

Section 1: Introduction / GARDENS / Indigenous Caretakers

Welcome to “An Agricultural and Ecological Tour of Lakeshore Grounds.” This tour will guide you through Humber’s Lakeshore Campus and into Colonel Samuel Smith Park, exploring the connections between the agricultural and ecological history of the property and current urban agriculture and ecology projects in the area.

If you’re following this tour in person, you might be right outside the Student Welcome and Resource Centre, located just off the intersection of Kipling Avenue and Lake Shore Boulevard. For those of you listening from home, we will use descriptive audio to guide you from one location to the next, ensuring a seamless and accessible experience. As you move between locations, please pause the audio until you’ve reached the next location to ensure you don't miss any important information.

Throughout this tour, we will delve into the rich history of Lakeshore Grounds, starting with the Indigenous caretakers of the land, moving through the era of the Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital, and exploring the current efforts in urban agriculture and ecological restoration. We aim to highlight the significant transformations this area has undergone and the continuous efforts to connect its past to present sustainability practices.

Let's embark on this journey together and discover the intricate tapestry of agriculture and ecology that makes Lakeshore Grounds and Colonel Samuel Smith Park unique.

Please take a moment to locate our starting point: a green Sustainability Trail plaque situated halfway down the path on the left side, between the Student Welcome and Resource Centre and the sidewalk parallel to Colonel Samuel Smith Drive. This is

where we will begin our tour. If you haven't arrived here yet, pause the audio until you do.

GARDENS Lakeshore

Before we delve into the historical significance of the Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital's agricultural practices, it's important to highlight the continuity of agricultural efforts in this area. Today, urban agriculture initiatives, such as the ones led by GARDENS Lakeshore, are a testament to the enduring value of cultivating the land for food security and community well-being. These contemporary projects mirror the hospital's historic efforts to grow food locally, underscoring a long-standing tradition of agriculture on these grounds.

Hello! My name is Vanessa Keall-Vejar Co-Chair of the Gardens Pods project, Community Developer and Managing Director of CBASE here is South Central Etobicoke

The GARDENS Pod Project started in 2016. It was originally conceived as an idea to build various planters to create a larger Community Garden. Limited access to land allowed the advisory council to look at various options and the Pod Project was born. One of such planters, and a vital connection to our lakeshore community is the linear pod in front of the fashion institute at Humber on the North West corner of Kipling and Lakeshore.

It is a special pod, not only because of where it is, but also due to the fact that it also hosts an Indigenous medicine garden holding sweetgrass, white sage, razor edge

coreopsis, black eyed susan, echinacea and ceremonial wild strawberry. All of which are also pollinator promoting.

Within the sustainable urban farming plants we chose to grow on the street level of the pod, we sought to reflect the culturally appropriate equity seeking community in which we live! What that means is we planted a diverse, nutritionally dense, all organic crop rotation from eggplant, callaloo, beets, radish, multiple herbs, heirloom tomato varieties and even a few specialty surprises!

Donations are directly harvested by our pod leads and taken to local food programs in need, such as Daily Bread and LAMP CHC. We are grateful to our community for embracing us, and to the Humber arboretum training program that diligently grows our seedlings in the greenhouse! By late October's harvest celebration hundreds of pounds of organic food was collected that directly benefits our community.

We hope to always have this pod thriving within the vibrant Lakeshore area for many years to come! Thank you!

If you're interested in learning more about the sustainability features of Lakeshore campus, there is a sustainability trail marker outside the Faculty of Community and Social Services building or the C building.

Indigenous Caretakers

Carry on down the path until you reach the sidewalk. There should be a tall, coppery-brown art installation on the left-hand side.

Lakeshore Grounds Interpretative Centre would like to recognize that Indigenous people are the original and first caretakers of this land. Long before Europeans arrived, Indigenous peoples lived and thrived on this land for thousands of years. Ontario is crisscrossed with foot trails and river routes, known as the carrying trails, which Indigenous peoples used to travel between Lake Ontario, the Atlantic coast, and the rest of the Great Lakes via Lake Simcoe. The Humber River, Rouge River, and Don River were primary routes to Lake Simcoe.

In the Toronto and Etobicoke area, the land was primarily occupied by the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Wendat nations, and most recently by the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. In 1787, the Mississaugas of the New Credit surrendered their land in what is known as the Toronto Purchase, leading to European colonization and land use changes that we will discuss later on.

Etobicoke's name comes from the Anishinaabemowin word "Adobigok", meaning "place of the Black Alders." Similarly, Mimico is derived from the same language and means "land abundant with pigeons", referring to the now-extinct passenger pigeon. The Anishinaabemowin word for pigeon is omiimii.

In the early 19th century, North America's passenger pigeon population numbered in the billions, making it the continent's most populous bird. Their large numbers posed a significant problem for farmers, leading to widespread hunting for their meat. By the 1880s, passenger pigeons were critically endangered, and the species became extinct just over 30 years later. The last known passenger pigeon died in 1914 at the Cincinnati Zoo.

This is also why our logo at Lakeshore Grounds Interpretative Centre features the passenger pigeon as we aim to research, preserve, and share the history of this area. It serves as a poignant reminder of the relationship between people and the natural environment.

You might notice Indigenous art installations in and around this building and campus. If you're interested in learning more about the Indigenous cultural markers on campus, you can visit Indigenous Education and Engagement.

As we proceed with this tour, I want to emphasize that Indigenous people have been and will continue to be the original caretakers of this land. Their deep connection to and stewardship of the land is an integral part of Lakeshore Grounds history and future.