Community Gardens
Helping Families Grow

Saint Vincent de Paul Food Pantry

Garden in Syria

"Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime."

Talwood Apartment Building

What is a Community Garden?

*Nourish Project: https://nourishproject.ca

- An organization that assists neighbourhoods in Peterborough & Haliburton with community gardens so that everyone has access to healthy food.
- Nourish also offers cooking classes, community meals, supermarket & farmers' market tours, peer advocacy training and workshops featuring experts on issues related to poverty, health and food insecurity, etc.
- It is led by the YWCA & joined by other organizations e.g., Health Unit, City, local chefs & farmers, community food advocates, school board, etc.
- They manage 47 community gardens which are overseen by a coordinator.**
- The gardens are on city, provincial, federal, church, and workplace properties.***

Rooftop Garden at the MNR Building

Trent University

Ecology Garden

What are the benefits of a community garden?

Steps for Starting a Community Garden

1. ORGANIZE A MEETING OF INTERESTED PEOPLE:

Determine whether a garden is needed and wanted, what kind it should be (vegetable/fruit, flower), and who it will involve and benefit.*

2. FORM A PLANNING COMMITTEE:

- Choose a well-organized person as a garden coordinator.*
- Form additional committees to tackle specific tasks by asking what skills or connections the members have in the community.**
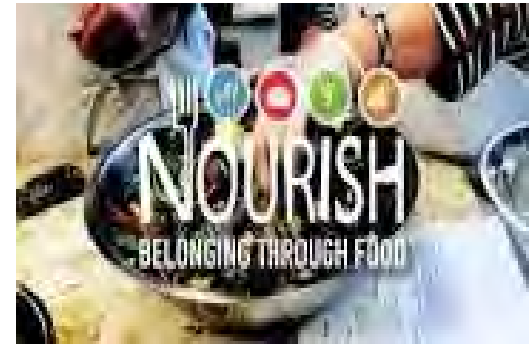
3. IDENTIFY ALL YOUR RESOURCES:

- Contact local municipal planners about possible sites and seek out other local sources for information and assistance.
- Look within your community for people with experience.*

Peterborough Pollinators

4. APPROACH A SPONSOR:

- Identify businesses, groups or organizations that might donate to or promote the garden.
- Some gardens "self-support" through plot fees, but for many, a sponsor provides an essential source of funding for gardens.

5. CHOOSE A SITE:

When selecting a garden site, consider:

- the amount of sunshine,*
- the accessibility of water,*
- the soil,*
- ownership,*
- the location,*
- the diversity of people,
- and the closeness to public transit.*

6. PREPARE AND DEVELOP THE SITE:

- The land will need preparation for planting.
- Organize volunteers to clean it, gather materials and decide on the design and plot arrangement.*

7. ORGANIZE THE GARDEN:

-   Members must decide how many plots (10'X10') are available and how they will be assigned.
-   Allow a space for storing tools, a water cistern, making compost and don't forget the pathways between plots!

8. PLAN BASED ON DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE AREA:

- Consider creating a special garden just for kids, raised beds for seniors, communal spaces, plots to grow produce for the Food Bank, etc.

9. DETERMINE RULES AND PUT THEM IN WRITING:

- Determine guidelines, roles & responsibilities that everyone agrees upon and put them in writing.
- Sort out how the garden will operate.
- Create specific roles so everyone is involved.*

SAMPLE RULES & REGULATIONS FOR COMMUNITY GARDENERS

The following guidelines are just suggestions. You should adapt them to your particular situation and needs. The best rules are those that the gardeners participate in drawing up. Make sure that the rules that you adopt are enforceable and fair. Every gardener should be given a copy in a language in which they are comfortable and they should also be posted in a prominent place at the garden.

- I will pay a fee of $ _____ to help cover garden expenses.
  I will have something planted in the garden by [date] and keep it planted all season long.
- If I must abandon my plot for any reason, I will notify the coordinator.
- If my plot becomes unkempt, I understand that I will be given [timeline] notice to clean it up. At that time it will be [consequence].
- I will keep trash and litter cleaned from the plot, as well as from adjacent pathways and fences.
- I will participate in the fall clean up of the gardens.
- I will plant tall crops where they will not shade the neighbouring plots.
- I will pick only my own crops unless given permission by another gardener.
- I will use ecological gardening methods and therefore will not use chemical fertilizers, pesticides or herbicides that will in any way affect other plots. I will follow the City of Peterborough pesticide by-law.
- I understand that neither the garden group, nor owners of the land are responsible for my actions. I therefore agree to hold harmless the garden group and owners of the land for any liability, damage, loss or claim that occurs in any connection with use of the garden by me or any of my guests.

I have read and understand the above rules and agree with them as conditions of my membership in the garden.

Signature of the garden member: _____ Date: _____

I have ensured that the garden member whose signature appears above has had the garden rules fully explained to his/her satisfaction and has knowingly signed acceptance.

Signature of Coordinator: _____ Date: _____

10. KEEP MEMBERS IN TOUCH WITH EACH OTHER:

- Form a telephone tree and/or an email list.
- Install a rainproof bulletin board in the garden to post info.
- Have regular meetings or celebrations.

Season Wrap-Up
Donating

*Gleaning

The Peterborough Gleaners brings together local volunteers and people living with limited means to ensure everyone has access to **healthy local** food. They fund and organize trips to area farms to pick produce that growers donate.**

Canning

Seed Collecting

Composting

Tools & Water Cistern Maintenance*

Harvest Dinner
Saturday, October 28 · 6 PM

Problems & Successes

Discuss at the final meeting:

- What flourished or what didn't?
- What would you do differently next season?
- Etc.

The Talwood Community Garden started in 2017 with 24 plots. Those plots fed 15 families, as well as a few individuals. In 2018 there are 36 plots & 50 gardeners. Plots were added for the kids, the seed collectors & the Food Bank.

Conclusion

Community gardening is one way of addressing the ever increasing costs of fresh produce and food insecurity in our communities. Everyone should be able to enjoy healthy food. We need to engage the marginalized by equipping them with the knowledge, skills, tools and space to grow their own fruits & vegetables. By helping the people we serve to grow nutritious foods, we are ensuring that they are adequately fed and that they are helping their families grow.