



Mission:

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

That's a Wrap!

Well can you believe it!

The Mount Forest Community Garden is winding down for the growing season and about to have a much-deserved winter rest. I'd like to take a moment to reflect on the journey of our first year. It's a remarkable story.

Using the infectious energy generated in the winter planning meetings along with the generously gifted location, many committee members and volunteers, worked hard to develop a vision of what this garden could be; how it could serve our community, how it might impact food security, how it could build connection and create a welcoming space to be in. Remember that our garden was simply a bare canvas in May of this year! Equipment and skills from local residents delivered what was needed to work the soil, add the elements and shape the space into the framework that would allow the vision to be erected. Weather challenged us with extended cold, followed by drought, then early in the growing season with heavy rains. The first seeds and plants were carefully planted by our first-year gardeners on June 3rd!

The growth that followed had a ripple effect that we had hoped for but didn't think we could achieve in our first year. We engaged over 40 gardeners, over 60 volunteers, 2 food banks, 4 community organizations, our highschool, numerous generous sponsors and private donors, and Mount Forest residents in general. Community members have made the following comments and posts; "a gem in Mount Forest", "just amazing", "every day in the garden is a good day", "I love going there", "it's just beautiful", "The volunteers who made this are amazing!".

Who comes to the garden? Almost everyone. Toddlers, kids, seniors, cyclists, joggers, visitors to Mount Forest, other communities who are considering creating a garden of their own. The impact of the garden in our first year has blown us away.

As we continue forward with plans for 2024 we are happy to hear that the large majority of our 2023 gardeners, would like to return to garden again. That's a stamp of approval!

Planning for adding in spaces for new members to the garden is now underway and applications will soon be available.

Many thanks to everyone who made this project become what it is; an asset to our community, in so many ways.

Thank you!

Elsa Mann, Community Garden Leadership Committee, Chair

**350 households supported;
860 pkgs of produce
harvested and donated**

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
- Celery - 49 bunches
- Onions - 40 pkgs
- Kale 34 bunches
- Green Peppers - 24
- Carrots - 24 bunches
- Cabbage - 22 heads
- 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

Who's Who in the Garden - Volunteers:

Daphne Rappard

As a local chiropractor/ naturopath, active member of the Mount Forest Horticultural Society and Green Team, and the Christmas Bureau, it was only natural for me to attend the public meeting about the proposed Community Garden. Absolutely determined not to be part of the leadership of yet one more committee, I was determined to keep a low profile, and just be a small part of this exciting venture. I made comments, and only signed my name in one spot...

Fast forward to spring 2023: as co-chair (the co-part was short-lived...) of the Down to Earth Committee, I was all of a sudden immersed in working with an incredible, small team of enthusiastic people creating the Garden, first on paper, then in real life! Challenged by prolonged spring thaws and inhospitable terrain, we slugged through snow and mud, marking where we envisioned the various garden elements would be. Our delayed start ended up being a blessing for me as I had, in the meantime, received a cancer diagnosis, and had bowel surgery May 19th.

Determined to not be deterred by this unlikely change in my life, the Garden became my focus. A week later, I was back on-site. And I had a new, keen volunteer! My sister, a retired nurse living in Saskatchewan, had come to 'look after me'. Little did she know what she was getting in to! We spent all our days at the Garden site, helping with construction/ finishing of raised beds, moving compost and mulch, picking rocks, and watching in wonder how so many people came together to actually make our vision a reality, ready for planting day on June 3rd!

Throughout the summer, being at the Garden has been a wonderfully positive distraction for me; meeting with novice and experienced gardeners, waging (and winning!) war on a potato beetle invasion, harvesting for the Mount Forest and Arthur foodbanks and the Raw Carrot, watching the sunflowers at the top of the slope smiling down on the Garden, even salvaging hundreds of tomatoes from our blighted plants; it has all been such a rewarding experience for me.

And, as important as the growing aspect of the Garden has been, even more special has been the sense of Community that has been created in this very special place. I have gained several very special friends, and even when I was not able to physically be in the Garden for several weeks due to severe side effects from chemo, they kept me in the loop, and supported me. I have nurtured this Garden, but it has sustained me...



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