

Assessing the Appropriateness of Entomophagy and Insecticulture in Riley Park-Little Mountain

Executive Summary

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Insecticulture, the practice of growing insects for self-consumption, can be easily conducted in a home setting and is an efficient and environmentally-sustainable source of protein. Thus, insecticulture may be a natural addition to urban agriculture, a model aimed at encouraging sustainable food production. The potential for inclusion of insecticulture in the urban agriculture model has not yet been explored in the literature. The objective of this study, which was a Community-Based Experiential Learning project for LFS 350 at the University of British Columbia, was to determine whether insecticulture is an appropriate addition to an already developed urban agricultural food system: that of the Riley Park-Little Mountain community within Vancouver, BC. This community is active in urban agriculture and may therefore value the sustainability benefits of insecticulture.

A survey was conducted to determine whether Riley Park-Little Mountain (RP-LM) community members are aware of entomophagy (the practice of eating insects) and insecticulture; whether they are open to participating in these practices; and whether their openness to participate aligns with their current practices in urban agriculture. The survey was conducted with 41 participants at either a farmers market or a grocery store in the RP-LM neighbourhood. Yes-or-no questions determined participants' awareness of and openness towards the insect-related practices and their current urban agriculture practices. Open-ended questions organized into key themes determined the reasons for participants' level of openness to participate in these practices.

Most participants were aware of and open to participating in entomophagy, but the opposite was true for insecticulture. Regardless of the practice, farmers market participants were more likely to be aware and open, as were participants more active in urban agriculture. Participants' reasons for openness, or lack thereof, elicited five key themes: sustainability, appeal, enjoyment, logistics, and awareness.

Overall, the results from this study demonstrate that entomophagy is appropriate for the RP-LM community and that insecticulture may be appropriate given an increase in awareness of this practice. This suggests that information and exposure to insecticulture should be provided to RP-LM citizens. As one of the goals of the Vancouver Food Strategy is to foster food-friendly neighbourhoods by supporting and enabling food production through all forms of urban agriculture, similar studies should be performed in other communities to determine if most Vancouver citizens will value efforts made by the City of Vancouver to support insecticulture within the urban agricultural food system.