

On the other hand ...
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locavores are fooling
themselves
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THE GLOBE AND MAIL

SATURDAY, JULY 7, 2012

SECTION F

Globe Focus

WEEKEND EDITOR: CAROL TOLLER

URBIVORES

Imagine a city full of public gardens and orchards where anyone, rich or poor, could pick fresh fruits and vegetables for free. **Sarah Elton** reports on a movement making this locavore dream a reality. But would you want it to sprout in your local park?

Produce to the people

In downtown Kamloops, B.C., on a narrow patch of land near the hospital thrift shop and a tanning salon, there's a vegetable garden. Its raised beds are planted with kale, peas and squash – a whole variety of produce, growing in the open, with no fences to keep out passersby.

Which is exactly the point. The garden is called the Public Produce Project and has an official open-picking policy: Anybody is invited to come in and harvest food for free. There are signs instructing people what to take, when and how.

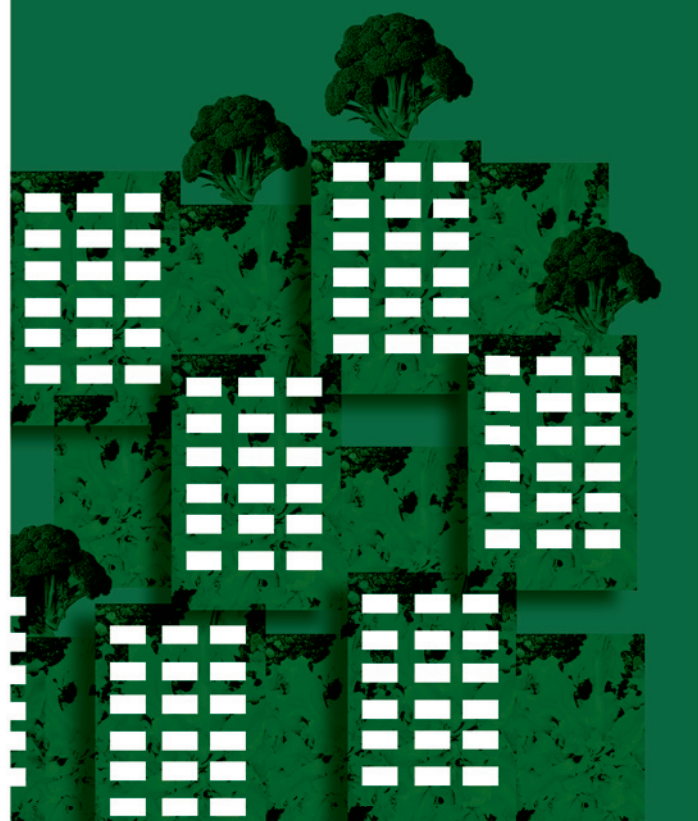
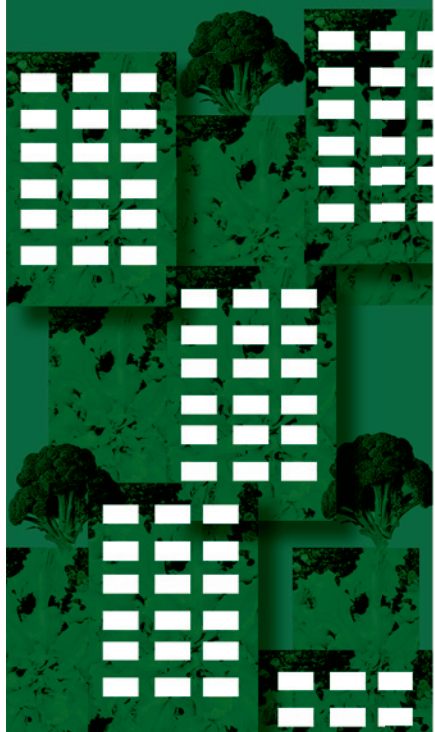
Chelsea Bailey, who runs the nearby restaurant The Ploughman's Lunch with her family, took advantage of it on her breaks last summer, as a refuge from her busy job. "I would go to the garden, pick a couple pieces of lettuce and sit on a bench and eat them," she says. "It was so freeing. You could just go outside and eat something."

There were always a lot of people coming, particularly children and university students, as well as the homeless. And the garden had a lasting influence on Ms. Bailey's own diet: "Since then, I have eaten more fresh foods, because I realized how lovely they are."

While governments in Canada have been distancing themselves from food production (as with the recent scrapping of the federal Canadian Wheat Board), the garden in Kamloops is part of a growing movement.

It advocates using public lands for food instead of flowers – creating spaces in cities for vegetable beds and fruit trees rather than lawns and dog walking. While the work may be done by volunteers, it requires the support of the state and the community at large. And despite critics who fear that food in common space will create messes or attract vermin and vagrants, it's spreading rapidly across the continent.

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EXCERPT FOOLING HOUDINI

'I heard a loud 'clink' and felt as if all the air had been sucked out of my lungs'

Novice magician **Alex Stone** is given a chance to perform before the greatest conjurers in the world. Things don't go well

The 2012 World Championship of Magic opens Monday in the famed British resort of Blackpool. Held every three years, it is a secretive affair that attracts, as one novice discovered, a very tough crowd.

In the foyer of a hotel in downtown Stockholm, a stunning 22-year-old Belgian girl with dark brown eyes and long chestnut curls had attracted a small crowd. She held an ace in each hand, and as she twirled her arms through the air, the cards transformed into kings.

The audience had seen this sort of thing before – but then, in one fluid sequence, she coiled her wrists again and the kings became queens. The energy in the room quickened as her arms

snaked through the air like a flamenco dancer's – once, twice – and the queens faded into jacks, then tens. The people around her began to cheer. Another whirl and the tens turned into jokers. She is one of a few magicians in the world who can pull off five transformations in a row, and the audience was now crazy for her.

Toward the back of the lobby, a florid man in a black pork-pie hat demoed a shell game – that age-old swindle with three hollowed-out shells and a pea. In the corner by the entrance, a gaggle of teenagers in red lounge chairs were performing an acrobatic kung-fu of card stunts known as "extreme card manipulation" – a flurry of cuts, spins and flourishes. In the hands of these

kids, the cards became pyramids and snowflakes, whorled mollusk spirals, mandalas of cycling angels. There were the mentalists – mind readers, spoon benders, second-sight acts. Everywhere you looked men and women were sharing secrets, trading moves. I clutched a worn deck of blue Bicycle cards in my fist and drank in the scene.

We were all in Stockholm for the 2006 World Championships of Magic, otherwise known as the Magic Olympics. Every three years, the greatest conjurers from around the globe descend on a chosen city, armed with their most jealously guarded secrets, and duke it out, trick for trick, to see who among them is most powerful.

Magic, Page 6

Steal a watch, make a coin vanish – see how they get away with it

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