

# Trinity One Sustainable Food Systems Network Report

## Charles Mingyang Deng

### Summary

This summer I was an intern in the Trinity One Sustainable Food Systems Network. I, along with two other interns, worked with Professor Nicole Spiegelaar at Trinity College and the Edible Campus coordinator Beatrice Lego at University of Toronto Scarborough campus. There are three major components in this internship, the first one is to learn about urban farming and to sell products at the farmers' market at UTSC; the second one is the collective project of building urban food-producing sites at Trinity College; the third one is my individual study of the Government of Canada's plan to ban harmful single-use plastics.

Throughout this time, I learned about urban farming sites' establishment, building process, and maintenance. I gained deeper knowledge about the way food is created and distributed in urban areas, which would benefit my intended future studies on urban development.



Germinated plants in the Green House at UTSC.

## Major Activities

- May 2019: Training on plant germination and Rooftop Garden and Edible Campus Farm maintenance.
- May 2019: Training on building raised beds and food security in the Greater Toronto Area.
- June 2019: Expanding the experimental farm for the Farmers' Market at UTSC and building raised beds at Trinity College.
- June 2019: Selling plants at the farmers' market at UTSC.
- July 2019: Rebuilding the Rooftop Garden at the Munk School of Global Affairs.
- July 2019 – August 2019: Selling harvested products from the Rooftop Garden and the experimental farm.
- August 2019: Promoting the Rooftop Garden and the St. Hilda's Garden to the U of T community.



Building one of the three raised beds in St. Hilda College's Yard.

## Values of our work

**Trinity College:** We built three raised beds to grow medicinal herbs and edible plants, utilizing the St. Hilda's yard which was vacant before this summer. We also helped to rebuild and expand the Rooftop Garden on top of the Munk School of Global Affairs. Throughout the summer, our job was to monitor and improve these two food-production sites on campus.

**UTSC:** We were trained at UTSC to germinate seeds in the greenhouse and transplant germinated plants into the soil at the rooftop garden and the Edible Campus Farm. We were also responsible for setting up our site and promoting our products at the UTSC farmers' market.

**Individual study:** I examined Government of Canada's report to ban harmful single-use plastics. By comparing the Canadian plan to other regions' Bills and Plans, I provided recommendations in my literature review regarding how Canada should approach the ban realistically and effectively.



The Rooftop Garden at the UTSC campus. In this picture, strawberry plants, groundcherry plants, and raspberry plants are planted on the same side.



The Rooftop Garden at Munk School after its renovation and expansion.

## Personal Reflection

This summer I learned how to conduct research, how to establish urban farming sites, and how to build customer relations. These are valuable experiences that will benefit me for years to come.

From my time at UTSC, I learned how to germinate seeds in a Greenhouse and how to transplant seedlings, which helped me with building the St. Hilda's Yard Project at Trinity College. It was especially valuable to me as I have not had any prior experiences in farming and taking care of plants before. One of the goals that I hope to achieve by joining this internship over the summer was to learn more about agriculture; by the end of this summer, I achieve exactly what I wanted to learn. Additionally, I also had the chance to develop customer relations and sales skills, which are the areas that I have always wished to improve on.

From my time at Trinity College, I learned how to build an urban farming site from scratch. Our team was also involved in the expansion, renovation, and maintenance of the Rooftop Garden, which was crucial to our understanding of growing food in an urban environment. Moreover, I took on the research to study the Canadian government's initiative to ban harmful single-use plastics. This allowed me to familiarize myself with research methods and key stakeholders in a researching process.

Overall, I have grown significantly over the summer both academically and professionally. This internship allowed me to explore fields that I otherwise would not have access to and I believe this summer solidified my understanding about urban agriculture even more.

