 | 1 cup grated old cheddar cheese |
| 3 cups boiling water       | 19 oz can tomatoes              |
| ½ pound mushrooms, sliced  | 1 tsp salt                      |
| ½ cup chopped onion        | 1 cup hot water                 |

## Preparation:

1. In a pot combine the rice, ¼ tsp of salt and 3 cups boiling water. Bring to a boil and then reduce heat to allow rice to simmer for about 40-50 minutes, until nearly tender.
2. Drain rice if any liquid remains in the pot.
3. Sauté mushrooms and onions in butter, for about 5 minutes.
4. In a greased, 2 quart casserole dish combine cooked rice, mushrooms and onions with all remaining ingredients.
5. Cover and bake for 1 hour at 350°F.

*Apitaye Massou! Wiisinin! Bon Appetit!*

## Submit a story

Please send along your northern food stories and photos to share your stories with neighbours in the north.

Send your story ideas to: [amanda@foodmattersmanitoba.ca](mailto:amanda@foodmattersmanitoba.ca)



**Food Matters Manitoba**  
(204) 943-0822  
Toll Free 1-800-731-2638  
Fax (204) 943-0823  
[info@foodmattersmanitoba.ca](mailto:info@foodmattersmanitoba.ca)  
[www.foodmattersmanitoba.ca](http://www.foodmattersmanitoba.ca)

## Funding provided by:



**Design:** [simplelifedesigns](http://simplelifedesigns.com)  
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Out on the lake, harvesting wild rice.

# Processing Manoomin

*Amanda Froese, Northern and Indigenous Program Intern, Food Matters Manitoba*

**Harvesting manoomin is a small feat but the hard work really starts once you're back on dry land.**

The **first step** in processing manoomin is to spread it on tarps outside to dry. This important step also lets all the spiders that were harvested with the manoomin escape!

The **next step** is to parch the manoomin over a fire, using poplar wood to add flavour to the rice. You will need a very large pot and a paddle or long stick to stir it. Continuous stirring is critical to prevent the manoomin from burning. The first sign that the rice is done is the smell of toasted manoomin, which is followed by a crackling sound. Take the pot off immediately and continue to stir it while it cools so it doesn't burn.

Once the manoomin has cooled off, place it in a shallow hole, lined with a tarp, and dance on it wearing moccasins. The dancing movement separates the manoomin from the husk, preparing it to be winnowed. Winnowing is done by placing some of the danced on manoomin in trays and gently tossing it so the wind (or your breath) can blow away the empty husks.

The **next step** is to sort through the winnowed manoomin and separate the ready to be cooked manoomin from the manoomin that needs to be processed more.

**Final step:** cook it!



Parching the manoomin.



Dancing on the manoomin.



Winnowing the manoomin.