

## **A Note from the Owners of 37191 Schooner Way...**

We are city people - have been all our lives. If someone had said to us 5 years ago that we would be living on a rural island, own chickens and be living a more sustainable life we would have laughed but here we are.

We bought this property because we fell in love with the view and of course the people that live here. They are so kind and welcoming and my family and I felt right at home. What we didn't realize was the tremendous sense of community and conservation that this island has and how it would alter our previous way of doing things.

The "garden" was from gate to house covered in an invasive plant called St Johns wort and it took about 6 months of painstaking work to remove it all. Once we had the bare ground lots of planning was in order to make sure we had something that was not only functional but also did no harm to the beautiful environment around us. We have tried to make our home as sustainable as possible so all the garden beds are made from recycled wood from a neighbour's renovation. They have been tilled with horse manure from one of our many farmers here on Pender and a total of 75 yards of premium garden topsoil has been added to the garden. Crushed rock pathways make it easier to reduce weeds. No pesticides have ever been used here - we use manual removal, vinegar or boiling water to eliminate weeds. There are several water catchment containers to water the garden and again mulch is used throughout to reduce water evaporation. The mulch has been purchased but more recently we have been able to get it from one of the many wood cutting companies that work on Pender - they need to get rid of their chipper debris and we regularly need more mulch.

The chicken coop enclosure is made entirely of post construction 2X4's and has saved every piece of wood frame you see from a landfill. The coops themselves are insulated with new leftover insulation from another construction job on island and the wood chips and manure from inside the coops are being composted to use for next years garden. Having fresh eggs daily even during the winter months has been so gratifying in that the chickens have a large run to play in, they are warm and dry year round and enjoy both full sun and shaded areas.

Multiple mature fruit trees provide an abundant harvest. Their roots are covered with mulch to ensure they remain well hydrated during the dryer summer months. 4 apple trees, 2 pears and 2 cherry trees and one very large plum tree over the chicken coop in addition to several blueberry bushes. Most of the fruit is canned and stored in the cool storage area on the lower level. Because there is a wood burning stove on the lower level we have a significant wood stack and the wood shed itself was again made from old pallets—all recycled.

Our home was very much what you see - few renovations have been needed. Because of power outages we have installed a separate panel for a generator for essentials and a surge protector on the entire house. The shed to the right of the front door as you look out is convenient to house the generator and the carport is just close enough for the generator cable to reach while keeping the generator out of the elements.

We have thoroughly enjoyed living here and have put our hearts into creating a beautiful oasis that is peaceful, productive and sustainable. We are now looking to find a larger acreage for retirement and of course space for a bigger coop...you can never have too many chickens!