

Growth Chambers

DURHAM COLLEGE – CENTRE FOR FOOD

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OUTCOME:

To support the field-to-fork vision, DC is creating a “living lab” environment, which takes the practicality and hands-on nature at the heart of agriculture and pairs it with technology and investigation. The new growth chambers will enable DC researchers and partners to focus on local realities and challenges, while engaging the local farming community in innovative applied research projects. This additional research capacity will foster new strategic partnerships with local producers and stakeholders, while also facilitating research into pest management, crop integration, and plant propagation, in addition to other challenges that the agriculture community may be facing.

FUNDING:

The Growth Chambers are the result of a \$150,000 Applied Research Tools and Instruments (ARTI) grant from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), awarded to the college via NSERC's College and Community Innovation (CCI) program.

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BACKGROUND:

Durham Region boasts the largest area of farmland in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and is one of Ontario's leading agricultural producers. In order to promote research in this growing sector, two new growth chambers were installed in spring 2015 at Durham College's (DC) Centre for Food (CFF), located at its Whitby campus. The Conviron BDW 40 Walk-in Growth Chamber provides a controlled environment in a walk-in configuration, while the ADAPTIS A1000 Reach-In Multi-Purpose Growth Chamber is equipped for experimentation with a broad array of insect species. This new equipment will enable students to take the skills they are learning in the classroom and apply them in an experiential environment while working alongside local farmers. This approach not only aligns the curriculum with the college's agribusiness priority to support innovation and commercialization, but is also an extension of the CFF's field-to-fork philosophy, which is based on the harvesting, storage, processing, packaging, sale and consumption of food – in particular the production of local food for local consumers.

