

# Amy Oi Ning Cheng

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## EDUCATION

**Masters in Environmental Studies** 2016  
York University, Toronto, ON

- **Outstanding Graduate Paper Award**
- **Advisor:** Dr. Roderick MacRae, Associate Professor, Canadian Food Policy Expert
- **Major Research Paper:** “*Broadening the World Crops Discourse: Exploring Ecological and Cultural Gaps in World Crops Research for the Greater Toronto Area*”. Identified data gaps about 'ethno-cultural' vegetables production and marketing in SW Ontario; explored the opportunities and challenges for racialized, small-scale, organic farmers growing and selling culturally-diverse crops; examined socio-economic factors that impact racialized communities' engagement with local food movements; highlighted examples from Toronto's Cantonese-Chinese, first-generation immigrant community for discussion.

**Bachelor of Fine Arts with Honours, Visual Arts Major** 2005  
University of Victoria, Victoria, BC

**Theatre Technical Production Major** 2001  
Ryerson University, Toronto, ON

**Arts & Social Sciences Major** 2000  
University of Western Ontario, London, ON

## ADDITIONAL TRAINING

**Plant Health Diagnosis & Introduction to Beekeeping** 2020  
Penn State Extension, Penn State University, PA

**Soils & Plant Growth** 2019  
University of Guelph's Open Learning and Educational Support, Guelph, ON

**Dismantling Racism in the Food System - Growing Food and Justice** (three days) 2015  
Black Creek Community Farm & Growing Power Detroit, Toronto, ON

**Farm Business Planning Certificate** 2011  
Everdale Organic Farm & Environmental Learning Centre, Guelph, ON

**Sustainable Farming Certificate & Apprenticeship** 2011  
Everdale Organic Farm & Environmental Learning Centre, Guelph, ON

## AWARDS, NOMINATIONS & GRANTS

<b>Outstanding Graduate Paper Award Recipient</b> Master in Environmental Studies, York University	2016
<b>Innovation Award Nominee</b> Organic Ontario Awards, Organic Council of Ontario	2014
<b>Carrot Cache Grant Recipient</b> Small Farm Business Grant, The Big Carrot	2013
<b>Growing Forward Program Grant Recipient</b> Farm Business Grant, Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association	2012
<b>New Products Program Grant Recipient</b> The Ontario Greenbelt Foundation	2012

## SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE EXPERIENCE

<b>Anti-Racism &amp; Equity Coordinator</b> Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario, Guelph, ON	March 2021 - Present
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Supporting EFAO's Executive Director and Anti-Racism & Equity Consultant on EFAO's anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion work.

- Advised on 2020-2025 strategic plan.
- Recommended changes to the board's structures and processes; changes are currently underway.
- Supporting the coordination and facilitation of BIPOC farmers' network meet-ups.
- Synthesized and presented results from a regional BIPOC farmers' survey to EFAO staff and board.
- Supporting the formation of a BIPOC Equity and Accountability Committee, the development of an online BIPOC farmers' directory, and a BIPOC blog posts series.

<b>Various Roles</b> Black Creek Community Farm, Toronto, ON	2014 - 2020
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I was BCCF staff for 7 years and evolved through different roles, each time with increasing responsibility: farmer, weekly food box (CSA) program and markets coordinator, garden network coordinator, and market garden manager / lead farmer. I developed, coordinated and implemented food justice programs that prioritized service to the farm's local community and residents.

- **Market Garden Manager & Lead Farmer (2018 - 2020)**  
Developed, managed and implemented 1 acre of certified organic production for 40+ crops. Supplied and operated a 125-members weekly box (CSA) program, plus wholesale and on-farm sales. I also coordinated and implemented additional community programming based out of the market garden.

## **SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE EXPERIENCE** (cont'd)

### **Various Roles** (cont'd)

2014 - 2020

Black Creek Community Farm, Toronto, ON

- **Market Garden Manager & Lead Farmer (2018 - 2020)** (cont'd)

#### Strategic Planning & Management:

- Supported the E.D. and steering committee for BCCF's 2020-2025 strategic planning.
- Developed market garden strategic plan and business plan, plus end-of-season reports for: market garden budget, crop production analysis, and customer, staff and volunteer feedback.
- Liaised and collaborated with project partners African Food Basket and FoodShare Toronto.
- Developed and implemented production record-keeping systems, farm operational protocols, site and equipment procedures, COVID safety guidelines and site sanitization / PPE stations.
- Logistics coordination with other BCCF program leaders for on-farm special events with up to 300 attendees.
- Hired, trained, supervised, and evaluated staff and volunteers.

#### Farm Production:

- Developed, supervised and implemented daily logistics plan for every aspect of vegetable production: crop planning; supplies procurement; infrastructure set-up and repairs; 28 consecutive weeks of field prep, planting, crop management, harvesting and post-harvest processing; end of season equipment inventory and site clean-up.
- Managed all aspects of produce storage, quality control, and inventory tracking. Ensured weekly produce availability and quality for multiple sales channels: wholesale, weekly box pickups, emergency food box deliveries, and farm store.
- Diversified BCCF's crop production to include culturally diverse crops: Asian greens, Ghanian eggplants, callaloo, scotch bonnet peppers, etc.
- Maintained detailed production records to pass Eco-Cert's annual organic certification audit and site-inspection, successfully maintained BCCF's "certified organic" status every season.

#### Marketing, Sales & Distribution:

- Successfully achieved annual sales and membership goals. Over 3 years: 400% profit increase, 250% gross sales increase, 250% membership increase.
- Developed and coordinated logistics for weekly CSA, farm store, and wholesale distribution: communicated with wholesale buyers, packed and delivered wholesale orders, operated weekly on-site pick-ups and emergency food box deliveries, ensured COVID safety practices.
- Developed accessibility pricing and payment model used by 30% of weekly box members.
- Stabilized annual box program membership and increased membership retention.
- Managed membership database, invoicing, payments tracking, customer service and feedback.
- Improved marketing and communications: introduced weekly newsletters to members, scheduled weekly social media updates, and enhanced print and digital marketing content by designing engaging visuals and impactful story-telling.

## **SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE EXPERIENCE** (cont'd)

### **Various Roles** (cont'd)

Black Creek Community Farm, Toronto, ON

- **Program Coordinator, Black Creek Garden Resource Network (2017)**

Planned, coordinated and implemented gardening resources for local garden groups and seniors.

- Established partnerships with Toronto Community Housing resident groups, Black Creek Health Center, and Toronto Public Health.
- Conducted consultations with local residents to inform programming design; developed all programming educational material; coordinated and facilitated all program activities.
- Successfully advocated for a seniors' gardening program aimed at reducing seniors' social isolation; coordinated and facilitated this program for 20 seniors.
- Provided to local community: 3000 organic vegetable seedlings, 58 gardening workshops / events, and bi-weekly on-site support for 3 community gardens.
- Engaged 40 households, 16 local organizations, and 550 local residents - including 330 seniors.

- **Graduate Site-Assistant (2015 - 2016)**

Constructed permanent site infrastructure, led workshops, coordinated volunteer work sessions.

- **Farmer & CSA Coordinator (2014)**

Farmed 3 acres of certified organic vegetables with a farm team and led the coordination of a CSA program and farmers' markets sales.

- Managed weekly box program distribution, customer service, and produce receiving.
- Researched and led the construction of on-farm infrastructure: commercial walk-in cooler, outdoor vegetable washing and processing area.
- Coordinated and led weekly farmers' market: sales planning, packing and transporting produce to markets, market set-up, sales, customer service, and record-keeping.

### **Facilitator & Instructor**

2012 - 2020

University of Guelph, Ryerson University, Fleming College, FoodShare, the Greenbelt Foundation

Developed modules for academic courses and community programming.

- Taught post-secondary students, new farmers, general public of all ages.
- Topics: crop planning, urban farming, farm business planning, growing / selling diverse crops.

### **Online Course Curriculum Developer**

2019

University of Guelph, Guelph, ON

Co-developed and co-wrote 50% of course content for an online 'Vegetable Production' course (course no. 3101018), this is an elective course for U of G's OpenEd Horticulture certificate and/or diploma.

- Co-designed course objectives and learning outcomes for a 12 weeks course (12 units) in accordance with U of G's Open Learning framework and requirements.
- For each course unit: established detailed learning outcomes, co-wrote unit content, developed resources, activities, assignments, and tests.

## **SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE EXPERIENCE** (cont'd)

### **Consultant & Research Assistant**

2015 - 2016

Partnership between Toronto Urban Growers, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, Toronto Public Health, and Toronto Food Policy Council., Toronto, ON

Advised and co-researched for a project called '*Feeding Diversity*' that looked at 5 case studies of small-scale farmers growing and marketing culturally diverse crops in the Golden Horseshoe region.

- Advised on initial research outline and coordinated the application process for research participants.
- Implemented research with co-researcher, liaised between participants and project organizers.
- Synthesized research data; co-authored final report for submission to funders.

### **Program Coordinator**

2014 - 2015

Friends of The Greenbelt Foundation, Toronto, ON

Coordinated the *World Crops Project* that supported BIPOC organizations, community gardeners, and small-scale commercial urban farmers throughout the GTA with culturally relevant resources and events.

- Conducted community consultations to shape seasonal programming.
- Developed partnerships with local farmers to supply organic, culturally-diverse plants for programming.
- Facilitated events for urban farmers and crop researchers to discuss tropical crops production feasibility.
- Provided on-site technical support for participating community gardens.

### **Farmer Consultant**

2013

Vineland Research & Innovation Centre, Toronto ON

Consulted on the development of educational resources for small-scale farmers growing and selling organic, culturally diverse vegetables.

- Provided feedback on Vineland's project outline and learning resources.
- Participated in regional meetings with other farmers to discuss needs and gaps.
- Featured in the World Crops Project's *Eat Local, Taste Global* video series.

### **Owner & Operator / Farmer**

2012 - 2013

Red Pocket Farm, Toronto, ON

Solo owner and operator of Red Pocket Farm, a 1/4 acre organic market garden specialized in Chinese vegetables. I produced 30 crops and 100+ varieties for Toronto farmers' markets.

- Planned all aspects of farm business, crop production, marketing, and sales.
- Implemented all farming tasks from seed, to harvest, to final sales.
- Engaged Toronto's Chinese community via educational tours and workshops.
- Presented at local and regional food conferences about culturally significant crops.

### **Sustainable Farming Internship & Certificate**

2015 - 2016

Everdale Organic Farm & Environmental Learning Centre, Guelph, ON

Apprenticed and assisted with 10 acres of vegetables production as part of a team, supported CSA program (CSA) and farmers' markets, assisted with poultry and ruminant care.

## **OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

### **Museum Exhibit / Diorama / Graphics Production Technician**

2008 - 2011

Western Development Museum, Saskatoon, SK

I completed hands-on and digital graphics production for the “Winning the Prairie Gamble” Exhibit. Created museum displays for 4 museum locations across Saskatchewan.

- 2-D productions: graphic mural prints and installation, editing and processing 1000+ archival photos, 300+ exhibit signage, and 100+ artifact replicas.
- 3-D productions: construction and special-effects painting for life-size museum dioramas. Examples include re-creations of a 1930’s depression-era farm house, a barn facade, an 1800’s Ukrainian settler shack (exterior and interior), the interior of a potash mine, and natural landscape exhibits.
- Collaborated directly with construction foreman, managed production logistics, fabricated artifact mounts and display components in wood, metal, and plastic.
- Managed and prepared 1000+ digital files for large scale printing.
- Worked directly with museum exhibit designer and curators, was a core member of a diverse production team working alongside various trades technicians.

### **Assistant Computer Lab Facilitator**

2007 - 2008

Employment & Learning Centre, YWCA Saskatoon, Saskatoon, SK

Assisted with the delivery of all computer lab programs for YWCA employment centre clients.

- Assisted the instruction of adult and senior computer literacy classes.
- Supervised computer lab and provided technical assistance to employment centre clients.
- Designed and produced computer lab marketing materials: posters, brochures, job search packages.

### **Freelance Scenic Arts Technician**

2005 - 2007

Toronto Young People’s Theatre, The Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity,  
Factory Theatre, Ronnie Burkett Theatre of Marionettes

Assistant set and special effects painter for live theatre designs / productions.

- Worked directly with head scenic painter to execute large-scale painting production for theatre sets, materials, paint and equipment preparation; large-scale painting; attended design team meetings.
- Followed design plans as outlined by theatre set designer, created life-size replica of design models with a high degree of detail and accuracy for the designer’s approval.

### **Educational Services Assistant**

2005 - 2007

Young People’s Theatre, Toronto, ON

Assisted the educational department by developing and facilitating arts education workshops, and assisted with technical theatre production by set painting for YPT stage productions.

- Arts education: created teacher guides for performances, delivered theatre workshops and tours, created promotional materials, and moderated on-stage interactions between actors and 400+ audience members.
- Theatre technical production: painted and constructed theatre set pieces, according to set designs.

## **GENERAL STRENGTHS & WORKING STYLE**

- Fluent in Cantonese (conversational)
- Strong and proven abilities for operational planning, coordination and execution.
- Artistic, strong eye for design
- Diverse experience, interdisciplinary problem-solving, organized, methodical, and detail-oriented
- Strong interpersonal skills: empathic, thoughtful, supportive leadership style, good listener
- Strong physical stamina, enjoys physical work (farming, technical production, ultra running, climbing)
- Values quality work, responsibility, accountability, clear communication, realistic goals, humility, respect
- Intermediate level Google Sheets or Excel, Google Docs or Word, Freshbooks, Powerpoint, Canva, Adobe Photoshop and InDesign; beginner level WordPress

## **SKILLS & QUALIFICATIONS HIGHLIGHTS**

- Organic Farming & Market Garden Management:
  - 7 growing seasons --> special interest in Asian crops
  - Planning and farming 1 acre field / greenhouse: 40 crops x 22 weeks x 125 members box program
  - Managing and training farm staff and interns
  - Organic certification record keeping; crop production, CSA, and sales record keeping
  - Field preparation with two-wheeled tractor (BCS) and driving tractor
  - Seedlings production, planting, management, harvesting, processing, and crop storage
  - Working knowledge of soil fertility, cover crops, weeds, pests, and disease management
  - Experience with farming infrastructure, irrigation set up, equipment and materials: Earthway seeder, flame-weeder, wheel-hoe, row covers, tarps for low-till practices, etc.
- Teaching & Facilitation:
  - Diverse topics: sustainable agriculture, urban farming, arts education
  - Program development, coordination, facilitation, and instruction through a social justice lens
  - Curriculum design and delivery for academic courses and community settings
  - Experience with kids, youth, post-secondary, adults, seniors, racialized communities
  - One-on-one mentoring, staff and volunteer training
- Research:
  - Masters in Environmental Studies, awarded for outstanding graduate paper
  - On-farm vegetable variety trials
  - Community-based and participatory research with small-scale farmers
- Technical Arts Production:
  - 7 years' experience in technical arts production for live theatre and museums
  - Arts technician for national and regional arts organizations across Canada
  - Arts education curriculum design and delivery for kids and youth
  - Freelance graphic design and production

## TEACHING, FACILITATION & PUBLIC SPEAKING

Presenter	Urban Farming: Red Pocket Farm, <b>Foodshare Toronto</b>	2020
Facilitator	World Crops Workshop, <b>Guelph Organic Conference</b>	2016
Panelist	Urban Market Gardening, <b>Foodshare Toronto</b>	2015
Presenter	Crop Planning for Small-Scale Urban Farms, <b>Ryerson University</b>	2015
Presenter	Crop Planning Module, <b>Fleming College Sustainable Agriculture Program</b>	2014
Presenter	Farm Business Course, <b>Everdale Farm &amp; Environmental Learning Centre</b>	2013
Panelist	Commercialization of World Crops, <b>Bring Food Home Conference</b>	2013
Presenter	Crop Planning Module, <b>Fleming College Sustainable Agriculture Program</b>	2013
Panelist	Commercialization of World Crops, <b>Toronto Urban Agriculture Summit</b>	2012

## PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO) Member	2017 - Present
National Farmers Union (NFU) Associate Member	2012 - Present

## PERSONAL INTERESTS

- Fine arts drawing and painting, illustration, photography
- Long-distance running, hiking, back-country camping, rock climbing