



杞子茶屋 Goji Berry Teahouse

by

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Can the goji 枸杞, a Chinese heritage plant, co-exist in the community ecology of Edmonton?

This question was first raised when I gathered goji branches at Grandma Lau's house to memorialize Edmonton's abandoned Chinatown Harbin Gate in 2019 before the start of my MFA studies. During the next years of research creation, I mapped local wild gojis—straggly at the edges of asphalt and gravel beds near Hotel Macdonald, flourishing in the River Valley, cultivated in neighbour's yards. Wherever they grow they are easily identifiable for their red raindrop-shaped berries and drooping boughs. I sought out Chinese elders to listen to their stories of immigration to Canada, and how the goji plant migrated along with them or with their own elders from as early as the 1890s. The enduring importance of the plant to a sense of self and community prompted me to propagate and share the plant in an urban goji-berry adoption program in 2021, to expand and build that community through this health-giving plant (often consumed in tea), and to reflect more broadly on the place of the goji in the city. Trans-species engagement through composting, book publication, educational workshops on local sustainability with knowledge keepers and herbalists, sociologists and scientists, as well as more interviews and community engagement followed. All have a place in my MFA thesis exhibition *Goji Berry Teahouse* at Fort Edmonton Park.

The themes of my MFA Intermedia Thesis exhibition, then, have to do with home. What is home? A home is something that is constantly changing. It's not a house. It's more abstract. It's a feeling, a sense of belonging, comfort, security, and it always involves others. For most immigrants like me, home could be a fragmented idea because home is not a permanent place, it's on the move. The most difficult part of finding home has to do with political-historical settler colonialism, when a group is not being treated fairly.

In the main room of *Goji Berry Teahouse*, large-scale photographs of the people I interviewed line the walls chronologically to follow the path of the project, creating a visual context for it. A video entitled "The Living History of Goji in Edmonton" gave voice to the figures in the photographs, as did the audio recordings in Cantonese echoing from teapots. In one, Chinese elder Grandma Lau shares the story that when she immigrated from Hong Kong to Edmonton in 1972, she arrived with a cutting stuffed in her coat pocket. The other is by a Chinese elder about the goji in the Shaw Conference Centre area, which used to be a weekend destination in the 70s for Chinatown residents to pick gojis, eat food at local restaurants, and socialize. He talks about Chinatown now, and the challenges it faces as it, too, moves and morphs.

My multimedia installation entitled *China Room* was in a side room which houses Fort Edmonton's collection of colonial Chinaware. A large-scale worm composting video is projected on the ceiling of the China room, in which the visitors cannot avoid eye contact of the lowly creatures. As part of my MFA research, I have been investigating everyday domestic consumption, trying to transform waste into new materials/energy for the goji plant through collaborating with red wiggler composting worms who are active waste-to-energy-producers. These incomparable builders constantly turn and aerate the soil to produce rich compost (new soil). I see making soil with the humble worms as a form of activism to restore biodiversity. I am fascinated with worm composting with red wigglers (another migrant from Europe) and created two compost lamp installations for the exhibition. One compost lamp is installed in the porcelain room that embodies Edmonton's settler colonial history; it composts that history.

As a researcher committed to participatory art, I hosted weekly tea conversation at Reeds', where guests have been invited to reflect on their own idea of "home", in this time of mass migration. They are casual conversations with participants while we drink tea that I prepare from local goji berries and puer tea leaves that my family brought from China, when I immigrated to Edmonton 16 years ago. A daily activity of planting goji seeds with the guests and the goji adoption program continues during the exhibition.

Collaboration with Fort Edmonton Park has been very exciting as I brought in goji shrubs from my goji adoption program as the first element of the new Chinese Garden on-site, in which their Asian History Interpreters share the history of goji berries, referencing my research. The collaboration ensures physical space and representation of Asian cultures in Edmonton's history: a political act to raise awareness of the Chinese Canadian Community who have faced discrimination and displacement since their first arrival in Canada.

In conclusion, local goji co-exists in the community ecology of Edmonton. As a hardy perennial who migrated to Canada a century ago, local goji lives side-by-side with our Indigenous species in the River Valley and "reborn" every year to serve our local ecosystem of humans and wildlife. There is no place in Canada that grows naturalised wild gojis as well as Edmonton.



Guan_001 *Honeybee Collecting Pollen of Buddy's Goji Flowers*, 2021.

Documentation of Goji Berry Teahouse exhibition at Fort Edmonton Park

August 3rd - September 17th, 2023

In my MFA thesis exhibition and project, I explored how community based and multi species art practices with the goji offer new, positive, and meaningful ways to reflect upon the evolving and ongoing question of what home means to myself, my children, and my community. The following images and captions document my exhibition.



Guan_002 **Chinese Market Garden**, Fort Edmonton Park, Living Installation, 2022 - Ongoing.

Photo: Jordon Hon

The first work in my exhibition was Chinese Market Garden, a site-specific living art in collaboration between the Edmonton Chinese Community, myself, and Fort Edmonton. The young gojis were the first element planted in the garden through the Goji Baby Adoption Program. Now we finally have a physical space and representation of Asian cultures in this heritage park.



Guan_003 *Chinese Work Gang*, 1889. Digital Reproduction, 107" x 74.5", 2023.

Photo: Jordon Hon

Courtesy of Digital Collections, University of Calgary. Modifications to this image include cropping and colour desaturation.

The second work in my exhibition is *Chinese Work Gang*, a large digital reproduction of a photograph of Chinese workers working on the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks near summit, British Columbia. between Glacier House and the Loop, just west of Rogers Pass. Lower portion of Ross Peak in background.



After the completion of the Trans-Canada railway in the 1880s, Chinese workers who stayed in Canada opened up or worked in laundries, restaurants and other businesses. Chung Gee, the first Chinese person arrived in Edmonton from Calgary in 1890 and was followed by others soon after. In 1885, the federal government imposed a head tax that was later replaced by the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923. This Act closed the door to Chinese entry to Canada. Many Chinese workers could not return home to China anymore for fear of not being able to return to Canada. Those who came brought as many of their personal belongings that they could physically carry from home, including dry herbs, seeds, or plant cuttings.

The Chinese workers would have kept themselves healthy, as they had no ready access to a medical doctor. Nor did they have access to a person who could treat Chinese people with the medicines they were familiar with, such as Chinese medicinal tonics and Chinese home remedies using natural herbs, berries, and roots to cure illnesses or maintain health. According to Thean Pheh, a retired fruit technologist with Alberta Agriculture, goji was an important herb to the Chinese. It was extremely difficult to get the berries, or the goji leaves in those days, so the Chinese immigrants planted gojis on the slope between 95th Street to 98th Street, and from Jasper Avenue to the North Saskatchewan River. In the late 1970s most of the plants were uprooted to make room for the Shaw Conference Centre (the area where the Convention Centre is now), and other recreational facilities. Some Chinese came to the area to rescue fruits and cuttings at the time. Today, there are some surviving wild gojis growing along the river valley from the Hotel Macdonald to Kinnaird Park.



If I could travel back in time, I would bring you goji berries
once planted by your humble hands...
You, my ancestors from Southern China, will be remembered.

Guan_004 *Remembering my Ancestors*, Fort Edmonton Park. Ritual, 2023.

Photo: Jonathan Luckhurst



Guan_005 *At the Goji Berry Teahouse*, Fort Edmonton Exhibition. 2023. Photos: Jordon Hon

As a Chinese settler and mother living with my family on Treaty 6 territory for the past 16 years, I realize that colonialism continues to displace people and non-humans in my new home, which includes the land, the water, and the air that we all share. Through my art and research, I strive to decolonize my home by giving voices to the marginalized and the invisible.

After the removal of Edmonton's heritage landmark Harbin Gate in 2017, while learning about climate change, I have been trying to build a climate resilient community in Edmonton through my art practice including my current research regarding local heritage plants: goji.

In Edmonton, goji berries are not only found wild in the river valley, but they are also cultivated in the yards of members of the Asian community, particularly Chinese Canadian families. The oldest reported home-grown goji shrub in Edmonton is 51 years old, and owned by a Chinese Canadian grandma, Kwai Ping Lau, who is living in the Ottewell neighbourhood. Others can be found in the north, south and west sides of Edmonton. The most visible goji shrubs can be found in the yards of one of the oldest neighbourhoods, McCauley. A few other ethnicities have also started growing goji berries in their gardens in the past 20 years.

Over the past three years, I have been visiting these mature goji shrubs and talking with their growers. Goji is a valued plant which helps connect immigrants to their roots and traditions, and also helps diverse community members feel a sense of belonging in this land.

On the far wall of the exhibition, I installed a series of images taken over the course of my MFA research. The images include portraits of the Chinese elders I interviewed about their gojis, images of Harbin Gate, a Chinese heritage landmark removed in 2017, and images of goji

plants in the river valley. In this image, I am next to my large photo of the 91-year-old Chinese elder Joe Wong who is collecting goji berries in his back alley in the Northmount neighbourhood.



Guan_006 杞子茶屋 *Goji Berry Teahouse*, Reed's, Fort Edmonton Exhibition. 2023.

Photos: Jordon Hon

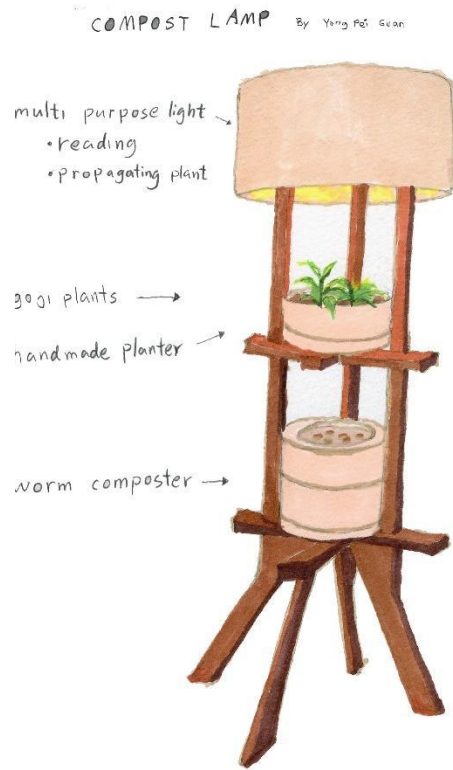
In this image, I was giving a tour for the Edmonton Chinese Community at the large compost lamp installation space.



Guan_007 *Living History of Goji in Edmonton*, Video Installation, 2023. Photos: Jordon Hon

A seven-minute video documenting the history, antioxidant analysis and community stories of local goji berries.

Link: <https://youtu.be/RIAGlhK0MD8>



Guan_008 **Multi-Species Collaboration**, Multimedia Installation, Compost Lamp 5'x16", 2023.

Photos: Jordon Hon

I have been investigating everyday domestic consumption, trying to transform waste into new materials/energy through collaborating with red wiggler composting worms who are active waste-to-energy-producers. These incomparable builders constantly turn and aerate the soil to produce rich compost (new soil). I see making soil with the humble worms as a form of activism to restore biodiversity.

I wonder if collaborating with other species including local goji plants and earthy critters will help enable the creation of a climate resilient local ecology.

A book that I wrote about local gojis is next to the lamp. Guests are welcome to sit down and enjoy.



Guan_009 ***Where did Grandma Lau's Goji Come From?*** Multimedia Installation, 2023

Photo: Jonathan Luckhurst

Since 2020, I have been seeking out Chinese elders to listen to their stories of immigration to Canada, and how the goji plant migrated along with them. This audio recording in Cantonese echoing from teapot shares Grandma Kwai Ping Lau's lifelong journey with her goji plant: it was a heritage plant originally planted by Lau's mother in her hometown, Hengcha village in Zhaoqing, China. Lau brought a cutting when she moved to Hong Kong with her family. When she immigrated from Hong Kong to Edmonton in 1972, she arrived with a cutting stuffed in her coat pocket.



Guan_010 *Tea Conversation*, Participatory Art, 2023. Photo: Fort Edmonton

Every Friday morning in August, 2023 at Fort Edmonton Park, I would wear my Hanfu, a traditional clothing origin to the Han Chinese nation, to host a tea conversation with my visitors, reflecting on ideas of home in our current era of mass migration.



Photos: Fort Edmonton Park





Guan_011 *Tea Conversation with My Community*, Participatory Art, 2023. Photos: Jordon Hon



Guan_012 *Planting Seeds with Youths*, Participatory Art, 2023. Photo: Drew Blaikie

During my exhibition, I invited my visitors to plant and bring home a local goji, as a part of the Goji Baby Adoption Program.



Guan_013 **China Room**, Multimedia Installation, 2023

A space to reflect our shared past and present through this site-specific installation.

According to Menita Hartwell, curator from City of Edmonton Heritage Collection, “Reed’s China Room demonstrates how the arrival of the train allowed commerce to further develop, as goods were easier to ship” in the early 20th century. Besides selling household goods, Reed’s also was a China retail outlet. Fine China became popular in the west in the 1600s. The train enabled colonialism to speed up in the 1800s.

A three-foot tall compost lamp that I made was installed at the center of the room. The lamp shade is made from recycled paper. Below the lampshade, is a ceramic planter propagating goji, and two level ceramic vermicomposters in the bottom. I made this lamp as a proposition of how composting could be introduced into everyone’s homes and daily lives. A 30-minute vermicomposting video is projected onto the ceiling to visualize its sacred process. A book on local goji history is next to the compost lamp. Guests are welcome to sit down and enjoy.



Guan_014 *Living History of Gojis in Edmonton*, Bilingual Books, 2020-2023.

Living History of Gojis in Edmonton features three years of research on goji history, antioxidant analysis by two local chemists and community stories of local goji berries. A PDF of this book is in appendix to this thesis document.

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The Living History of Gojis in Edmonton



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Honeybee Collecting Pollen of the Goji Flowers, 2021. Photo by Yong Fei Guan.

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A close-up photograph of a goji berry plant. The image shows several green, elongated leaves and clusters of small, bell-shaped flowers in shades of pink and purple. A honeybee is perched on one of the purple flowers, facing right. In the background, several bright red, elongated goji berries are visible, some still attached to the stems. The overall scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

Goji



Wild Gojis, Edmonton River Valley, 2021. Photo by Yong Fei Guan.

Acknowledgements

The title of this book includes the name Edmonton. The Cree name for this place is amiskwacîwâskahikan which means Beaver Hills House. I acknowledge that Edmonton is located on Treaty 6 territory, a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples including the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway/Saulteaux/Anishinaabe, Inuit, and many others whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our vibrant community.

As a Chinese settler and a mother living with my family on Treaty 6 territory for the past 16 years, I recognize that colonialism continues to displace people and non-humans in my new home, which includes the land, the water, and the air that we all share.

Through my art and research, I strive to decolonize my home by giving voices to the marginalized and the invisible.

I thank all the people who contributed to this book, with special thanks to Lan Chan-Marples and Ging Wei Wong who provided me with historical background and extensive references about the history of Chinese immigrants in Edmonton. Finally, thank you to all the Chinese ancestors and elders who grow all these beautiful goji shrubs in the river valley and in their backyards; I am grateful to inherit this precious heritage, of which I feel extremely proud.



Harvesting Goji Berries with Mr. Cheong, August 2022. Photo by Manpreet Singh.

Introduction

Goji berries (in Chinese pinyin: *gǒuqǐ* 枸杞), known as wolfberries, are the fruits of full-sun perennial shrubs that grow natively in Asia. They are perfectly content to grow in Edmonton. In fact, gojis have been growing in the wild with indigenous species in river valley since the first Chinese moved to Edmonton in the 1890s.

After the completion of the Trans-Canada railway in the 1880s, Chinese workers who stayed in Canada opened up or worked in laundries, restaurants and other businesses. Chung Gee was the first Chinese person to arrive in Edmonton in 1890, and he was followed by others soon after. In 1885, the federal government imposed a head tax that was later replaced by the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923. This Act closed the door to Chinese entry to Canada. Many Chinese workers could not return home to China anymore for fear of not being able to return to Canada. Those that came brought as many of their personal belongings that they could physically carry from home, possibly including dry herbs, seeds, or plant cuttings.

The Chinese workers would have kept themselves healthy, as they had no ready access to a medical doctor. Nor did they have access to a person who could treat Chinese people with the medicines they were familiar with, such as Chinese medicinal tonics and Chinese home remedies using natural herbs, berries, and roots to cure illnesses or maintain health. According to Thean Pheh, a retired fruit technologist with Alberta Agriculture, goji was an important herb to the Chinese. It was extremely difficult to get the berries or the goji leaves in those days, so the Chinese immigrants planted gojis on the slope between 95th Street to 98th Street, and from Jasper Avenue to the North Saskatchewan River. In the late 1970s most of the plants were uprooted to make room for the Shaw Conference Centre (the area where the Convention Centre is now) and other recreational facilities. Some Chinese came to the area to rescue fruits and cuttings at the time.



Wild Gojis Below Hotel Macdonald, 2022. Photo by Manpreet Singh.

Today, there are some surviving wild gojis growing along the river valley from the Hotel Macdonald to Kinnaird Park.

Gojis belongs to the nightshade family which also includes tomatoes, eggplants, and peppers. Gojis were first recorded around 200 BCE in *Shennong Bencao Jing* (神农本草经), the oldest existing book about Chinese herbs. They have more than 2200 years' worth of written history as traditional Chinese medicine. The properties of gojis are said to include enhancing immune system function, anti-tumor, antioxidant, improving eyesight, protecting the liver, and improving circulation. In addition to the fruits, the use of other parts of the goji plant, including flowers, leaves, seeds, and root bark were also recorded. Gojis are admired berries that gained the tittle of superfood in 2011 and have been widely commercially available since.

Gojis are rich in antioxidants which contribute to longevity. The berries contain incredible amounts of carotenoids and Vitamin C among other phytochemicals. They are traditionally used in soups and herbal medicine. Fully ripe berries are edible off the bush or in a dried form. They are also used as nutraceuticals to maintain good

health, and this is due to their abundance of bioactive molecules like polysaccharides, phenolic compounds, and vitamins and minerals.

As explained by local clinical herbalist Robert Dale Rogers in *Harvesting Health Fruit as Medicine*, goji leaves are used in treating insect and mosquito bites (Rogers 287). They are made into a well-known traditional tonic used for treating general debility, blurred vision, tinnitus, male sexual problems, and other deficiency conditions. The fruit is a liver restorative and useful in low immune resistance, hepatitis, liver cirrhosis and toxicosis. It helps lower high cholesterol levels by improving liver function and preventing hepatotoxic activity (Rogers 288). Goji berries are free radical inhibitors; their antioxidant properties are useful in preventing premature aging, vision loss, and improving the quality of the skin (Rogers 289).

At least two varieties of gojis grow in Edmonton: *Lycium barbarum* L. and *Lycium chinense* Mill. Both can be found in the river valley and backyards of Chinese Immigrant families. *L. barbarum* have bigger, sweeter, and spindly fruits. *L. chinense* have ellipsoidal shaped fruit, and the young shoots and leaves are commonly used in Chinese cooking. Pheh reports that goji cultivation was mentioned in documents from the Tang Dynasty (618-907), but major commercialized cultivation started around 600 years ago in Zhongning county of Ningxia province, in the northwest of China, especially along the Yellow River. The two main species cultivated in China are *Lycium chinense* Mill. and *Lycium barbarum* L.; one for harvesting its tender leaves as vegetables, while the second that has smaller, tougher leaves is grown for its berries that are widely used in cooking and Chinese herbal and Ayurvedic medicine (Pheh).

The climate of Ningxia is continental; it has colder winters, longer-lasting snow, and shorter growing seasons. Temperatures range from an annual average maximum of 80 °F (27 °C) to an annual average minimum of 7 °F (-14 °C). Cao Youlong, a goji expert from Ningxia Academy of Agriculture and Forestry Sciences argues that Zhongning is a suitable area for growing goji thanks to its plentiful sunshine, little rainfall and rich

organic matter in the soil. Similarly, Edmonton also has a continental climate with similar extreme seasonal temperatures.

In Edmonton, goji berries are not only found wild in the river valley, but they are also cultivated in the yards of members of the Asian community, particularly Chinese Canadian families. The oldest reported home-grown goji shrub in Edmonton is 51 years old and owned by a Chinese Canadian grandma, Kwai Ping Lau, who is living in the Ottewell neighbourhood. Others can be found in the north, south and west sides of Edmonton. The most visible goji shrubs can be found in the yards of one of the oldest neighbourhoods, McCauley.

A few other ethnicities have also started growing goji berries in their gardens in the past 20 years. Over the past several years I have been visiting these mature goji shrubs and talking with their growers. As we see from the stories of local growers, goji is a valued fruit which helps connect immigrants to their roots and traditions and also helps diverse community members feel a sense of belonging in this land.



Sun Drying Joe Wong's Goji Berries, 2021. Photo by Yong Fei Guan.



Local Goji Stories and Knowledge

Joe Wong, Northmount

Joe Wong is a Chinese Canadian who came to Edmonton from Hong Kong in 1955 to join his family and work with his uncle Bark Ging Wong at market gardening (Merrett 214).

Besides his family's celebrated gardening history in Edmonton, Joe Wong is also a goji lover who has been growing these superfoods at home for more than two decades. He has five fully grown goji shrubs in his backyard in the Northmount neighbourhood. Most of them can grow up to 12 feet tall in the summers. Wong treasures his goji shrubs as he and his family eat them every day. His wife puts a few teaspoons of frozen gojis in their pu'er tea each morning; it is a special recipe that he learned from one of his old friends. Every morning, Joe has three or four big cups of goji pu'er tea and toast for breakfast. According to Wong, it is a healthy drink as the pu'er tea reduces fat and the gojis are good for circulation.

It turns out not only Wong and his family love his gojis, but the birds love them too. Especially around the end of September, when there is not a lot of food around, just in a few days, groups of sparrows would devour the gojis at the top of his shrubs. "We can't beat the birds, so we end up eating the leftovers," Wong smiled.

When it comes to storage, Wong washes all the berries before he freezes them. That usually lasts for the whole year. When the gojis run out for a while, he reports his eyesight is not as good as before. He then buys a few bags of dry gojis from Chinatown, and feels his eyesight improves again after a few days of eating them.

Wong says we must be patient and persistent when picking gojis, or we may not be able to collect much as the birds love them while the mosquito loves us. Wong usually picks the berries in the evening when he finishes his chores. Sometimes he invites his friends to pick during

the day and bring them home. “My mahjong friends are not interested; only my karaoke friends like them,” Wong said, “I would give each of them a bowl, you-pick style. They were thrilled to see so many gojis.” Wong indicated a few of his Chinese friends also have goji shrubs in the neighbourhood. A lot of his Lebanese neighbours are also interested in having goji plants in recent years. Wong said, “When they ask me for plants, I dig up some suckers, and put them into a milk jug with some soil, or I cut some cuttings for them.” His neighbour across the alley also has some hardy goji shrubs given by Wong five years ago; they are already bearing a lot of fruit in early July. Wong’s neighbour picked a few orange-red berries and handed them to me. They were sweet with a bit of tartness. Perfect for making tea!



Joe Wong Collecting Goji Berries in His Back Alley, 2021. Photo by Yong Fei Guan.



A Visit to Kwai Ping Lau's Backyard, Ottewell Edmonton, 2019. Photo by Shawn Tse

Kwai Ping Lau, Ottewell

Kwai Ping Lau has a 51-year-old goji plant in her backyard in the Ottewell neighbourhood. It is approximately 11 feet tall and 15 feet wide. It was a heritage plant originally planted by Lau's mother in her hometown, Hengcha village in Zhaoqing, China. Lau brought cuttings from the plant when she moved to Hong Kong, then brought the cuttings from Hong Kong to Edmonton in 1972.

When I asked Lau how she grew such a hardy shrub in her backyard for so many decades in Edmonton, she said, "Just give it water." Every year, Lau dries the berries as soon as she collects them. It's Lau's passion. She picks them whenever there are gojis, or the birds will eat most of them. When I asked what kind of birds like the gojis, she told me "The ones that can fly."



Kwai Ping Lau's Backyard, Ottewell Edmonton, 2021. Photo by Yong Fei Guan.

To dry them, she puts them on a piece of paper in a bowl, then turns them over time. Sometimes Lau sends dry berries to her family in Hong Kong. Lau says gojis are good for eyesight. She often makes Chinese soup with them. Lau says they make her soups sweeter.

Despite the extreme heat of the summer of 2021, Lau's gojis were still thriving with thousands of juicy red berries in her backyard. One evening when I was collecting goji samples, Lau's daughter-in-law Esther Lau made a goji smoothie with banana and avocado for everyone. It was sweet and nutritious. A refreshing summer drink!



Buddy Kashuba and His Gojis, 2021. Photo by Yong Fei Guan.

Buddy Kashuba, Knottwood

Buddy Kashuba has a 33-year-old goji shrub in his backyard in the Knottwood neighborhood. He planted it in the center of his south facing back yard in a wooden raised box with garden lights, which invites viewers to pay attention. “She seems to like it,” Kashuba said. It reached its peak at 12 by 12 by 12 feet in the summer of 2020.

Unlike many Chinese who grew up with goji berries, Kashuba was introduced to goji through an old friend in his adulthood. His old business partner Tom Yau had a goji shrub in his previous house in Edmonton. Yau’s elderly mother wanted to grow goji berries, so Yau

got a young goji plant from a Chinese friend in his mother's mahjong club in 1995. According to Kashuba, the plant was originally from Tibet. Yau's friend brought the plant from Hong Kong when she lived there, then she brought it with her when she moved to Edmonton. However, it never grew very big in Yau's yard. After Yau's mother died in 1999, he decided to give the goji shrub to Kashuba who was interested in growing goji berries. "It was one spindly branch along a fence before I got it, then it just exploded when I put it in the middle of my south facing backyard. I think it got a chance to expand." Kashuba added, "it might also be because this house lot used to be on farmland."

The bees seem to love the goji flowers in Kashuba's goji shrub; he often sees 10 to 30 bees at the same time during the flowering season. It was full of busy bees and other insects in late August, 2021 when I visited. I saw mason bees, bumble bees, honeybees, wasps and a ladybug. They rushed to collect the pollen and nectar of the goji flowers. Kashuba notices the rabbits like to eat the gojis that fall on the ground. Every year, he leaves some berries on the shrubs and notices small birds will eat them throughout the winter months. By spring, all the berries are cleaned out.

Kashuba advocates this superfood to his family. He believes gojis are very good for us because of their antioxidant capacities, which are higher than blueberries. He gave some goji plants to his sister Alice Kmech who lives in my neighbourhood in Twin Brooks. One summer day in 2020 when I walked by Kmech's backyard, I discovered a goji shrub that she planted near the sidewalk, which I later found out was originally from Kashuba's goji shrubs. I occasionally see neighbours munch on the berries as they walk by. Kashuba also gave some to his cousin Tim Goshko, who has a tree farm on the southwest of Edmonton, but the goji did not like the acidic soil around the spruce trees.

Each year, Kashuba also gives a couple of containers of goji berries to Tom Yau. Yau's wife dries them and puts them in soup. Then Kashuba freezes the rest to make juice or salad. Kashuba gave me a two-foot-tall goji shrub in June 2020. He believes it was growing from a seedling that the birds dropped at the edge of his house. It was a hardy shrub that was full of gojis when he planted it in my garden. It had roots that were as long as the shrub. When I came back to visit him a year later, Kashuba provided me with approximately 100 goji seedlings for community research.

Mr. Cheong, McCauley

Mr. Cheong has a goji paradise in the McCauley neighborhood. He grows gojis in his entire yard, front and back where there is sufficient sunlight. His goji shrubs vary in height from two feet to ten feet. Cheong has been growing them for 40 years. He has both gojis: *Lycium barbarum* L. and *Lycium chinense* Mill.

According to Cheong, a lot of Chinese like to cook the leaves with eggs to make soup/potage for improving eyesight. He likes the fruits of *L. chinense* better as they are a bit tarter and have tougher skins.



Mr. Cheong and His Gojis, 2021. Photo by Yong Fei Guan.

He believes they have higher antioxidant properties and are very good for our gut health.

Cheong got the cuttings of the *L. barbarum* from his nephew in Edmonton in 1983. Then shortly after that, he purchased the *L. chinense* in a Chinese supermarket where they sell the branches with leaves in bundles. He was curious to find out if they would grow in Edmonton, so he stuck some cuttings into the ground, but they did not grow very much for a few years. Sometimes he saw some flowers but there were no bees around the *L. chinense* shrub, so he used a Q-tip to help pollinate the flowers, which then started to bear fruits.

Cheong has fed the birds for years with gojis. A few came in the early years, and now he frequently sees more than 30 sparrows all at once in his yard. I saw more than a dozen birds in one shrub one morning when I visited Cheong with Dustin Bajer, my goji research partner. Perhaps that's one of the reasons why most of his shrubs are still green in early September; the birds must take a good portion of the ripe berries during the harvest season. Gojis usually can be harvested twice a year in Edmonton, in early July and late August through September; however, most of Cheong's gojis were still green in September due to the extreme heat this summer. He predicts he will have a small harvest this year.

Each year, he invites his relatives, friends, and neighbours to pick the berries. Cheong indicates that gojis need a bit of care in the beginning years. They like to be in full sun and like moderate watering. He suggests not to prune them before winter to protect the skin of the branches. For fertilizer, Cheong likes to add sheep manure into the soil.

Bajer noticed lots of honeybees are around Cheong's goji shrubs that could have come from Bajer's hives a couple blocks away. Cheong gave Bajer some *L. barbarum* cuttings a few years ago for cultivation, and they are doing well in his nursery.



Paul Lai's Home Dried Goji Berries, 2022. Photo by Yong Fei Guan.

Paul Lai, LaPerle

Paul Lai is another goji grower in the LaPerle neighbourhood. About 23 years ago, Paul Lai's Chinese friend gifted him two small goji plants. It did not grow very well in the beginning years, as Lai and his family did not know the growing condition of gojis. Once he moved the goji shrubs into a sunny spot in his backyard, the plants started growing fast.

Lai loves to dehydrate the berries every year to store for later use. He discovered that the goji berries that ripen in the summer are much sweeter and bigger than the ones in the fall, but he still saves all of the berries because he thinks he shouldn't waste any of them. Lai likes to put the berries into his water to drink everyday. He has two types of gojis: *Lycium barbarum* L. and *Lycium chinense* Mill. Lai planted *Lycium chinense* Mill at the front and side of his yard because his friends love them. Every time his friend comes to visit, he takes some of the leaves off for cooking. Lai also knows a friend who has a restaurant, and he uses

the leaves to make congee. For Lai, he likes to use the leaves of *Lycium chinense* Mill to make soup with salted duck eggs.

Lai said before the Shaw Conference was built in the 70s, the site used to be filled with gojis. It was Lai's first time to see so many fresh goji berries on trees in front of his eyes; "I got so excited because I had only seen the dried ones in a store before [in Hong Kong]. And it became a regular activity I would do with my family after dim sum every weekend. It was easy to do at that time; the hill was a lot flatter."

Lai believes the wild goji that grow near Shaw Conference are more than a century old because that's what the elderly Chinese told him in the 70s. The Chinese elderly people used to call that area Goji Hill (Cantonese: gei2 jiz saan1 杞子山). Lai explained, "it was so massive from the Hotel Macdonald grew all the way down... In Calgary they don't have any goji in the wild, but in Edmonton it managed that way! Maybe because it's colder in Edmonton and the gojis like this kind of altitude."

Yan Lau & Luc Hong, Aspen Gardens

Paul Lai's brother-in-law Yan Lau and his wife Luc Hong have also grown gojis in their yard for more than 30 years in the Aspen Gardens neighbourhood. Lau got the goji from his Aunt Liu. Lau indicates that Aunty Liu might have got the gojis from the river valley, where most of the Chinese in Edmonton knew about the Goji Hills in the 70s.

Every Fall, when the gojis were ripe, people would go there to pick goji berries. "I remembered in the early 70s before the Edmonton Convention Centre was built, there were so many Asian people wearing sun hats looking for something in the area when we drove by in the Fall season. Later on we found out those are older generation Chinese (Cantonese: lou5 wa4 kiu4 老华侨) picking goji berries." Lau said. "It was only a short window of a couple weeks in the Fall that



The Branches That Sneak Through the Fence, 2022. Photo by Manpreet Singh.

we would see so many middle-age to elderly Chinese, mostly women (Cantonese: 阿妈⁵ 阿妈). They would walk here or arrive by bus and pick the berries after dim sum or shopping,” Hong recalled. “Most of the dim sum restaurants and Chinese grocery stores were around that area at the time. People would buy BBQ meat after their dim sum; it was their tradition, but it was not easy to buy Chinese food at that time,” Lai added.

Lau and Hong have had the goji mother plant in their front yard since the early 90s, but it never grew well as it faces west and other trees mostly cover their front yard. So, they transplanted some of the cuttings from the mother plant into the south facing backyard, where the goji is much happier in the past 10 years. Lau said transplanting the cuttings required a lot of patience. You need to put the cuttings into the water and wait for them to grow roots. That might take a very long

time. Every June when the *Lycium chinense* Mill. are booming, Hong would pick the leaves to make pork liver soup (Cantonese: jyut yeun6 tongi 豬潤湯). “Their taste is very distinctive, makes you feel good, like eating bitter melons,” Lau described. Hong would freeze the berries every year for making soup or tea. Sometimes she would sprinkle some berries on the ground pork or chicken and steam them together.

Perhaps because there is not enough space for the goji shrubs, the berries ripen late for this family. They usually harvest the berries in the beginning of October when most goji are turning red. Some years there are so many frozen goji berries left over from the previous years, they have to throw them away. At one point Lau was interested in cultivating goji berries when he was still working. “You said you want to be a goji farmer after retirement,” Hong teased her husband during our interview, although Lau doesn’t remember.

Every year before winter, they would trim the goji shrub down after they harvested the berries. Sometimes they would trim them in the spring if they were busy in the Fall. They think the berries grow denser after yearly trimming. The new branches will grow better berries and grow brushier instead of fall on the ground. “The goji shrubs like the sun, but I think the berries prefer to stay in the shade of their leaves,” Lau added. They grew the gojis next to a tall wooden fence, but some of the branches are sneaking through the narrow gaps of the fence every year. He thinks the ones that got out of the fence grow the best because they are the stronger ones and the determined survivors. Lau jokingly called it 红杏出墙 (Hóng xìng chū qiáng) which means: lit. the red apricot tree leans over the garden wall, an idiom for a wife having an illicit lover.



Willie Wong's Garden, 2022. Photo by Manpreet Singh.

Willie Wong, Pleasantview

Local artist Willie Wong has aging goji shrubs in the Pleasantview neighborhood. It turns out that around 40 years ago, Wong got the young goji plants from a Chinese couple who used to sell house plants from their yard in the west end. Wong thinks the couple must have had goji berries in their yard, but nobody would have wanted to buy them, as people didn't know what gojis were.

"I was born and raised in Malaysia," says Wong, "We have goji berries, but mostly [imported] dried ones. Some people grow gojis in Malaysia

as well, but the weather is too hot. They grow, but they are not the same. There is a nice story that I heard about goji berries from a Chinese elder in Edmonton. The monks in Tibet used to grow them around the well as a decoration as the branches flop over.” Wong recalled. “Then of course they drink the water and the water tasted so good, because the berries have been dropping into the well. That adds a little flavour to water. The monks there live forever and they seem so young. The story went to the emperor, and the emperor decided to find out what the hell is going on there. Then they found out that it was the well water. But why? Later on they discovered it was the goji berries. So, the emperor took some of the goji plants and planted them everywhere near the palace.”

It was a hot summer afternoon when I visited Wong and his lovely garden. Most of the plants he has are edibles: an apple tree, two types of cherries, many types of mint and basil. He also grows pumpkin plants for the leaves, which are apparently very tasty. He offers me some homemade goji tea with pu’er, hibiscus and roselle. He said hibiscus is good for lowering blood pressure. I was astonished by the deep red once the hibiscus infused with the water. It made the tea sweet and sour simultaneously — like the taste of cranberry. Every time Wong makes his tea, he tries something different. Sometimes he puts some dates in it.

“Only five or six years ago the sparrows discovered the gojis are edible, so they started to attack the goji berries,” Wong told me, “Before that I didn’t need to worry about birds. They would pick them, and suck on the juice, then throw the rest away. I have seen them take the berries into their nest in the spring when they are ready to feed their babies inside my birdhouse.” Wong appeared conflicted about the birds taking the gojis.

Wong's grandparents moved to Malaysia from China in the early 1940s. "I came to Edmonton in 1978. In Malaysia we ate a lot of gojis; we put them in soups and cooking. When I saw the old Chinese couple who were selling goji plants in the early 80s, I was curious because I never saw the fresh ones before, so I had to get it," Wong spoke fondly about his gojis.

"I don't even buy the dried ones anymore. I freeze the goji berries, then the juice and everything is still there." Wong also has the leafy gojis (*Lycium chinense* Mill.); he calls it goji choy (vegetable). Wong likes to crush the goji choy and fry it with eggs. "It tastes so good!"

Wong loves to make goji muffins with fresh goji berries, he explains: "the colour blends with the muffins, it's so beautiful! If I freeze them, the colour doesn't blend as much. But if I use the fresh berries, the goji is like golden yellow colour. Everybody knows about my goji loaf!" Wong loves to eat the berries fresh as much as he can; he also likes to make smoothies with them. He picks a handful everyday in the summer and fall, then he puts them into a big cup with a bit of water, blends it, then drinks it. "It's so good for you!" Wong encourages, "I know that you can only eat a small amount every day, because apparently, too much goji is not good for us either. They are rich in vitamin A." Wong added, "Goji is relatively new in the western world, but the Chinese have been consuming it for thousands of years."

Wong has a lot of appreciation for local gojis. "It's so nice that the goji can grow here, I just love it. For the last 40 years, I have been educating people about goji and giving them cuttings, but if I owned an acreage farm, I would definitely mass produce them. They are so easy to grow in Alberta. You can harvest them within three years!" Wong thinks the potential economic value of goji berries in Edmonton is exciting, as organic goji berries are very expensive on the market nowadays.



Botanical Studies of Goji

Beside community knowledge from experienced growers, there are also experts in the herbal community who value Edmontonian gojis. In 2022, I was fortunate to meet and study herbal medicine with Robert Dale Rogers RH (AHG), an experienced clinical herbalist and internationally-known herbal teacher living in Edmonton. In his book, *Harvesting Health Fruit as Medicine*, he describes goji as a relatively rare member of the nightshade family on the Prairies. Even though they belong to the heat-loving solanacea family like tomatoes and peppers, they seem content to overwinter in our climate in the Prairie regions.

Rogers provides us valuable knowledge on gojis' use as a traditional medicine. However, very little recent scientific work has been done on goji in the prairie provinces, and not much is known about its requirements (Pheh). Although a test plot was put up at Crop Diversification Centre South in the late 1970s and early 1980s, no report can be found. Nevertheless, gojis appear to be adaptable to a wide range of soil reactions and easy to grow in Edmonton's climate Zone 3, although technically it is rated as hardy enough to grow in Zone 4. There are bushes that grow well in protected locations in Zone 2. Fairly severe winterkill can be expected in open areas for most years but those in protected locations like Edmonton or the southern part of the province have no problems. They are late in leafing out, hence are seldom harmed by late frost. Gojis can tolerate light shade but perform best in full sun. Their tolerance to soil reaction and salinity in Alberta is unknown. They thrive in good soil moisture but cannot stand wet feet (Pheh).



Kashuba's Goji Shrubs, 2020. Photo by Buddy Kashuba.



Sparrows Resting on Wild Gojis, 2022. Photo by Manpreet Singh.

With insufficient scientific evidence about the properties of prairie gojis, I initiated the first phytochemical analysis with two local chemists, Dr. Sippy Kalra and Dr. Jagvir Singh in 2022. We compared the antioxidant capacities of seven different Edmonton goji berries, which were harvested during the Summer and Fall. We analyzed the samples in both fresh and dried conditions. We also compared dried local goji berry samples with imported dried samples from Ningxia, China, where it is claimed to produce fruits with “authentic” (道地) medicinal functions and nutrients. The results indicate that the local dried goji berries have much higher antioxidant capacity than fresh ones from the same plant. The dried sample from McCauley neighborhood had a result of RSA% of 75.48, which is the highest antioxidant capacity by far. In comparison, the dried sample from China had the second highest antioxidant capacity as indicated by RSA% of 72.37.

Edmonton is the first city in the prairie provinces to report local gojis’ antioxidant properties. This is only a preliminary work toward understanding the nutritional value of local goji berries in dried and fresh conditions. As Dr. Kalra emphasizes, the goji berries in Edmonton are comparable to the ones from Ningxia, China in terms of antioxidant capacity as measured by DPPH radical scavenging assay. However, due to the limitations of sample size, any conclusion drawn has limited applications. Further, systematic studies on goji berries in terms of total phenolic compound concentration, total carotenoids, total lipids, proteins and antioxidant capacity to understand the overall health benefits are much needed (Kalra).

Concluding Thoughts

Goji berries are not native to this land, but they have naturalized and have lived side-by-side with our indigenous species in the Edmonton River Valley for more than a century. The living gojis are symbols of resilience. They symbolize Chinese immigrants' ability to tolerate hardship and extreme weather, while humbly nurturing the well being of our society.

As for ecological sustainability, some people worry that gojis might be invasive, but Ron Berezan, a local certified permaculture teacher, argues that gojis cannot be “described as invasive species—certainly not on the prairies where it is only marginally hardy enough to survive.” When cultivated with care however, gojis thrive. Taves Family Farms in BC have been farming goji for the past ten years. Peas on Earth Organic Farm in Edmonton have been farming gojis for decades and they are adding hundreds of new shrubs as demand increases in recent years. Furthermore, planting urban edible trees and shrubs is a cost-effective way to slow down climate change (cooling the land and releasing oxygen to the atmosphere), while feeding all forms of life without leaving carbon footprints from global transportation and consumption.

Through the lens of gojis, I invite you to explore the idea of who or what is native. Many people think that the river valley should only be filled with native plants. The goji, however, has found a home here too. Does it not belong? How long does it need to be here to be considered part of the local community?



The character 福 is written as a “blessing” for Chinatown and the Indigenous land it sits on. The design also incorporates the flowers and fruits of three plants found in the river valley—the wild rose, saskatoon berry, and goji berry. The wild rose and saskatoon berries are native to the region, while goji berries were brought over by early Chinese railroad workers who settled in Treaty 6.

This is a land defense and protest patch designed by Paul Giang in collaboration with aiya 哎呀, and commissioned by Ociciwan Contemporary Art Centre in 2021 as part of kamâmak nihtâwîkîhcikan. The patch can be hung with the character right side up or upside down (to signal a blessing to come). Similarly, the circular arrangement of text and flowers reinforces the significance of cycles.

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About the Author

Yong Fei Guan is a Chinese Canadian artist-researcher completing a Master of Fine Arts at the University of Alberta. Formally trained as an elementary school teacher in China, Guan taught in her hometown in Jiujiang, Foshan for three years.

When Guan immigrated to Canada in 2007, she fell in love with the Canadian natural landscapes where she spent many summers and falls fishing and camping with her family and friends. Since she received her art degree in Emily Carr University of Art + Design in 2014, Guan has dedicated her passion to explore multicultural identity, politics and their relationship to environmental issues in her work. She has been involved in public and community art projects including 塑胶狮 Su Jiao Shi and 金猪 Golden Pig, in which the artist diverted plastic waste from the landfill to create large art installations and exhibitions.

Guan is currently living in Edmonton with her husband, her two daughters and her cat Fela. www.yongfeiguan.com





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枸杞

關泳霏

那些紮根在埃德蒙頓的枸杞

感謝：
海上曦傳媒譯
珍品工作室的阿曼達·舒茨設計和插圖



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枸杞



野生枸杞，埃德蒙頓河谷，2021年。攝影：關泳霽

致謝

這本書的標題提到一個地方名——埃德蒙頓。在被賦予「埃德蒙頓」這個名字前，這片土地有一個克里族（加拿大其中一個原住民族）方言的名字，叫amiskwacîwâskahikan，意思是“海狸建在山丘上的家”。在這裡，我想明確表達我對埃德蒙頓歷史文化的認同：我認同埃德蒙頓位於加拿大原住民和英國皇家代表於1876年簽訂的第六條約定的領土上；這裡是加拿大很多原住民族的傳統聚居地；克里族、布萊克足族、梅蒂斯人、納科塔蘇族、伊羅克西斯、丹尼人、奧吉布韋/索爾托/阿尼什納貝人、因紐特人和許多其他族裔世代代居住在這片土地上；這些民族的歷史、語言、傳統，深淵流長，滲透在埃德蒙頓今天的方方面面。

作為在這片土地上生活了16年的華裔移民，作為一位母親，我不得不承認殖民主義依然苟存於世。它在悄無聲息地侵蝕著人類，侵

蝕著我們可愛的家園、我們腳下的大地、我們喝的水、我們呼吸的空氣……我們身邊的很多人、物、事、社會現象，環境因素等等，他們的存在並沒有得到社會的認可。他們被社會無視著，被邊緣化著。我希望通過我的藝術和研究去幫助他們，讓社會聽到他們的聲音，讓我們的家園早日實現去殖民化。

編寫這本書的前後我得到了很多人的說明，我由衷地感謝大家。特別感謝為我提供埃德蒙頓華人移民史以及其他很多寶貴參考資料的陳惠蘭女士和黃景煒先生。最後，我還想感謝那些把枸杞帶到了埃德蒙頓的華人祖先和長者們。感謝你們呵護了這些樸實的枸杞，感謝你們讓這些橘紅色的果子結滿了埃德蒙頓的河谷和你們家的後院，感謝你們讓這個美麗的生命延續到了今天。謹以此書，感念祖祖輩輩千百年來不斷傳承的智慧積累和辛勤耕耘。



與張先生一起收穫杞子，2022年8月。攝影：曼普裡特·辛格

引言

枸杞 (gǒuqǐ)，又稱枸杞子，或者杞子。在西方國家，枸杞一般被叫做Wolfberries(狼莓)或者Goji。我們平時說的「枸杞」指的是一種喜陽的多年生灌木的果實。枸杞源於亞洲，可是它在地球另一端的埃德蒙頓也能生長得非常好。事實上，自從19世紀90年代第一位華人來到埃德蒙頓后，枸杞就開始在埃德蒙頓河谷紮根發芽，毫無違和地和這裡的本土物種一起欣欣向榮。

19世紀80年代橫跨加拿大的鐵路(加拿大太平洋鐵路前身)建成。之後，很多曾參與興建鐵路的華工留在了加拿大。留下來之後，他們開始經營或者從事洗衣店、餐館等行業。1890年，一位名叫朱忠的華人從艾伯塔的卡爾加里向北出發，來到了埃德蒙頓，成為了第一個踏足埃德蒙頓的華人。隨後，很多華人陸續到來。然而，1885年加拿大聯邦政府強徵人頭稅，緊接著1923年《中國移民法》出臺。這兩個充滿了排華色彩的歧視政策無情地截斷了境外華人進入加拿大的大道。那時候加拿大境內很多華工都不敢踏出加拿大邊境，因為他們害怕一旦出去，就再也沒法回來。可能由於這些歷史原因，很多華人只要有機會入境加拿大，都盡量多帶個人物品過來，也許還包括各種藥材、種子或者植物插枝。

早期的華工和家屬都「不敢病」，因為當時的北美大陸上，他們無處投醫，或者說他們沒法找到心裡認可的那種中醫館。他們熟悉和信賴的是那種會望聞問切把脈抓藥的中醫館。如果身體不舒服了，這些中醫給病人的藥方會用到常見的山草藥、果實、根莖之類。據艾伯塔農業部的退休水果技術員培先生稱，中國人普遍認為枸杞是非常重要的中藥。過去在埃德蒙頓，幾乎沒法找到杞子或者枸杞葉。所以，早年從中國來的移民就在位於嘉士珀大道和北薩斯喀徹河之間，東至95街，西至98街的一個斜坡上，開荒種起了一大片的枸杞。19世紀70年代後期，這個原本種滿了枸杞的斜坡要興建肖恩會議中心(也就是今天的埃德蒙頓會議中心)。為了給新



麥當勞酒店下方的野生枸杞，2022年。攝影：曼普裡特·辛格

建築騰地方，成片的枸杞被連根拔起。當時，很多華人來到現場搶救枸杞。現在，我們從麥當勞酒店沿著河谷走到金納德公園，路上仍然能看到一些倖存的枸杞灌木。

枸杞和番茄、茄子、辣椒等都屬於茄科類植物。對枸杞最早的文字記錄可以追溯到中國現存有關於中藥最重要最古老的文獻——大約西元前200年的《神農本草經》。顯然，枸杞被用作傳統中藥已有超過2200年的書面歷史。據記載，枸杞的功效很強大，能增強免疫系統功能，對抗腫瘤，抗氧化，改善視力，保護肝臟和促進血液迴圈等諸多方面都有作用。文獻上除了詳細記錄了杞子外，還介紹了枸杞其他部分，包括花、葉、種子和根皮。2011年，備受喜愛的枸杞被譽為超級食物，並開始被廣泛商業化應用。

枸杞富含有助延年益壽的抗氧化劑。此外，它也含有豐富的類胡蘿蔔素和維C等植物化學物質。人們的日常飲食和傳統藥膳，經常會用到枸杞。熟透的杞子既可直接食用也可曬乾后再食用。因為富含多糖、酚類化合物、維生素和礦物質等生物活性分子，所以枸杞被譽為是很好的保健品。

埃德蒙頓臨床草藥師羅伯特·戴爾·羅傑斯在他的著作《收穫健康：水果療法》中解釋，枸杞葉可以用來緩解蚊叮蟲咬(羅傑斯 287)。有一種治療體虛、視力模糊、耳鳴、男性性功能障礙和其他虛弱癥狀的著名傳統補藥，裡面也用到了枸杞葉。而杞子被譽為肝臟的修復劑，對於免疫力低下、肝炎、肝硬化和中毒癥狀都有療效。杞子還可以說明改善肝功能和防止肝毒性活動，從而降低高膽固醇水準(羅傑斯 288)。杞子還是自由基抑制劑，它的抗氧化屬性有助於延緩衰老以及改善視力和膚質(羅傑斯 289)。

目前，埃德蒙頓至少生長著兩類不同品種的枸杞：寧夏枸杞 (*Lycium barbarum* L.) 和中華枸杞 (*Lycium chinense* Mill.)。這兩種枸杞都可以在河谷和華人家庭的後院中找到。寧夏枸杞的果實更大、更甜、形狀更細長；中華枸杞的果實則呈橢圓形。人們做飯的時候喜歡採摘中華枸杞的嫩芽和葉子來煮食。據培先生介紹，唐朝(618-907年)的文獻曾記錄關於枸杞的種植，但枸杞的大規模商業化種植始於大約600年前的中國西北地區寧夏省中寧縣，尤其集中在黃河沿岸。在中國種植的枸杞主要也是中華枸杞和寧夏枸杞。人們一般會採摘中華枸杞的嫩葉來作為蔬菜食用；寧夏枸杞的葉子較小較硬，但寧夏枸杞的果實食用和藥用價值都很高，常被用於配製中草藥和印度的阿育吠陀藥材。

中國寧夏屬大陸性氣候，冬季較冷，雪季較長，生長季相對較短，年平均最高氣溫為80°F(27°C)，年平均最低氣溫為7°F(-14°C)。寧夏農林科學院的枸杞專家曹友龍認為中寧縣之所以適合種植枸杞，是因為該地日光足，雨少，而且土壤肥沃富含有機物。巧合的是，加拿大的埃德蒙頓有著和中寧縣相似的大陸性氣候，和極端的季節性溫度。

除了在河谷，我們經常也能在亞洲家庭尤其是華裔家庭的後院看到枸杞。奧特維爾社區的華裔老奶奶劉石桂平家有一棵已經種了51年的枸杞。這棵枸杞應該是這些種在私人院子並且能明確追溯年齡的枸杞中最年老的。很多住在北邊、南邊、和西邊的家庭也都種有枸杞。在埃德蒙頓，最多家庭種枸杞的社區應該是麥考利社區了，它也是全城最古老的社區之一。最近這20多年，有些其他族裔也開始在院子里種起了枸杞。

這幾年，我經常在埃德蒙頓尋找這些老枸杞灌木，而且找機會跟種枸杞的人聊天。聆聽他們的養殖心得和故事，讓我漸漸感悟到，枸杞對於埃德蒙頓的移民更多的是一種精神寄託。這種來自故土，結出橘紅果子的植物，是華人對自己傳統和根基的認可。如同枸杞用力紮根大地，全力向陽生長，人們在這片多元文化融匯的土地上，勞動生活，勤懇上進，努力地創造和積累歸屬感。



在曬黃伯伯家的杞子，2022年。攝影：關泳霏



當地趣聞
和知識共用

北山社區的黃瑞禮先生

加籍華人黃瑞禮在1955年從香港來到埃德蒙頓和家人團聚。他來到之後就和伯父黃栢振一起從事菜農工作(梅雷特 214)。

黃瑞禮的家族在埃德蒙頓菜農界享有盛名。作為一位枸杞愛好者，黃瑞禮在自己家已經種了20多年枸杞。他在北山社區的家中有五株種了多年的枸杞。夏天的時候，這些枸杞大多能長到12英尺高。黃瑞禮和家人每天都吃杞子，所以他很愛惜這些枸杞灌木。黃夫人每天早上沖普洱茶的時候都會往茶里放幾勺冷凍的杞子，這種喝法是他們從一個老朋友那裡學來的。每天早餐，黃瑞禮都會喝三四大杯杞子普洱茶，再吃點土司。黃先生說，普洱茶配杞子很健康，因為普洱茶能減脂，而杞子可以促進血液迴圈。

有趣的是，不僅是黃先生和他的家人喜歡杞子，到他家來的鳥兒們也很喜歡杞子。尤其是九月底，當覓食開始困難的時候，常常會有一群群麻雀來爭相啄食他家的杞子。黃先生笑著說：「我們搶不過小鳥們，所以只能吃它們挑剩的那些杞子。」

杞子的儲存保鮮方面，黃先生會先把杞子洗乾淨然後冷凍起來。這樣處理后，杞子通常可以存放整整一年都安然無恙。黃先生還說如果有一段時間不吃杞子，他的視力就會明顯變差。家裡實在沒杞子的時候，他就會跑去唐人街買幾袋杞子干。只要吃幾天，視力又會變好。

黃先生說摘杞子必須要有耐心和毅力。“一是因為有鳥來和我們搶，二是因為蚊子會不停地來叮我們。如果缺乏耐力和毅力，還沒摘多少，就摘不下去了。”黃先生通常會挑晚上清閒點的時間來摘杞子，有時候白天他也會邀請朋友來摘，摘了再讓朋友帶回家。

“我的麻將友不大感興趣，但我唱K的歌友很喜歡來摘杞子。我給他們一人一個大碗，隨便摘。他們看到這麼多枸杞開心得不得了。”黃先生說有些住他家附近的華人朋友也種有枸杞。這幾年，很多黎巴嫩鄰居也想種枸杞。“黎巴嫩鄰居問我要枸杞苗的時候，我會用牛奶瓶裝些土，挖一些帶根的枸杞苗插進土裡給他們，或者直接給他們一些截枝回去插種。”五年前，黃先生把枸杞苗給了後院對面的鄰居。今年七月初，送給鄰居的枸杞灌木又開始有收成了。我到訪的時候，這位鄰居摘了幾粒橙紅色的杞子給我嘗，又甜又酸，拿來泡茶肯定一流！



黃瑞禮在他家後巷摘杞子，2022年。攝影：關泳霏



在探訪劉石桂平奶奶的後院，奧特維爾社區，2022年。攝影：謝兆龍

奧特維爾社區的劉石桂平奶奶

家住奧特維爾社區的劉石桂平奶奶在後院有一棵51歲的枸杞。這棵枸杞差不多11英尺高，佔地15英尺寬。說起這棵枸杞，還有一段歷史。很多年前，劉石桂平的母親在家鄉中國肇慶市橫岔村種了一棵枸杞。當年劉女士移居香港，從她母親的這棵枸杞上截了一段枝條帶在身邊；1972年劉女士移民加拿大的時候，也把這枸杞一路帶來了埃德蒙頓。這枝飄洋過海的截枝，長呀長，長成了現在後院這棵51歲的枸杞樹。

我問劉奶奶在埃德蒙頓自家後院怎麼能把枸杞種得這麼好，她的回答很簡單：“只要給它水就可以。”每年，劉奶奶採摘到杞子后就會把它們晾乾。她樂在其中，一旦看到樹上結杞子了，就趕緊去摘，因為她也怕被鳥兒們搶先一步。我追問她哪些鳥喜歡吃杞子，她幽默地說道：“會飛的那些。”



劉石桂平奶奶的後院，奧特維爾社區，2021年。攝影：關泳霽

把杞子摘回來後，劉奶奶會曬乾它們。她在碗裡鋪上一層紙，把新鮮的杞子鋪平在上面，時不時去翻翻，好讓杞子早點曬乾。有時候，她會給遠在香港的家人寄去一些她自己曬乾的杞子。劉奶奶說杞子對眼睛好，她煲湯常常喜歡用些杞子，撒上小小一抓，湯會更甜。

儘管2021年埃德蒙頓迎來酷暑，劉奶奶家的枸杞卻依然長得很茂盛，迎來豐收。有一天晚上我來劉奶奶家採摘枸杞樣本，她的兒媳劉李婉華還為大家做了一杯加了香蕉和鱷梨的枸杞冰沙，口感香甜，營養豐富，炎炎夏日，清涼透心！



巴迪·卡舒巴和他的枸杞，2021年。攝影：關泳霏

諾特伍德社區的巴迪·卡舒巴

住在諾特伍德的巴迪·卡舒巴在後院有一棵種了33年的枸杞。他院子朝南，院子中央放著一個帶燈的木製種植箱。種植箱裡種著的就是這棵枸杞。獨樹一“站”，格外醒目。卡舒巴說：“它好像很喜歡這裡。”這棵枸杞在2020年夏天長到了12x12x12英尺。

很多中國人從小就非常熟悉怎麼食用枸杞。和大家不一樣的是，卡舒巴是成年後才從一位老朋友那裡聽聞到枸杞。這位老朋友是卡舒巴的生意合作夥伴邱兆棠先生。之前邱先生的老母親一直想種枸杞。1995年，他母親常去的麻將館有一位朋友給邱先生送來

了一棵枸杞，邱先生就把這棵枸杞種在院子里。據卡舒巴說，這棵枸杞最初來自西藏。邱先生的這位朋友是當年住在香港的時候購買的這株枸杞植物，等她搬來埃德蒙頓時，就一起帶來了。可惜的是，這棵枸杞在邱先生的院子里長勢一直不大好。邱先生早就知道卡舒巴想要種枸杞。1999年邱先生的母親去世后，邱先生就把這棵枸杞送給了卡舒巴。“來到我家之前，它只是一株很纖弱的枝條，孤孤單單地挨著圍牆長著。後來，我把它移植到我家，它突然一下子繁茂起來。大概因為這個朝南的後院中央給了它更多的生長空間。”卡舒巴補充道，“也可能是因為這個房子的地基以前是塊農田。”

蜜蜂似乎很喜歡卡舒巴家的枸杞開花。那些開花時節，卡舒巴經常會看到10到30隻蜜蜂成群地湧來。2021年8月底我來拜訪的時候，看到了滿院子忙碌的昆蟲：石蜂、大黃蜂、蜜蜂、黃蜂和瓢蟲。它們爭相採集枸杞花的花粉和花蜜。卡舒巴還發現，兔子喜歡來吃掉落在地上的杞子。每年，他都會在枸杞枝頭留一些杞子。整個冬天卡舒巴都能看到有小鳥來吃這些枝頭的杞子。春天來臨前，所有的杞子都無蹤無影了。

除了自己享用，卡舒巴還把這種超級食物推薦給了他的家人。在他看來，枸杞的抗氧化能力比藍莓還高，所以很有益。卡舒巴的妹妹愛麗絲·克米奇和我一樣都住在雙溪社區。2020年夏天有一天，我路過克米奇家，看到她家後院的路邊種了一棵枸杞。現在卡舒巴提起說他之前給了一些枸杞苗克米奇，我才聯繫起來，在克米奇家後院附近的那些枸杞來自卡舒巴的後院。我偶爾還看到，有些鄰居路過克米奇家的時候，順手摘些杞子邊走邊吃。卡舒巴還說他之前也試過把一些枸杞苗送給他那位在埃德蒙頓西南部開林木培育基地的老表蒂姆·戈什科。可惜的是，枸杞不大喜歡種滿了雲杉樹的酸性土壤。

每年，卡舒巴都會給邱兆棠家送幾罐杞子，他知道邱太太喜歡把這些杞子曬干用來煲湯。至於富餘的杞子，卡舒巴會把它們冷凍起來，日

後拿來榨果汁或者做沙冰。2020年6月，卡舒巴送給了我一棵兩英尺高的枸杞苗。他說這棵苗應該是由鳥兒掉落到他家邊緣的一棵小嫩芽成長起來的。他送來我家的時候，這棵枸杞的根須和它的枝條一樣長，枝頭上掛滿了杞子。2021年，我又來探訪卡舒巴。他知道我在進行社區研究，又送給我差不多100根枸杞幼苗用於研究。

麥考利社區的張先生

麥考利社區的張先生坐擁一個枸杞天堂。他整個院子都種滿了枸杞，無論是前門花園還是屋後庭院，凡是有足夠光照的地，都被他種滿了枸杞。他的枸杞高矮參差，矮的只有兩英尺，高的足足十英尺。張先生說他這些枸杞已經種了40年了。

他這裡既種有寧夏枸杞，也種有中華枸杞。

張先生提到，很多中國人喜歡摘些枸杞葉，打個雞蛋，做一道雞蛋滾枸杞湯/羹，這種湯/羹對眼睛好。相對而言，他更喜歡中華枸杞結的



張先生和他的枸杞，2021年。攝影：關泳霏

杞子，因為它們略帶酸味，皮更有韌性。張先生還說中華枸杞的杞子的抗氧化物質含量更高，對腸道健康非常有益。

張先生的寧夏枸杞一開始只是幾根插枝，是1983年他的侄子給他的。後來沒多久，他在一家華人超市買到了中華枸杞。當時超市把一些帶葉的枸杞枝綁成一扎出售。張先生有點好奇想知道在埃德蒙頓能不能把中華枸杞種活，於是他就把一些插枝插到地里。剛開始的幾年，枸杞沒怎麼長，偶爾會開零星幾朵花，但周圍都沒看見有蜜蜂的蹤影。然後他就嘗試用棉簽幫助枸杞花授粉，之後，張先生驚喜地發現枸杞開始結出杞子了。

這麼多年來，張先生一直很歡迎鳥兒來吃杞子。剛開始的幾年，只有幾隻鳥偶爾會來。現在，他的院子里經常同時有30多隻麻雀來光顧。有一天早上，我和一位枸杞研究夥伴達斯汀·巴傑爾一起去看張先生時，我在一棵枸杞叢中看到了十多隻鳥。杞子收成的季節，鳥雀們一定都採走了大部分成熟的杞子，也許這就解釋了為什麼九月初秋意漸濃了，張先生這裡枝頭上的杞子大部分還是青青的，顯得還沒成熟。在埃德蒙頓，枸杞通常可以在一年內收穫兩次，分別是在7月初和8月底至9月，但是由於今年夏天極端炎熱，張先生的大多數枸杞在9月仍然是綠色的。他預測今年枸杞產量應該不高。

每年，張先生都會邀請他的親朋鄰居們來摘杞子。張先生說，最開始種枸杞那幾年，需要花些心思給枸杞做些護理。枸杞喜歡充足的光照和適量的澆水。他建議為了保護枝幹的表皮，避免冬天前去修剪它們。肥料方面，張先生喜歡在土壤中添加羊糞。

巴傑爾發現張先生的枸杞灌木周圍有很多蜜蜂。巴傑爾覺得這些蜜蜂可能是他家的蜂箱，因為他家和張先生家就隔了幾個街口。幾年前，張先生給了巴傑爾一些寧夏枸杞插枝，現在這些枸杞都長得很好了。



黎卓銘家的杞子干，2022年。攝影：關泳霏

拉珀爾社區的黎卓銘先生

黎卓銘是拉珀爾社區的一位枸杞種植者。大約23年前，黎卓銘的中國朋友送給他兩棵小枸杞苗。起初幾年，由於黎先生和家人不瞭解枸杞的生長條件，所以枸杞長得不怎麼好。後來他將枸杞移到後院陽光充足的地方，枸杞馬上開始了快速猛長。

黎先生每年都喜歡把杞子儲存起來備用。據他觀察，夏季成熟的杞子比秋季成熟的那些更甜更大。但無論是哪個季節成熟的杞子，他都不浪費，全部保存起來了。黎先生每天都喜歡飲一杯杞子水。他也既有中華枸杞也有寧夏枸杞。黎先生的朋友們都喜歡他的枸杞，所以他特意把一些中華枸杞種在前院和房子側邊。每當有朋友來訪，他都會摘下一些枸杞葉來招呼朋友。黎先生有一位開餐館的朋友還會用枸杞葉來煲粥。黎先生自己喜歡用枸杞葉加鹹蛋滾個湯。

黎先生說，70年代肖恩會議中心建立之前，那裡滿是枸杞。黎先生還記得他第一次在那裡看到灌木叢中掛滿了新鮮的杞子，他興奮極了：“因為之前我只在[香港的]店舖里見過杞子幹。之後每個周末，我們一家人喝完早茶就到河谷那邊散步看枸杞。那時那裡的山丘比現在要平坦得多，走起來比現在輕鬆。”據黎先生回憶，肖恩會議中心附近的野生枸杞已經有一個多世紀的歷史了，因為70年代的時候，老一輩的華人是這樣告訴他的。黎先生還解釋說，老華僑們曾經把那個地方叫做為“杞子山”（粵語：gei2 ji2 saan1），“一大片[野生枸杞]從麥當勞酒店一直延伸到下面……在卡爾加里野外已經找不到枸杞了，但這些野生枸杞卻能在埃德蒙頓用這樣的方式存活生長！可能因為埃德蒙頓氣候更冷，枸杞喜歡這種環境。”

白楊花園社區的劉仁駒和韓綠葉伉儷

黎先生的小舅子劉仁駒和他的妻子韓綠葉在白楊花園社區也種了30多年的枸杞。他們的枸杞是劉仁駒的阿姨送給他們的。劉先生說，阿姨的枸杞可能是從河谷移植來的，因為在20世紀70年代，很多在埃德蒙頓的華人都知道杞子山。每年秋天杞子成熟時，大家都去那裡摘杞子。劉先生說：“我記得在20世紀70年代早期，埃德蒙頓會議中心建成之前，我們開車經過這個地方時，會看到很多亞洲人戴著遮陽帽在這裡尋找某些東西。到了秋天我們才知道原來是華裔老一輩在摘杞子。”“只有每年秋天那短短的幾周時間，我們才會看到這麼多中老年華人，大多是阿媽。他們會走路或乘公交車來這裡，喝個早茶或者買完東西，然後就來摘杞子。韓女士回憶說。“當時大多數華人茶樓餐館和雜貨鋪都在那附近。大家還有個傳統，就是喝完早茶再去買點燒臘，但當時買中餐並不容易。”黎先生補充道。



鑽出圍欄的枸杞枝，2022年。攝影：曼普裡特·辛格

劉仁駒和韓綠葉夫婦自90年代初就在前院種了一棵枸杞母株，但由於前院朝西，而且種滿了其他樹木，所以枸杞長勢一直不怎麼茂盛。後來，他們截了一些枝條移植到朝南的後院。最近這十多年，後院的枸杞明顯長得相對好。劉先生說，移植枸杞枝條很考驗耐心，需要把枝條放進水裡，等它們生長出根系。這個過程可能很漫長。劉家也種有幾棵中華枸杞來採收枸杞葉。每年六月當其枸杞枝繁葉茂時，韓女士會摘些枸杞葉來做豬潤湯（粵語：jyu1 yeun6 tong1）。“它的味道很獨特，喝起來讓人很舒服，就像吃苦瓜一樣。”劉先生描述道。而寧夏枸杞他們家只會摘杞子。韓女士每年都會將其杞子冷藏起來，以後用來煲湯或者泡茶。有時她會在肉末或雞肉上撒一些杞子，一起蒸熟。

也許他家後院空間太小，枸杞沒法充分長開，所以他家的枸杞子通常十月初才成熟，收成比較晚。有時，他們有太多之前留下來的冷藏杞子，吃不完只好扔掉。劉先生退休前曾經癡迷種植枸杞。韓女士打趣說劉先生說過「退休後要當一個枸杞農」。不過劉先生說他已經記不清了。

每年秋天，他們摘完杞子就會給枸杞修剪枝葉，爭取冬天前完成修剪。如果實在來不及，他們會等到春天才修剪。他們認為修剪后，新一年的結果密度會更高。而且新長出來的枝條會更加繁茂，不會垂到地上，結的杞子也更好吃。劉先生說：“枸杞枝葉喜歡陽光，但我認為杞子更喜歡待在它們葉子的陰影中。”他們把枸杞種在一面高高的木圍欄旁邊，每年都會有一些枝條從圍欄那狹窄的縫隙中鑽出來。劉先生覺得那些鑽出縫隙的枝條長得最好，因為它們明顯生命力更旺盛，在夾縫都能生存。他開玩笑地說枸杞探出圍欄就像「紅杏出牆」。





黃琳芬的花園，2022年。攝影：曼普裡特·辛格

普萊森特維尤社區的黃琳芬藝術家

埃德蒙頓的藝術家黃琳芬在普萊森特維尤社區種有一些陳年枸杞灌木。原來，大約40年前，在埃德蒙頓西城區有一對夫婦經常出售室內植物，黃先生從他們那裡買來了一些枸杞嫩苗。黃先生覺得那對夫婦的院子一定種了枸杞，可是那時候其他人都不知道枸杞是什麼，所以沒人買。

“我在馬來西亞出生長大，”他說，“我們有枸杞，但大多數是進口的杞子干。在馬來西亞也有人種枸杞，但天氣太熱了，即使能種

活，這些枸杞也不大一樣。我在埃德蒙頓聽過一個關於枸杞的傳說。傳說中，藏族的僧侶曾經把枸杞種在井邊，枸杞的枝條垂落到井裡，看著是一道美麗的風景。」黃先生回憶道。僧侶從這井裡打水喝，發現水很好喝。因為枸杞落入了井裡，給井水增添了一點味道。神奇的是，之後那裡的僧侶都不會變老。故事傳到了皇帝那裡，皇帝想弄清楚到底是怎麼回事。當時人們推斷僧侶青春永駐的靈丹妙藥就是這裡的井水。但是到底是為什麼呢？後來他們終於發現其實枸杞才是謎底。之後，皇帝就讓人在宮殿周圍四處都種滿了枸杞。”

我在一個炎熱的夏日下午拜訪了黃先生和他那迷人的花園。他花園裡大部分種植的都是可以食用的植物：一棵蘋果樹、兩種不同品種的櫻桃、許多種薄荷和羅勒。他還種了那些專門吃葉子的南瓜藤，看起來就非常美味。他給我泡了一些自製的枸杞茶，裡面加了普洱、木槿花和洛神花。他說木槿花有助降血壓。當木槿花與水沖在一起的時候，我被那一抹深紅驚豔到了。沖出來的茶又甜又酸，就像蔓越莓的味道。每次沖茶，黃先生都會嘗試添加不同的東西，有時他會加些棗進去。

黃先生說從前都沒有鳥兒來吃枸杞，但“大概五六年前，麻雀開始發現杞子是可以吃的，從此它們開始了來掠奪我的杞子。”黃先生說：“這些鳥摘下杞子，吸光汁液，就把剩下的部分全扔掉。春天的時候，我也看見過小鳥把杞子叼進鳥屋去喂鳥崽。”提到鳥來摘杞子，黃先生顯得悲喜參半。

黃先生的祖父母在20世紀40年代初從中國移居馬來西亞。“1978年我來到埃德蒙頓。在馬來西亞的時候，我們經常吃枸杞，一般會來煲湯或者做菜。80年代初，我碰見那對賣枸杞幼苗的華人老夫婦時，我很好奇。我從來沒有見過新鮮的枸杞，所以我毫不猶豫就把枸杞苗買下來。”黃先生深情地談到他的枸杞。“自己種枸杞

后,我都不再買杞子幹了。我把枸杞冷凍起來,這樣可以完好地保存它的汁液和其他成分。”黃先生還種有中華枸杞,他稱之為枸杞菜。黃先生喜歡把枸杞菜搗碎后和雞蛋一起煎,“味道非常好!”

黃先生還喜歡用新鮮杞子來做杞子馬芬,“杞子的顏色混進馬芬里,非常美麗! 冷凍后的杞子顏色就沒法混得那麼好。用新鮮的杞子,杞子就會變成很好看的金黃色。我做的杞子麵包可謂遠近聞名了!”黃先生喜歡盡量多吃新鮮杞子,他也喜歡用新鮮杞子來做冰沙。夏天的時候,他每天採一把,然後放進一個大杯子里,加點水,攪拌后飲用。“這對身體很有益!”黃先生說,“據我所知,杞子也不能過量吃,每天吃一點點就好。它們富含維生素A。”黃先生又補充說,“枸杞對西方人來說是新事物,但中國人已經吃了數千年了。”

黃先生非常看好本地的枸杞。“我很開心看到枸杞能在埃德蒙頓生長得這麼好。在過去的40年中,我一直熱衷於給身邊的人科普枸杞; 給他們切枝讓大家種植。如果我有一個農場,我一定會大規模種植枸杞。在艾伯塔省,枸杞非常容易種植,三年內肯定能收成!”黃先生認為,現在有機杞子在市場上賣得很貴,所以在這裡種植枸杞的潛在經濟價值會很高。



枸杞的植物學研究

除了這些經驗豐富的種植戶，草藥界有些專家也很重視枸杞在埃德蒙頓的種植。2022年在埃德蒙頓，我有幸會面註冊草藥師羅伯特·戴爾·羅傑斯，並向他學習草藥醫學。長居埃德蒙頓的羅傑斯是一位經驗豐富的臨床草藥師，同時也是享譽全球的草藥界老師。他的著作《收穫健康：水果療法》中將枸杞描述為西部大草原茄科植物家族中的珍稀成員。儘管枸杞和番茄、辣椒一樣屬於喜熱的茄科家族，但枸杞似乎也能安然接受甚至享受草原氣候的漫長寒冬。

羅傑斯為我們提供了很多有關枸杞作為傳統藥物的寶貴知識。然而，就如培先生所說，在大草原省份，人們對枸杞所進行的近期科研很少，甚至也不怎麼瞭解其相應的科研要求。雖然20世紀70年代末期到80年代初期，糧食多樣化中心南分部曾經建立過一片枸杞試驗田，但我們一直沒找到相應的試驗報告。不管怎麼說，我們發現枸杞生命力很頑強。它可以適應很多不同酸鹼度的土壤。

雖然按照氣候區的分類，枸杞被歸類為4號氣候區的植物，但它在3號氣候區也能輕輕鬆鬆長得很好。甚至在非常乾冷的2號氣候區的特定保護點里，有些枸杞也能存活。在空闊原野生長的枸杞可能熬不過嚴寒，但在受保護點例如埃德蒙頓和艾伯塔省南部一些地區，枸杞通常都能活下來。它們開葉較晚，因此巧妙地避開了晚霜的傷害。光照方面，雖然枸杞能在陰影下生長，但足夠的光照能讓他們長得更好。枸杞對艾伯塔的土壤酸鹼的反應和鹽度的耐受性還有待探索。我們還瞭解到枸杞喜歡濕度足夠的肥沃土壤，但水分太多會容易導致根系淹水影響枸杞的存活。



卡舒巴的枸杞灌木·2020年·攝影：卡舒巴



在野生枸杞上棲息的麻雀·2022年·攝影：曼普裡特·辛格

當前並沒有足夠的科學證據來分析研究大草原地區的枸杞。在這個前提下，2022年我邀請了埃德蒙頓兩名化學家西皮·卡爾拉博士和賈維爾·辛格博士和我一起對枸杞進行了第一次植物化學分析。在夏秋季節採摘時，我們從七棵不同的枸杞上收集了杞子樣本。

我們對這些樣本的抗氧化能力進行了對比。我們分別對比了新鮮和乾燥的樣本，還對比了本地杞子干和寧夏進口的杞子干。挑選寧夏枸杞來對比是因為據說寧夏枸杞的藥用功能和營養成分最“正宗”（道地）。埃德蒙頓本地的新鮮和乾燥樣本的對比顯示，杞子乾的抗氧化能力比新鮮樣品高得多。在這次對比中，抗氧化能力最高的是來自麥考利社區的杞子乾樣品，抗氧化能力參考係數RSA%值為75.48，而寧夏進口的樣品RSA%值為72.37，排名第二。

埃德蒙頓是第一個對枸杞的抗氧化性質進行研究報告的西部大草原城市。但這僅僅是個開始，要深入認清枸杞的營養價值，還有很多工作要做。正如卡爾拉博士所強調的，按照DPPH自由基清除實驗（一種常用的體外抗氧化活性評估方法），埃德蒙頓的枸杞在抗氧化能力方面是可以和中國寧夏枸杞相提並論的。然而，由於樣本數量有限，目前的任何結論都具有局限性。另外，要更充分地瞭解枸杞對健康的好處，除了它的抗氧化能力，我們還有必要對枸杞其他的性質例如總酚類化合物濃度、總類胡蘿蔔素、總脂類以及蛋白質等方面進行系統的研究。

結語

枸杞不是埃德蒙頓的本土植物，但它們作為歸化植物已經和埃德蒙頓的本土物種一起在河谷生長了一個多世紀。在我看來，枸杞是頑強生命力的象徵。即使氣候惡劣，環境艱難，從中國南北來的枸杞依然把根紮進大地，向著太陽的方向努力生長著。如同世世代代華人移民，不管有多少困難多少風雨，他們依然勇敢樸實，堅韌不拔，拼盡全力去適應著身邊的環境，默默無聞，不怨不悔，為社會的建設添磚加瓦。

至於生態可持續性，一些人擔心枸杞可能會成為入侵物種。但當地執證永續農業教師羅恩·貝瑞讚認為枸杞不是入侵物種，“特別是在只有邊緣耐寒性植物才可以存活的西部大草原。”但是不得不說，如果用心種植，枸杞會長得特別好。卑詩省的泰夫斯家庭農場已經種了十年枸杞。埃德蒙頓一家叫「地球豌豆」的有機農場也有幾十年種枸杞的經驗，而且隨著近年不斷高漲的需求，他們目前正在加種數百棵新枸杞。此外，種植可食用的城市樹木和灌木，既是在減緩溫室效應（降低土地溫度，向大氣釋放氧氣）方面成本效益可喜的措施，又絲毫不增加全球運輸和消費負擔，而且還為多種生物提供了多樣食物和養分。

透過枸杞，我想邀請您一起來探索「本土」這個概念：到底誰/什麼才能稱為本土？許多人認為只有那些本土的植物才有資格生長在埃德蒙頓的河谷。然而，河谷也是枸杞的家。那些世世代代在這裡生根發芽的枸杞灌木難道不屬於這裡嗎？還要在這裡熬過多少個寒冬，才能被接納成為這裡的一員？



圖片上的「福」象徵了對唐人街和它所在的原住民土地的祝福。「福」周邊的野玫瑰、薩斯卡通莓和枸杞，都是在埃德蒙頓河谷中可找到的的漿果。野玫瑰和薩斯卡通莓是該地區的本土植物，而枸杞是早期移居到第六條約土地的鐵路華工帶來的。

這是kamâmak nihtâwihcikan(埃德蒙頓原住民克里族族語“你好”)專案的土地捍衛徽章。2021年，奧西瓦恩當代藝術中心委任利炳坤與哎呀(合作社)合作完成徽章的設計。這個徽章可以正面佩戴，也可以倒置佩戴(表示即將“到”來的祝福)，這和中國貼“福”的傳統相呼應。同時，文字和花朵的圓形排列，突出了平衡歸一，周而復始的意義。

參考文獻

《中國枸杞的生物分子和臨床方面》

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關泳霏，華裔加拿大籍藝術家兼文化研究者。她於2014年獲得艾米麗·卡爾大學藝術與設計藝術本科學位，目前在艾伯塔大學攻讀藝術碩士學位。

關女士於2007年移民加拿大，在此之前，她曾在家鄉廣東省佛山市九江鎮當了三年的小學教師。定居加拿大以後，她對這裡優美的自然環境產生了濃厚的興趣。夏秋季節，她經常和家人朋友去釣魚和露營。她的藝術作品，致力於探索多元文化身份、政治及其與環境問題的關係。2016年至今，關女士創作了許多頗具社會影響力的公共藝術作品，其中包括兩部使用了廢棄塑膠製作完成的大型裝置藝術作品：《塑膠獅》和《金豬》。

關泳霏目前與丈夫、兩個女兒還有家裡的貓，菲拉一起生活在埃德蒙頓。網站：www.yongfeiguan.com