

Mount Forest Community Garden *Accomplishments*



Mission:

A space for residents of Wellington North to grow food, learn and connect through gardening

The Journey

What began as a vision of just a few in November 2022, launched at a Community meeting, quickly became the mission and mandate of many to make that vision a reality.

Fifty people attended that first meeting which started the snowball rolling leading to a contagious movement to making this project happen. Very quickly at the beginning of 2023, Community volunteers formed four committees to steer and carry out the project. The committees engaged in leadership, financial matters, property build/maintain and community engagement.

A local landowner, Al Sharpe, having always been community-minded and interested in community gardens came forward and donated a free-lease on a piece of land in MF. It was a blank canvas to build on.

With the support of fundraising and engaged volunteers, the community garden began to take shape. By April a layout of the garden was finalized and grounds preparations began. Many volunteers and countless hours of hands-on work went into laying the groundwork (pun intended) to prepare the property for gardeners to grow food.

Members of the community were invited to a public meeting to learn about how they could be involved as gardeners, both the experienced and novice gardeners.

Not only did the earth need preparation through cultivation, layout and conditioning, work-bees built raised and elevated beds to go along with the in-ground planting spaces.

Poor spring weather caused significant delays, but with great determination and finally a break in the cold and the rain, the garden was ready for planting weekend, June 3.

Garden tools, seeds and bedding plants were so graciously donated from many different sources. Volunteers stepped up to help the Rookies learn about the practices of gardening and share their knowledge.

Through the summer months, the garden has continued to progress with the addition of community growing spaces to grow food for the local foodbanks and the Raw Carrot, on-site composters, stone-dust pathways, a french drain, picnic/garden benches and pavilion shelters for shade and activity spaces.



2023 In a Nutshell

The Garden Committees, volunteers and gardeners have much to be proud of:

~32 gardeners over 42 plots/raised beds/elevated gardens
~60+ volunteers

~Connected with 5 groups and organizations in Well'n North

~Grab & Go garden & Sharing Shelf

~Abundance of produce donated

~On-site composting

~Garden benches & Pavillion for seating, shelter & activities

~25 returning gardeners confirmed for 2024 gardening season

~Mount Forest & District Horticulture Club-2023 Garden Tour

~All garden plantings and facilities implemented using horticultural best practices and environmentally conscious approaches.

~A beautiful space "for residents of Wellington North to grow food, learn and connect through gardening"

860 pkgs of produce harvested & donated to our Foodbanks who support over 350 households

Thanks to the many amazing volunteers and gardeners who planted, cultivated and harvested for the community Foodbanks and the Raw Carrot. We thought that everyone would like to know the impact that this has had in our community.

The final tally is in, the Mount Forest Community Garden has provided an abundance of produce for the Mount Forest Community Pantry and the Arthur Foodbank to distribute. Check out how well you've done!

Green Beans - 95 pkgs

Peas - 50 pkgs

Tomatoes - 87 pkgs

Lettuce - 76 bundles

Swiss Chard - 73 bundles

Potatoes - 102 portions

Celery - 49 bunches

Onions - 40 pkgs

Kale - 34 bunches

Green Peppers - 24 portions

Carrots - 24 bunches

Cabbage - 22 portions

Zucchini - 20

Beets - 17 bags

Cherry Tomatoes - 12 bags

Yellow Squash - 9

Cucumbers - 7

Radishes - 13 bundles

Broccoli - 2 heads

Hot Peppers - 22 pkgs

Garlic - 40 bulbs

Early-morning harvest time in the Mount Forest Community Garden - This produce was on its way to the Mount Forest Pantry & the Arthur Foodbank