

Newsletter

November-December 2023



Mission:

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



Happy Holidays



Grow-A-Row and help feed your community

With Food Security in mind the Mount Forest Community Garden is looking for growers to plant and raise produce for harvest and donation to the Mount Forest Community Pantry and the Arthur Foodbank. In addition to the foodbanks, the food will be shared with other social services and networks in the community that support those that are in need.

Food Connects us as a community and builds each other up in times of need. Large or small, every donation from a garden makes an incredible impact. When we can provide fresh produce to a family or individual, we are helping to build their resiliency. It is critical to eat well when you are in crisis, so when we can give fresh-from-the-garden vegetables it tells someone they matter.

When you grow-a-row, this can really add up to make an incredible difference in someone's life. Gardening, volunteering and giving back are all great activities for your heart, and your community.

What can I grow?: Summer & Winter Squash, Potatoes, Carrots, Beets, Beans & Peas, Leafy Greens, Tomatoes, Peppers, Cucumber, Onions & Garlic.

Organic: Vegetables should be Organically grown in which garden soil is free of pesticides and chemicals.

Donating your Harvest

It's easy! Donations can be taken to the Sharing Shelf at the Community Garden, Monday and Thursday evenings or by 8 am, Tuesday and Friday mornings for foodbank distribution. Arrangements for pick up can also be arranged by contacting Daphne Rappard, Down to Earth chair for the Community Garden at 519-323-7845.

When donating your produce please do not wash it. The dirt helps to keep it fresh for longer. Please drop-off your unwashed produce in a container (bag, box, bin) that you ideally don't need back.

What's coming in 2024!

While online Registration has opened for the 2024 growing season and a number of gardeners have already registered, in-person registration events will be offered in January and February at various locations.

Also, in January & February registration and workshop nights will be held at the Sports Complex There will be a registration table for volunteers & new gardeners, along with mini workshops and information tables on a variety of topics such as Hugelkultur, companion planting, container gardening, the local foodbanks and more.

In March and April seed-starting workshops with Collette from the Horticulture Society are being planned.

Stay-tuned for more information to come, including dates and locations.

And once we get into the garden during growing season, CGLC members will be hosting chat time/tea time/coffee break activities to create more opportunities for connecting with one-another in the garden.

Who's Who in the Garden - Volunteers:

Brad Andrews

Garden Design Artist



Not originally from the Mount Forest area, I moved to the community from Orillia via Flesherton, in July 2022. I work on the Rural Wellington Community Team with the Mount Forest Family Health Team.

My involvement with the Community Garden project began when I was asked to assist at a table at the first Community Garden meeting in November 2022. Once there I became aware of a void in the community, needing to be filled and a significant amount of the community members wanting to be part of this venture.

It had been a dream of mine to build something for the community elsewhere. But it did not transpire. And I have been so fortunate that the opportunity came along again. This time I had the company of like-minded others making up several teams/committees of passionate community residents and businesses. Everyone was ready to roll up their sleeves and jump right in. I have enjoyed being part of the process of planning, doing, and witnessing the growth and development of the Community Garden.

When designing the Community Garden, to be honest, I looked at quite a few garden plans, but in the end took the visioning from the Down to Earth Committee at the planning meeting and when I got home, I set to work without the influence of the internet and put pencil to paper. There were a few rough drafts. Eventually I approached the design by imagining actually being in the space from different vantage points. And what I envisioned was a place that I could be surrounded by garden. And that everywhere I looked it would be different. I also took into consideration some of the teachings from when I worked at a Healing Lodge. The implementation of a Medicine Wheel, represented the four directions, the seasons, the traditional sacred medicines, the different colours of humans, the different aspects (Emotional Physical, Mental and Spiritual), the ages of humans, etc. And I also wanted a 'Flow' to the garden, representing a river. When standing at any entrance to the Community Garden, you cannot see a direct line to an exit. There is no direct path to go through the garden. When going through, you have no choice but to follow the 'river' and see almost every component of the garden. This breaks away from the idea of going into some place, and only focused on getting out. No linear thinking happens.

Compared to other Community Garden members and Gardeners, being involved has impacted me differently. I had a dream, that I thought was lost, and I have been able to see the image of that dream come to life. From the look on peoples' faces from the first drawings, to the final draft of the garden design.

I had a difficult time processing the effect the paper design had on people. And it has been even more of a challenge to process the look on peoples' faces when they were standing in the garden, taking it all in. I still am amazed at the impact the design of the garden has had on everyone that visits it. It has become a living entity.

If it were not for being invited to assist with that first meeting, my dream would still be just that, a dream.

From what I have seen, Mount Forest is a community that is in a state of change. There are a number of societal variances; faith groups, a significant presence of a cultural community, obvious socioeconomic disparities, the influx of new residents, etc. The Community Garden has been the meeting ground for some of these groups. Seeing the garden be the catalyst and the bridge to bring these groups together, has been wonderful. And it shows, as a model, that change can happen from the bottom. That we don't need to wait for politicians and councilors to affect change.

The Community Garden has more than lived up to my expectations. First, it exceeded my expectation of being completed by July or August. Instead, it was complete ahead of schedule in less than half the time. This was only due to the diligent and committed members of the Community Garden, residents of the community, and local businesses. They showed up, ready to tackle every task. This was another example of community coming together.

For the future and my own vision, I admit selfishly, is that the Mount Forest Community Garden is a model for future gardens. And that it continues to develop to meet the various needs of the community and that it continues to be a place for people to share food, learn, communicate, share thoughts and ideas, where they can come to enjoy the tranquility...

Mount Forest Community Garden Contacts:

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