

## Nicola Thomas

- Nicola is the founder of Grand River Food Forestry. She is a Permaculture Design Consultant, teacher, and Community Capacity Builder. She is an avid environmentalist who saw an opportunity to encourage communities to steward the soil, grow edibles and increase pollinator corridors in under-utilized green spaces.
- She first created an Urban Bioshelter at her home in Kitchener and then the Food Forest at Kitchener's Forest Heights Community Centre in 2015. This was followed by the Edible Trails project. Through these initial projects, interest in the idea quickly grew to include other locations, collectively now known as Grand River Food Forestry.
- Through her passion and commitment to increasing community awareness of sustainable ecological land practices, Nicola has been recognized as one of Canada's "Top 100 Black Women to Watch 2016", City of Kitchener Environmental Leader 2019, and she is a Heart of the City National Park Delegate.
- Nicola has been mentored by top permaculturists from around the world and shares her knowledge locally, nationally and internationally through educational talks, seminars, one-on-one mentoring, hands on practical workshops, consultations as well as board of director memberships.
- Nicola's presentation tonight is entitled: **Increasing Biodiversity & Mitigating Climate Change With Edible Landscapes.**