

## Story of the Food Forest Idea in St André de Kamouraska, Canada

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As the sun dipped behind the hills of St André de Kamouraska, Canada, a sense of tranquility enveloped the town. Residents gathered in the community hall, eager to learn about an innovative concept that promised to transform their way of living—food forests. Among the attendees were Claire and Jean, avid gardeners with a deep love for the land. Tonight, curiosity had drawn them here.

The hall buzzed with anticipation as Emma, an environmental advocate, stepped up to the podium. Her eyes sparkled with excitement, and her voice carried the promise of transformation. "Good evening, everyone. I'm here to share a vision with you—a vision of sustainable abundance, resilience, and harmony with nature. This is the promise of a food forest."

Intrigued, Claire and Jean leaned forward, their skepticism mingling with curiosity.

Emma began to weave her tale, painting a vivid picture with her words. "Imagine a place where fruit trees, shrubs, herbs, vines, and vegetables grow together, supporting each other just as they do in a natural ecosystem. This isn't just a garden, but a thriving, self-sustaining food forest."

She described various plants suited to St André de Kamouraska's hardiness zone 4a and its typically acidic, well-drained soils. Among them were the resilient Hazelnuts (*Corylus americana*), which Claire and Jean had recently purchased. These hazelnuts are known for their delicious nuts and their ability to thrive in colder climates.

Claire's mind wandered to their garden, already filled with native plants like *Echinacea purpurea*, known for its beautiful flowers and medicinal properties. Could a food forest be the next step?

Emma continued, introducing other hardy plants suited to their conditions. "Consider the Honey Locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*), which is excellent for nitrogen-fixing and supporting soil health, and the Autumn Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*), which produces nutritious berries and improves soil fertility. These plants not only thrive in our climate but also support a diverse ecosystem."

She also spoke about trees like Heartnut (*Juglans ailantifolia*) and Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*), which thrive in St André de Kamouraska's soils. These trees produce abundant harvests of nuts and fruit.

Emma then shared a parable that resonated deeply with the audience:

"There once was a gardener who worked for God, trusting in God's provision and recognizing the divine within herself and all of God's creation. She did not dominate the land but respected the free will of herself and others, including her family, friends, and colleagues. She learned to forgive, love, and accept people as they were, speaking the truth yet never forcing it. She knew she was worthy to receive divine revelation and always tested the spirits to ensure they came from God.

As the day came for the gardener to meet her Creator, she did so with love and kindness for all creation in her heart. This is the spirit we must embrace to transform our land into something beautiful and sustainable."

The room was silent, absorbed in the story. Claire and Jean felt a surge of hope. The risks were real, but so were the rewards. Emma's vision of a food forest wasn't just about plants; it was about cultivating a community, respecting nature, and working together with love and kindness.

Emma's voice softened as she made her final plea. "Imagine St André de Kamouraska as a model of sustainability, drawing visitors and experts, fostering education and innovation. It's a vision we can achieve together, but it starts with a decision—to embrace this new way of thinking, to invest in our land and community."

She concluded with a heartfelt call to action. "Join me in this journey. Let's create a legacy of abundance and resilience for ourselves and future generations. Together, we can make St André de Kamouraska a beacon of hope and sustainability."

Claire and Jean stood, their hearts filled with purpose. The time for change was now. With the support of their neighbors and the guidance of experts like Emma, they embarked on a journey to transform their land into a thriving food forest—a legacy for future generations in St André de Kamouraska, Canada.

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This story, included with their purchase of the hazelnut shrubs, offers a message of hope, continuity, and love, ensuring that the vision of a food forest in St André de Kamouraska is honored in a meaningful and enduring way.