

# Carrot Cache Annual Report 2025

Celebrating over 20 years supporting Ontario's Sustainable Food System

**Carrot Cache is a non-profit organization that supports small projects in Ontario working toward a sustainable and just regional food system.**



# Chairperson's Message

*By Tom Walsh, Board Chairperson*

The first week of every June is local food week, a reminder that Ontario's history with food production transcends Canada's history with its roots deep in the agricultural traditions of our province's First Nations.

Along with other food related groups with financial limitations, Carrot Cache's grant program in 2025 continued to prioritize working with Ontario's Indigenous farmers and to learn from their experiences. In 2025, Sofi Rostampour, Founder and Director of Gwai-yuk Gih'nendahmoen shared this knowledge in workshops on the Carrot Green Roof. We are excited that Sofi was awarded a one-year grant by Miziwe Biik, a Toronto based Indigenous Employment & Training Program, to work full time assisting the CGR Garden Coordinator, Sydney Jinjoe. The learning will be mutual and reciprocal.

A farming friend would proudly say that a sovereign country grows its own food, eats what it grows and sells the rest. There are 1000s of small farmers and food processors of every background in the province who would like to contribute to this goal. Ontario has this potential and already 60% of food produced is consumed here. It's a complex industry and it's heartening to see local organizations like EFAO (Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario) addressing the issues.

*(continued)*

# Chairperson's Message

*continued*

For its part Carrot Cache will continue to support those initiatives that promote organic agriculture, regional food economies, food sovereignty and worker cooperatives. Cache is grateful to our partner support which will allow the Carrot Green Roof Project to increase its programming and research. To view those individuals and groups awarded grants for their projects in 2025 please continue to read through this Annual Report.

Given that the tumultuous 2024 year persisted into 2025 and now threatens to do the same in 2026, the requirement is to have all hands-on deck in a concerted effort to have Ontario grow food that is nutritious and affordable. This can only be achieved by all the actors in the food industry, including government, farmers, private business and social entrepreneurs.

Carrot Cache thrives due to its volunteer Board, the volunteers on the Carrot Green Roof and the Cache Grants and Garden Coordinators. To each of you a heartfelt thank you for your efforts and for sharing your time.

*Respectfully,*

**Thomas Walsh, Chair**

# **The 2025 Board of Carrot Cache**

*Community Resources Inc.*

**Thomas Walsh — Chair**

**Sarah Dobec -Vice Chair**

**Tamas Dombi**

**Marsha Kirzner**

**Stanislas Leveau-Vallier - Treasurer**

**Peter Mitchell**

**Kevin Wilkinson**

**Luke Dinan**

# 2025 Carrot Cache Grants Awarded

**\$104,879**

*invested in 2025*

**23 + 3**

*grantees + additional initiatives*

**\$3.3M+**

*distributed since 2001*

Through the 2025 grant program, Carrot Cache supported 23 projects across Ontario, plus the EFAO Carrot Cache Innovation Prize, the Harvest Justice theatre production, and an exceptional grant to Gwai-yuk Gih'nendahmoen for an Indigenous-led fasting camp ceremony. Funds went to local farmers and growers and community food initiatives — projects increasing access to fresh produce, promoting sustainable agricultural practices, and creating knowledge-sharing opportunities in communities throughout Ontario.

# 25 Years of Funding Ontario's Food System

*Annual grant distribution, 2002–2026 fiscal years*



**\$3.3M+**

*total distributed  
over 25 years*

**900+**

*grants awarded  
since 2001*

# 2025 Carrot Cache Grant Recipients

## Local Farmers & Growers

*15 grants*

### **Amani-Innovation**

A sole proprietorship producing African heritage vegetables on 5 acres in Scotland, Ontario. Funding will scale operations and improve food access for underserved ethnic communities.

### **Bhūmiyinda Farm**

A South Asian woman-led farm in Milton growing culturally relevant vegetables using ecological methods. Funding supports a root washing station and CSA expansion to 50+ households.

### **Chi Garden**

A certified organic farm and fermentation business led by new Canadians in Ottawa. Funding scales up production with a certified fermentation kitchen and online store.

### **Daraar Farm**

A Black-led farm in Mount Hope, Ontario growing on leased land with ecological methods. Funding supports a permaculture food forest and community workshops.

### **FnS Farm**

An Indigenous family-run microgreens farm in Tiny, Ontario, launching "Rooted Resilience" — workshops empowering families to grow nutrient-dense microgreens at home.

### **Grey Wolf Gardens**

A small ecological farm in Cochrane serving Indigenous families through partnerships with the Ininew Friendship Center and Sweetgrass Health Center. Funding expands cold storage to grow CSA reach from 20 to 60 families.

### **It's Giving Farm**

An ecologically focused farm on 7 acres in Altona, Ontario, serving the GTA with fresh produce, seeds, and flowers through farmers' markets and local food partners.

# 2025 Carrot Cache Grant Recipients

## Local Farmers & Growers (continued)

### **just a lil guy**

A queer- and disability-led micro-farm in Guelph. Funding supports building a squash tunnel for growing winter produce to donate to local food-insecure communities, while deepening inclusive and accessible farm practices.

### **Nice Things Farm**

A woman-led, no-till organic start-up market garden in Williamsford. In its first year, the farm will build a walk-in fridge and caterpillar tunnel to extend the growing season.

### **SARN Farms Inc.**

A Black-led farm on leased land in Toronto and Caledon, focused on regenerative agriculture. Funding supports a walk-behind tractor, improving production and mentorship capacity.

### **Spiral Farm**

A queer woman-led no-till market garden in Elora using organic practices and serving a sliding-scale CSA. Funding supports a movable hoop house to extend the growing season.

### **Stone Fruit and Bear Berries**

A queer- and trans-led orchard in Neustadt. Funding supports orchard expansion, biodiversity enhancements, and public programming to engage marginalized communities.

### **Urban Fresh Produce**

A Black-owned urban farm and plant nursery in Ottawa serving CSA members, Carleton University, and Caribbean restaurants. Funding supports a rear-tine tiller and chicken coop expansion.

### **Zahra Ecological Farm**

A Muslim-led ecological farm in Ottawa training youth in small-scale organic agriculture. Funding supports a tool shed and rain barrels for on-site sustainability.

### **Zawadi Farm**

A Black-led urban farm collective in Toronto growing culturally relevant crops using regenerative methods. Funding expands soil-building practices and community workshops promoting food sovereignty.

# 2025 Carrot Cache Grant Recipients

## Community Growing & Food Initiatives

8 grants

### Cultural Seeds

A women-led Indigenous seed and land repatriation initiative on Manitoulin Island. Funding supports "She Gathers the Seeds," a cultural knowledge-sharing gathering focused on Indigenous seed keeping, story sharing, and land stewardship.

### Jessica Shenandoah

A Mohawk herbalist and community educator in Akwesasne launching a medicinal herb farm. Funding supports free community workshops integrating Mohawk language and culture to teach plant ID, wildflowers, and seed starting.

### Kenhtë Skén:nen Food Project

A grassroots, Indigenous-led food justice project in Tweed. Funding supports infrastructure like composting toilets, fencing, fruit trees, and water storage to launch a permaculture garden and free u-pick space for racialized families.

### Leading Cloud Gardens

A remote Indigenous garden initiative of the Apitipi Anicinapek Nation in northern Ontario, supporting food security and intergenerational learning. Funding enhances accessibility with new benches, signage, and community waste systems.

### Many Hands Urban Farm Collective

A new non-profit formed by six urban farm organizations in Toronto to secure land tenure at Downsview Park. Funding supports fencing infrastructure to keep food security efforts viable and safe.

### Meaford Community Gardens

A volunteer-run garden collective in Grey Bruce County supporting food justice and education. Funding supports hoop house upgrades, a new shed, and water infrastructure.

### New Roots Collective

A youth-led grassroots collective farming ½ acre in Wanup, Ontario. Funding supports tools, infrastructure, and workshops to grow food for donation, host pay-what-you-can markets, and run food skills programs.

### The Abibiman Project

A queer, disabled, Black woman-owned culinary initiative in Toronto using African food traditions to build community. Funding supports French-language cooking workshops for unhoused and newcomer Francophone Black youth and families, fostering inclusion and belonging through food and language.

# Additional Initiatives

*Beyond our regular grant cycle, in 2025 Carrot Cache supported the EFAO Innovation Prize, Harvest Justice theatre production, student delegates to the DevOur Campus Conference, and an exceptional grant to Gwai-yuk Gih'nendahmoen for an Indigenous-led fasting camp ceremony.*

# EFAO Carrot Cache Innovation Prize

*11th consecutive year of support · 2025 Winner*

## Michelle Della Corte

*Fungi Fest Mtl · Montreal, Quebec*

### \$1,000 Prize

#### Project: Myco-Mulch

Repurposing spent oyster mushroom substrate as a living garden mulch — suppressing weeds, retaining moisture, releasing nutrients, and continuing to fruit mushrooms throughout the season.

Carrot Cache has sponsored the EFAO Carrot Cache Innovation Prize for 11 consecutive years, recognizing innovative ecological farmers at the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario's annual conference.


*"Myco-Mulch: turning 'waste' into abundance, one block at a time."*

— Michelle Della Corte, Fungi Fest Mtl


*Since 1979, EFAO has empowered farmers through education, research, and community-building to create resilient farms and share knowledge.*


# Harvest Justice: Twice the Speed of Lightning

*A theatre production supporting migrant farm workers*


**Harvest Justice**  **TWICE THE SPEED OF LIGHTNING**


We all think about the cost of food. But do we think about the human cost? What is it like for the people working on Ontario's farms?


 Written By  
**Catherine Frid**

 Directed and Facilitated By  
**Simon Malbogot**

Presented in  
**Native Earth's Aki Studio**  
October 1 - 5, 2025  
Wed - Sat: 7:30 pm  
Matinees on Thurs,  
Sat & Sun: 2:30 pm  
585 Dundas St. E., Toronto  
(Daniels Spectrum)

 COLLABORATIVE NETWORK  
TO END EXPLOITATION

 MOVED  
COMPANY  
THEATRE  
40+ years

 [cnee.ca/harvestjustice](http://cnee.ca/harvestjustice)

In 2025, Carrot Cache provided a \$2,000 grant to support Harvest Justice: Twice the Speed of Lightning — a powerful theatre production written by Catherine Frid and directed by Simon Malbogot that explores the lives of migrant farm workers in Ontario.

*"We all think about the cost of food. But do we think about the human cost? What is it like for the people working on Ontario's farms?"*

Presented at Native Earth's Aki Studio

October 1–5, 2025 · 585 Dundas St. E., Toronto (Daniels Spectrum)

# Gwai-yuk Gih'nendahmoen

*Supporting Indigenous-led ceremony and land stewardship*

## \$5,000 Grant

*Exceptional grant outside regular cycle*

### Fasting Camp Ceremony

Terra Cotta, Ontario · 4-day ceremony · ~12 participants including Elders, ceremony holders, firekeepers, and community members.

*Founder & Director: Sofi Rostampour*

Gwai-yuk Gih'nendahmoen is an Indigenous-led seed sovereignty and land stewardship initiative. In 2025, Sofi Rostampour shared knowledge through workshops on the Carrot Green Roof — focused on Indigenous seed saving, pollinator cultivation, and cultural food sovereignty — and partnered with the CGR on culturally significant crops including rare white corn, watermelon, and a traditional Mayan corn teaching.

*This exceptional grant — outside the regular granting cycle — supported a time-sensitive ceremonial event held in fall 2025, recognizing the spirit of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action through concrete support for Indigenous community wellness, cultural revitalization, and food sovereignty.*

# DevOur Campus Conference

*Supporting student delegates to a national gathering on sustainable food systems*



In June 2025, Carrot Cache sponsored student delegates from the McGill Food Coalition and George Brown College to attend the DevOur Campus Conference in Toronto — a three-day gathering bringing together over 15 campus food coalitions from across Canada. The conference fostered a national food movement on Canadian campuses, sharing knowledge on student-led gardens, food sovereignty, and addressing food insecurity in post-secondary communities.

*"I will take the knowledge I learned and the networks that I gained to make positive change to the GBC food system. Thank you, Carrot Cache."*

— Alex Parsons, George Brown College

*"The passion and emotion that radiated from these presenters — so young, yet so confident and well accomplished in their respective fields — was truly amazing to witness, and filled me with hope."*

— Erica Kimball, George Brown College

*"It was a gift to myself, to put myself out there and find out what I am capable of... Their stories were inspiring — their drive to establish a student-led sustainable food system that nourishes the student population and the surrounding community."*

— Marcia Lei Reyes, George Brown College

# 2025 Carrot Cache Grant Recipient Stories

## Chi Garden Organic Farm & Fermentation Kitchen

*Blackburn Hamlet, Ottawa · Farm to Fermentation Business Scaling Up*

Chi Garden is a certified organic ecological farm and fermentation business led by new Canadians in Ottawa. The Carrot Cache grant was the first external financial assistance they received in the ten years since founding their farming operation.

The funding supported the scale-up of their certified fermentation kitchen and the launch of an online store — extending the life of their harvest, reducing food waste, and preserving traditional fermentation techniques. The grant also helped Li, Bo and Sun, Shan build the infrastructure to share their cultural food traditions with the wider Ottawa community.



*"The encouragement and recognition we've received through this grant have meant even more to us than the financial assistance. It has affirmed that our vision and efforts are truly seen and appreciated."*

*— Li, Bo & Sun, Shan, Chi Garden*

# 2025 Carrot Cache Grant Recipient Stories

## Grey Wolf Gardens

*Cochrane, Northern Ontario · Cold Storage Walk-in Expansion*

Grey Wolf Gardens is a small ecological farm in Cochrane serving Indigenous families through partnerships with the Ininew Friendship Center and Sweetgrass Health Center. The Carrot Cache grant supported a substantial upgrade to their cold storage capacity — a 4× expansion that will allow them to grow their existing summer CSA program (25 families receiving weekly boxes from late June to Thanksgiving) into a new 20-week winter program as well.

For Luke Dinan and the Grey Wolf team, the impact reaches well beyond their own operation — strengthening food access for local First Nations community members across a region where fresh, local produce can be hard to come by.



*"The Carrot Cache's willingness to support a project in the North was extremely welcomed. Their support will ensure that more families — and particularly within our local First Nations community — will be able to receive the freshest produce possible."*

*— Luke Dinan, Grey Wolf Gardens*

# 2025 Carrot Cache Grant Recipient Stories

## SARN Farms

*Toronto & Caledon · BCS Walk-behind Tractor for 2-acre Expansion*

SARN Farms is a Black-led farm operating on leased land in Toronto and Caledon, focused on regenerative agriculture. The Carrot Cache grant funded the purchase of a BCS 718 walk-behind tractor and 18" rear-tine tiller — scale-appropriate equipment that immediately transformed their operation.

Before the investment, much of SARN's field preparation, bed shaping and cultivation relied on manual labour and rented or borrowed equipment, limiting how much land they could work and how reliably they could grow. The new equipment improved efficiency, reduced physical strain, and unlocked production capacity at their new 2-acre expansion site in Caledon.



*"Support like this makes a real difference for small farms by meeting us where we are and helping us build toward a more resilient future."*

— Arnest Sebbumba, Founder, SARN Farms

# 2025 Carrot Cache Grant Recipient Stories

## Stone Fruit & Bear Berries

*Neustadt, Grey Bruce · Orchard Expansion*

Stone Fruit & Bear Berries is a queer- and trans-led organic fruit farm in Grey Bruce, stewarding a mixed orchard and working in partnership with local Indigenous communities. With the Carrot Cache grant, Stone Stewart was able to plant over 40 fruit trees of varying types and varieties, 100 raspberry canes, and 30 shrubs (sour cherry and saskatoon).

The orchard expansion lays a stable foundation for future production — the kind of perennial investment that pays back for years. Some of the funding also went toward paying Stone for their own labour, recognizing that small farmers often subsidize their operations with unpaid work.



*"As a Queer and Trans Farmer, the Carrot Cache Grant has supported me so much in helping my fruity dreams come to fruition. I am so very grateful."*

— Stone Stewart, Stone Fruit & Bear Berries

# The Carrot Green Roof

*2025 Season Report · April – October · Coordinator: Sydney Jinjoe*

**68+**

*crop varieties grown*

**200+**

*lbs of produce donated*

**100+**

*volunteers & workshop participants*

**9**

*new community partners & research projects*

## Season Highlights

A revitalizing season of community engagement, bountiful harvests, and partnership building. Despite a hot, drought-prone summer, the roof produced weekly bounties shared with volunteers, Carrot Common staff, and food security organizations.

**Culturally significant new crops thrived:** Navajo White Corn, Mandan Squash, Arikara Watermelon, Wine Cap Mushrooms, Palestinian Arugula and Okra, and Aleppo Peppers.

*The garden ran under budget, allowing the season to be extended and a greenhouse purchased — expanding capacity for years to come.*

## Workshops (May – September)

Vermicomposting · Mayan Corn Talks · Edible & Medicinal Weeds · Harvest Preservation · Food System Security · Guerilla Gardening · Garden Tour & Garlic Planting

## Featured Partnerships

**Gwai-Yuk Gih'nendamoen Collective** — Indigenous seed sovereignty & land stewardship; co-hosted traditional Mayan corn teaching, shared rare crops including white corn and watermelon for seed rematriation.

**Community Fridges Toronto** — A new fridge at Carrot Common makes rooftop produce donations more accessible to the East end community.

**Building Roots** — Near-weekly donations of fresh greens, continuing into fall and 2026.

# Financial Statement

*Year Ended December 31, 2025 · Compiled by Edward & Manning LLP*

**\$328,319**

*Total Revenue*

**\$277,096**

*Total Expenditures*

**\$51,223**

*Surplus*

## Where the Money Went

<b>Grants to community</b>	<b>\$103,879</b>
Carrot Green Roof maintenance	\$50,000
Interest on Carrot Common JV loan	\$75,883
Administration & operations	\$46,334
Innovation Prize	\$1,000

## Balance Sheet Snapshot

<b>Net assets (end of year)</b>	<b>\$1,250,300</b>
Investment in Carrot Common JV	\$2,882,582
Ownership stake in Carrot Common	18%
Cash & investments	\$158,381

*Full audited financial statements available on request. Carrot Cache's 18% participating interest in Carrot Common Corporation — a joint venture with The Big Carrot — provides sustainable long-term funding for our grant program.*

# Thank You

*Carrot Cache's work in 2025 was made possible by:*

**Our grantees** — the farmers, growers, community groups, and food businesses doing the work on the ground across Ontario.

**Our volunteers** — the people who give time, hands, and care to the Carrot Green Roof and every event in between.

**Our Board** — for their thoughtful stewardship, time, and ongoing dedication.

**Carrot Common & The Big Carrot** — our long-standing partners whose support makes our grant program sustainable.

**Our partners** — EFAO and every organization that has worked alongside us this year.