

**Coombs Farmers' Institute**  
**CFI – 2019 Here We Grow - Overview**

**Project Objective**

This project's objective is to increase the ability of interested members of our community to grow some of their own food, and to recognize the importance of this enterprise, whether conducted by themselves or local farmers.

**The goals of this program addressing self-reliance are to:**

- Raise awareness of current food supply issues and increase the perceived value of agriculture,
- Provide support and education in food self-sufficiency, at no charge to the public.
- Motivate and instruct local residents to grow, prepare and preserve more food for their own consumption.
- Support local farmers by providing reasons and opportunities for non-farmers to meet with them. Consumers will be made aware of the variety and quality of local products, and sourcing and purchasing arrangements will be facilitated.

**Expected results include:**

- consumers making more informed choices about food quality, safety and security of supply
- farmers increasing production to meet new market demand
- increased volume of food being produced and stored by existing or new gardeners
- creation of skilled gardeners who can then share their knowledge with others
- strengthened community ability to create greater food supply security for all.

**CFI – Here We Grow** will demonstrate that the enterprise of growing one's own food is not only necessary, but easily accomplished and enjoyable. Using a mixed model of classroom sessions, workshops and events, support and encouragement can be provided to those citizens who recognize that being more self reliant is something they want and should do, but lack the means to get started.

This initiative will allow all participants to remember or learn the basics of self-sufficiency. Using traditional skill sets and adhering always to simple, basic principles, participants will gain confidence to expand the varieties and volumes of food they grow. When 'consumer growers' recognize the values and benefits of a local food supply, they are more likely to reach out to local farmers to fill those grocery needs that are beyond the production capacity of their backyard.

Some students may realize that their newly acquired skills may enable them to produce a marketable commodity, and thence lead to a new career.

We will have made steps toward a model of self reliance, particularly valuable in the event of uncontrollable outside forces, such as climate change, global politics and economics and ecological events.