

People, Plants and Water

Vision

Olds College will forge partnerships to create the Centre for the Horticulture Industry (CHI) to promote sustainable landscapes and food ecosystems that enhance quality of life and support a vibrant Canadian economy.

Olds College Botanic Gardens, Arboretum and Wetland

Since 1963, Olds College has provided training in Horticulture. In 1999, Olds College approved the development of a living laboratory within its academic programs. Olds College Botanic Garden Phases I & II were developed, in partnership with industry, to maintain and conserve collections of cultivars and native species grown on the northern plains. Groundbreaking of the 15 gardens took place in August of 2001. Less than one year later, the grounds were officially opened by Lt. Gov. Lois Hole. In the summer of 2002, the Promenade, a connecting link to the existing Bank of Montreal Landscape Pavilion, was officially opened by the Honourable Lyle Oberg, M.D., MLA.

Olds College Botanic Garden, Arboretum and Wetland will build upon the success of this partnership with industry, and will further expand the living laboratory so that our learners, the industry, and the public can enjoy an outstanding botanical, horticultural and environmental educational experience. The construction of the wetland, arboretum, public gardens and integrated research plots will create a case study for the understanding of the interrelationship between people, plants and water. The expansion will place Olds College as one of Canada's best horticulture schools.

Impacting our Urban Rural Environments

The horticulture industry faces many challenges such as recruitment, development, and retention of skilled workers. At the same time, global competition influences market realities daily: business, environmental and legislative concerns must be continually balanced.

Rapid growth, changing technology, as well as environmental and economic demands for science-based sustainable practices, place the horticulture industry on a steep learning curve. At the same time, the value of economic and natural resources entrusted to the industry is becoming more widely recognized by both urban and rural communities. The Olds College Botanic Garden, Arboretum and Wetland will build upon the education solution that Olds College provides and helps industry respond to the challenges they face.

Partnered with Strategic Industry Advisors

- Alberta Golf Superintendents Association
- Canadian Nursery Landscape Association
- Landscape Alberta Nursery Trades Association
- Canadian Golf Superintendents Association
- International Society of Arboriculture
Prairie Chapter

The Centre for the Horticulture Industry Offers Unique Solutions

- Increases student enrolment capacity with a projected 25 full-load equivalencies.
- Provides access to a unique range of plant materials relative to other botanical gardens within the province.
- Integrates water management curriculum relevant to Olds College's program mandate.
- Improves student capacity to employ land use and environmental planning principles and technology.
- Engages students in applied research as a component of curriculum.
- Increases national and international work experience opportunities (e.g. Co-op, internship, directed field study).
- Utilizes in situ laboratories to demonstrate and practice Integrated Pest Management.
- Provides project-based studies in areas such as land use planning, GIS mapping, and native plant material.
- Meets Industry training needs for:
 - A workforce with technical, supervisory and business capabilities relevant to sustainable landscape design, construction and management.
 - Local applied research specifically as it relates to water, integrated pest management and knowledge of plant material.
 - Knowledge and technology to be leaders in environmental stewardship.
- Focuses expertise, facilities, technology and applied research in ways that:
 - Support the learning outcomes of Olds College Students.
 - Create a showcase and a resource for Horticulture and its related sectors.
 - Provide education and enjoyment for learners and the public.
 - Model best practices in operational and environmental sustainability.
 - Complement and integrate the entire horticulture resource of the Olds College Campus.
- Complements existing opportunities for Horticulture/Agri-tourism destinations.

Olds College will develop the Centre for the Horticulture Industry to increase its capacity to provide safety, technical and business management training to the horticulture industry and the gardening public using a wide range of delivery methods. The CHI will support applied research to provide learners with a working knowledge of the value and practice of applied research to solve industry problems.

Olds College has been partnered with the industry since the horticulture program began in 1963. The College strives to align its programs with industry needs, diversification and specialization. With the completion of the CHI, Olds College will be uniquely positioned as a national-class education and business resource centre for the horticulture industry.

Financial Impact

Olds College Botanic Garden, Arboretum and Wetland

Research and Design	\$ 350,000	
Wetland	\$ 1,500,000	
Arboretum/Gardens	\$ 770,000	
Infrastructure/Buildings	\$ 540,000	
Signage/Data Stewardship	\$ 150,000	
Contingency	\$ 220,000	
Total		\$ 3,530,000

For more information about this 2009 Capital Vision Campaign Project, please contact:

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