

SPACING OTTAWA: Canadian Urbanism Uncovered

The Opening of the First Biodome Garden in Ottawa

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As Ottawa concluded celebrations for the grand re-opening of the long awaited Lansdowne Park last Saturday, their neighbours to the South were a buzz with excitement as preparations began to welcome the Mayor and rest of the city for another historic moment in the Capital. On August 17, 2014 the Brewer Park Community Garden (BPCG), situated across from Brewer Arena, celebrated the grand opening of Ottawa's first Biodome Garden project. To commemorate the day, the Park hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony along with an afternoon of events, including a barbecue and tours of the Biodome and gardens.





At the ribbon cutting, Project Lead Michael Oster welcomed and thanked the local community, volunteers, garden members and funders for their continued support and enthusiasm for the project, as it was through the assistance and patience of the garden members and community leaders, many who were present for the ceremony, that the Brewer Park Community Garden's three year long vision became a reality.



When asked about the inspiration for the Biodome Garden, Oster credited the ever-enduring spirit of his co-project leader, Guy Souliere and the pages of Patricia Watters' 1980 book, ["The Biodome Garden Book"](#). The project, which was first discussed by the BPCG members in 2011, originated as an idea to highlight the importance of introducing year-round sustainable, organic gardening to the Ottawa Region. Over the past three years, Oster and Souliere have worked tirelessly to lead the project with the Brewer Park Community

Garden association and bring together the talents of community members, with support of local funding. The result has included generous community funding from: TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, the City of Ottawa Better Neighbourhoods Program, Just Food and the Community Garden Network.



The completion of the Biodome Garden marks an historic moment for Ottawa. The project is the first structure of its kind in Eastern Canada, making it an exciting achievement that sets a high standard and precedence for future similar structures to be built in the Region. As explained by those involved in the project, “Since its inception, the Biodome Garden has appreciated informal collaboration with both Carleton University and Algonquin College. The energy systems for air movement, fluid pumping and temperature modulation of the Biodome Garden form the thesis topic of a Carleton Masters Candidate, Paula Claudino. Recognizing that both Carleton and Algonquin value community collaboration and real-world research opportunities, the Biodome Garden is hoping to attract more formal partnerships with one or both partners.” It is the hope of the Brewer Park Community Garden that this innovative project will be replicated many times in several different forms across the City and Ottawa Region. Its replication could shape the beginning of a much more healthy and sustainable food culture across Ottawa.

Editor’s Note: Upon initial publication, this story stated that the Biodome Garden had been completed in partnership with Carleton University and Algonquin College. This piece has been updated to better reflect the nature of the collaboration with these two institutions. We apologize for the error.

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