



Grand River Food Forestry

Nicola Thomas, PDC, GRFF Founder,
Community Capacity Builder

Permaculture - A Quiet Revolution

care for the earth
care for each other
share the wealth

UJAMAA
Cooperative Economics
Shared work & wealth

Black Leadership in Cooperative Farming Movement



Dr. Booker T. Whatley, Tuskegee University professor

- one of the inventors of the CSA Community Supported Agriculture that thrives today

First Land trusts started in 1969 by black farmers in USA



The 1886 Colored Farmers National and Cooperative Union

Fannie Lou Hamer's 1772 Freedom Farm

- Food hubs and food systems analysis cannot exist without acknowledging the work of **PIONEER BLACK FARMERS**

Re-Membering Our Global Indigenous Roots and Creation Stories

Ontario Black history helps to define me and is an integral part of my identity. I – a British-born African diaspora daughter – moving through this land, connecting the lineages from the Caribbean, West Africa, Celtic and African Canadian..

Our Agricultural History

connects us back to our creation stories and to each other

All creation stories

plants, Animals, Humans

LAND PRESERVATION, CONSERVATION & OBSERVATION

CANADA'S FOOD PRICE REPORT 2019

published by both Dalhousie University and the
University of Guelph.

An increase of 3-5% in food prices



Fresh fruit up approx 12%

Fresh veg up approx 18%



Industrial Farming



★ The UN Food and Agricultural Organization has made a powerful plea to return to **regenerative farming, farming based on agroforestry**

★ Going back to our Global Indigenous Land Practices

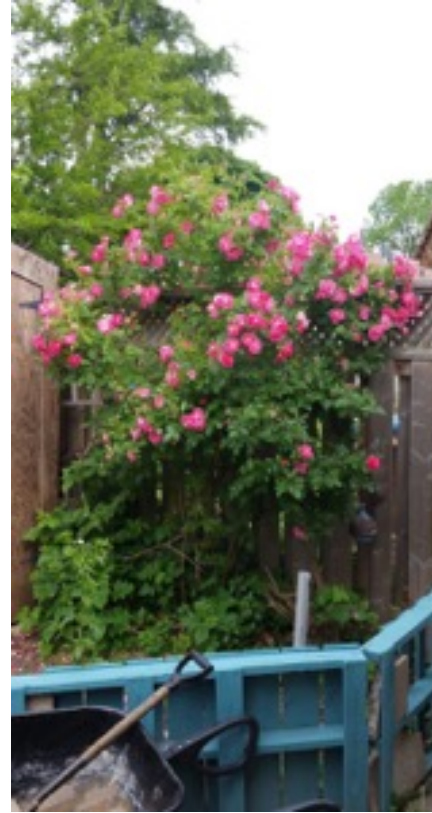


“Regenerative Farming” an African-Indigenous System



- system developed over millennia
 - revived in US by a Black farmer
- Dr. George Washington Carver, of Tuskegee University in the early 1900s. - -**
- Carver codified the use of crop rotation with the planting of nitrogen-fixing legumes & detailed how to regenerate soil biology.
 - His system was known as
Regenerative Agriculture

Polyculture vs Monoculture



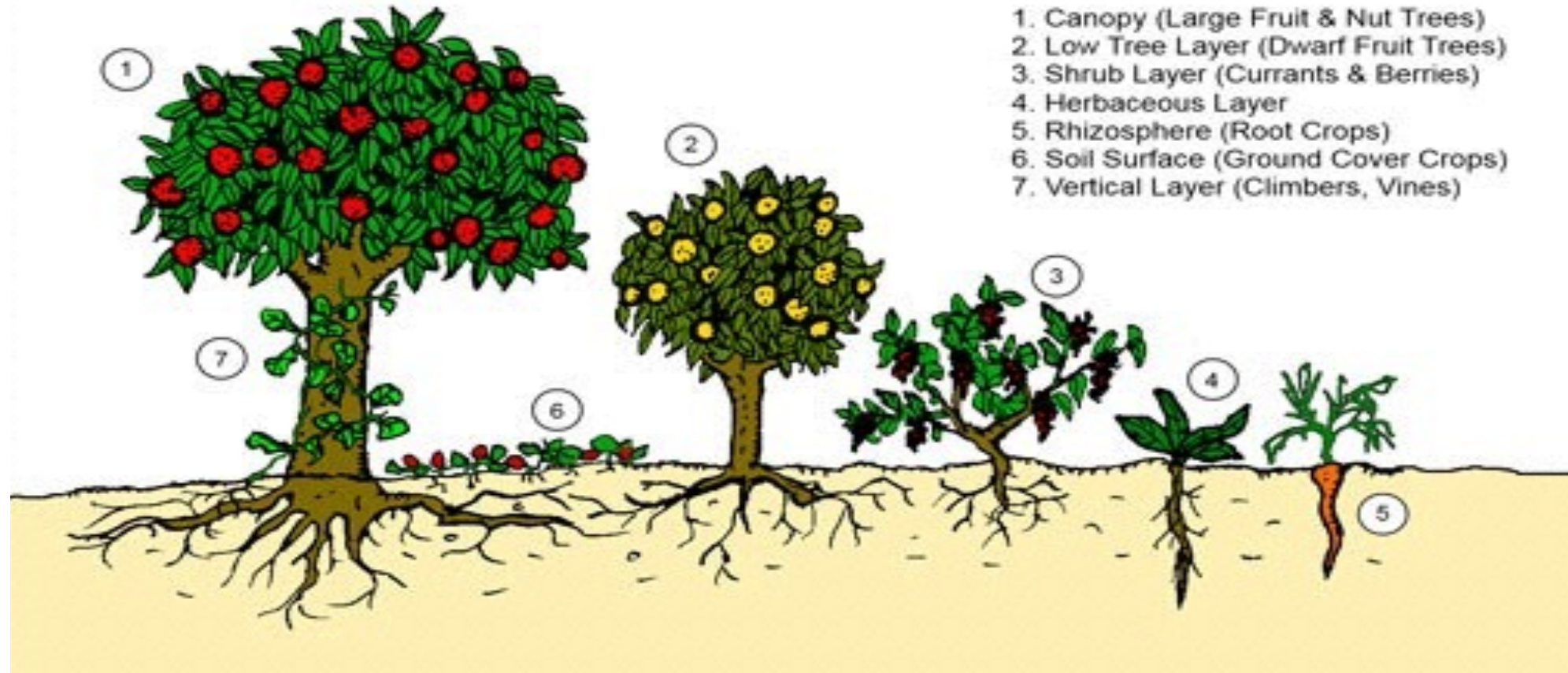
- ★ The Hausa farmers of Nigeria developed more than 156 systematic crop combinations, including no-till polycultures
- ★ Other global indigenous cultures used these techniques

Underutilized Green Space



What we Do; Agroforestry

The Seven Layers of a Forest Garden





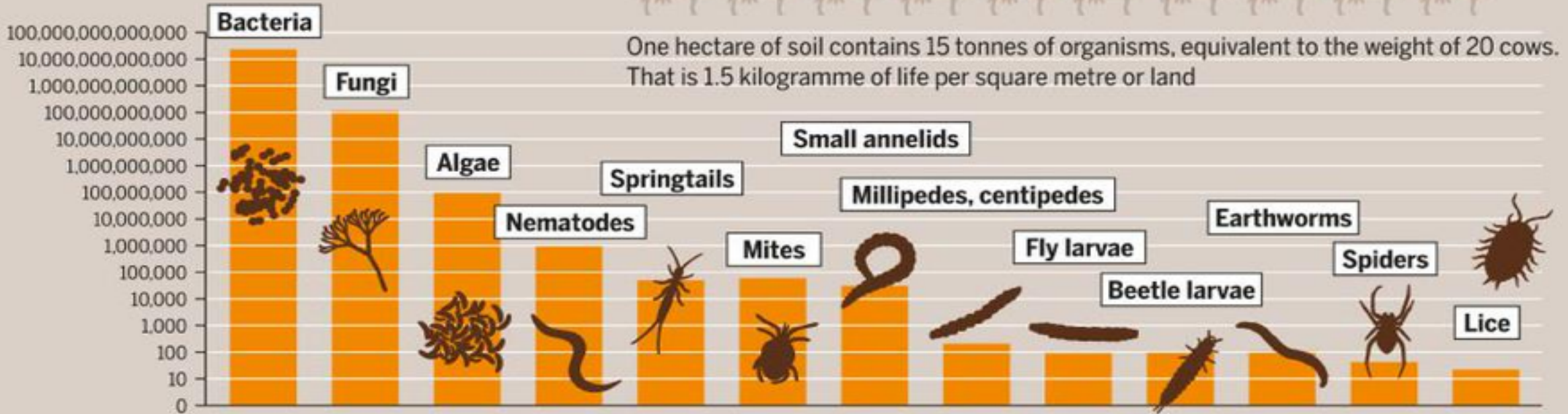
Why Agroforestry; No Till / Lasagna Gardening



- Biomimicry
- Maintains soil structure
- more accessible agriculture

TEEMING SOILS

Number of living organisms in 1 cubic metre of topsoil in temperate climates, logarithmic scale



BRIDGING
KNOWLEDGE.
EMPOWERING
TRANSFORMATION.

Global Soil Week @GlobalSoilWeek · 8 Mar 2015

#SoilAtlas for #IYS2015 BENEATH THE GROUND-Invisible Ecosystem(Pg12) Topsoil teems with life: globalsoilweek.org/soilatlas-2015
pic.twitter.com/nMhJ4YMzNw



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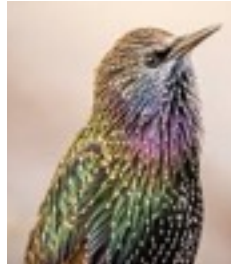
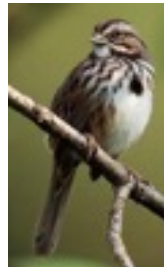
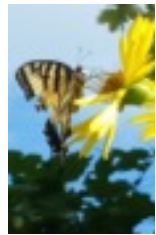
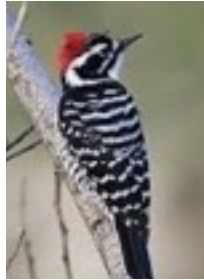


58



One hectare of soil contains 15 tonnes of organisms =
20 cows

Ecological and Economic Well Being



What Motivated The Volunteers / Stewards To Action?



- ★ Frustrated
- ★ Hopeless
- ★ Sad
- ★ Fear
- ★ Frozen

What if we could be the
change to an ecologically
sustainable future?

What is the recipe;
★ components, ideal
partners, motivation

How could we Expand
the Agroforestry
Movement;

★ what you can do

A vision for the future



Crosses all Barriers of age, gender, culture and religion... ..Everyone Eats



Creating Strong Social & Ecological links



Creating Agroforestry through Collaboration

Right Site

- ★ Soil Ecology
- ★ Permission to Plant
- ★ Proximity to Consumers



Right People

- ★ Champion/Visionary
- ★ Walking distance
- ★ Stewards
- ★ Financial & In Kind Support
- ★ Administrative helpers

Right Plants

- ★ Permaculture - Biomimicry
- ★ Perennials
- ★ Funding
- ★ Local nurseries



GRFF Ideal Partners:

Schools, Universities, Churches, Community Centers, Long Term Care, Parks, Local Municipalities, Private Properties & CHILDREN



What Motivated our Partners

★ **Food Security**
nutrition, income
when plants mature

★ **Ecosystem Services;**
maintaining & restoring soil fertility, protecting watersheds

★ **Increased Biodiversity** food, habitat for wildlife & pollinator species

★ **Absorbs Carbon Dioxide**

★ **Providing Humidity**



- ★ 24 Sites in 3 years
- ★ 500+ volunteers
- ★ 8000 people have walking access



Expanding the Agroforestry Movement

Be the Seed

- ★ Start building in your community
- ★ Make connections, build momentum

Look for opportunities

- ★ City climate change policies, Land development, Underutilized green spaces, Become a Bee City, Urban Forestry Department

Children; Educate & Involve

- ★ Local community, church or school
- ★ Inspire, motivate and support ambassadors

THE CITY OF
Waterloo



Canada Top 100 Black Women to watch
CANADA INTERNATIONAL BLACK WOMEN EVENT
B Nicola THOMAS
Infinite 2016



gardenKitchener

Kitchener Horticultural Society
Rockway Gardens



Forest Heights
Community Association Inc.

Community Garden Council
of WATERLOO REGION



"Growing Healthy Communities"



KWANTLEN
POLYTECHNIC
UNIVERSITY

**park
people**



17 Out of 17 Sustainable Development Goals



Gardeners are the Guardians



We are guests and stewards of the Land

Create Opportunities for fun in nature





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Our Ecological Wellness is Paramount

“The value of One, The Power
of Many”

UJAMAA

**Cooperative Economics
Shared Work & Wealth**