

VILLAGE OF DEXTER COMMUNITY GARDEN



10/24/2012

Village of Dexter Community Garden 2012
Season Wrap Up

New friends were made, tasty new vegetables grown, and new gardeners aplenty! Enjoy the memories of the season with a look back at this season's Village of Dexter's Community Garden .

Village of Dexter Community Garden

VILLAGE OF DEXTER COMMUNITY GARDEN 2012 SEASON WRAP UP

New Gardeners Have Found Us!

Who would have thought that through the devastation of a tornado, more people would become community gardeners? Amazingly, out of the wreckage of the March 2012 storm, that is exactly what happened this year in the community garden. At the pre-season informational meeting many new faces showed up, a number of whom had lost gardening space due to the tornado ripping through their neighborhood. This was the first year for the informational pre-season meeting and it turned out to be an excellent way for potential gardeners to learn more about the community gardening experience.

Garden applications were again available in late winter until spring via links available on the Village of Dexter web site. To spread the word about the garden to as many and as wide a population as possible, articles were submitted to newsletters of the Dexter Village, Senior Center, and Walk About Creek, as well as the Patch. Flyers were also distributed electronically via Dexter Community Schools Community Education and displayed at the Dexter Library.

Village of Dexter residents were able to apply for plots at the garden before non-residents, per our policy, and returning gardeners were able to request their same plots as past seasons. Many gardeners were returning for their second or third year and the mix of new and returning people was very affirming, showing there's a foundation to the program as well as new growth.

With the addition of the 4 new raised beds this season, the community at the garden was a delightful representation of Dexter. The raised beds plus the 16 plowed plots were filled with many families, couples, groups, friends and individuals.

If the pre-season meeting was one to gather information about the garden and ponder becoming involved, the garden orientation in April detailed the nuts and bolts by going over guidelines, touring the site and answering questions about the garden. Gardeners, particularly new gardeners, were strongly encouraged to attend this meeting.

"MY KIDS LEARNED ABOUT HOW MUCH WORK GOES INTO THE FOOD WE EAT, A LESSON THAT IS INVALUABLE. IF THEY GREW THEM, THE KIDS WERE MORE WILLING TO EAT THE VEGETABLES, WHICH WAS AWESOME FOR MY PICKY EATERS."

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The weather was cooperative in the late spring of 2012 and by the end of April the plowing and staking of the plots was complete and the garden opened with the Kick-Off Work Party. At this party the fence was raised around the garden, mulch was spread in the main pathway and gardeners had a great opportunity to meet their gardening neighbors. After a very successful but very dry growing season filled with plenty of watering, the gardeners closed the garden October 13th at the Final Work Party of the season. At the Final Work Party portions of the fence were removed in preparation for the fall plow, hoses stored and the garden tidied for the winter. Throughout the season and events at the garden, people got to know one another, met someone whose path they would have never crossed, shared a recipe, a story, wisdom. As with community gardens everywhere, the Village of Dexter community garden was certainly a melting pot and cross section of our community in 2012.



Taking a break from spreading wood chip: Spring 2012

Remember those new raised beds?

What a welcome and needed addition to the garden the 4 raised beds turned out to be. For those who wanted to be outside gardening with others while growing their own vegetables and flowers, the raised beds fit the bill for the gardener who desired a little less bending and kneeling. As with the 16 other garden plots, every gardener's distinctive style of gardening showed.



Gardeners at new raised beds: Early Spring 2012



The 4 raised beds

“THIS SUMMER WAS MUCH MORE OF A COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE FOR ME. ONE LADY IN PARTICULAR WAS ALWAYS THERE WHEN I WAS. ONE DAY IN AUGUST WE WERE PICKING IN OUR PLOTS AND STARTED CHATTING. WE SWAPPED PEPPERS AND RECIPES AND TALKED FOR SOME TIME. I REALLY ENJOYED GETTING TO KNOW A FELLOW GARDENER.”

Village of Dexter Community Garden 2012 Gardener Survey Results

**All gardeners were asked to participate in the community garden survey. Not all gardeners responded to the survey, and not all of those responding answered all the questions on the survey.*

Number of plots in garden: 16 full plots (or 32 half plots); 4 raised bed plots

Number of Primary Gardeners: 23

Number of surveys received: 12

*“THE MOST REWARDING EXPERIENCE WAS BEING ABLE TO DONATE A LOT OF FRESH PRODUCE TO FOOD GATHERERS....SO MUCH BETTER THAN GIVING CANS AND BOXES!
I LOVE HAVING A FREEZER FULL OF SUMMER.”*

**Answers below represent combined totals and are best estimates on the part of the participants*

How many people gardened in your plot this growing season?: 86

Did you share your produce with others?: Produce was shared with friends, co-workers, agencies like Faith in Action, extended family, neighbors, contractors, other gardeners and immediate family

How many people did you share your produce with? (your best guess as to how many people ate produce from your garden): 114 (this number does not include recipients at agencies like Faith in Action and Food Gatherers)

How much have you shared with others this growing season?: 717 lbs

What did you grow in your plot?:

Roma tomatoes, kale, cayenne peppers, Italian eggplant, basil, Brussels sprouts, dahlia, daisies, turnips, Swiss chard, butternut squash, beets, blue and red potatoes, sweet corn, mustard greens, sweet peas and snow peas, white zucchini? (mislabeled summer squash of some sort), pak choy, buttercruch lettuce, bush cucumber, onions, beets, potatoes, variety of tomatoes, popcorn, pie pumpkins, watermelon, zucchini, yellow summer squash, cherry tomatoes, heirloom tomatoes, cabbage, broccoli, green beans, yellow beans, peppers: green, red and yellow sweet, marigolds, leaf lettuce, sugar snap peas, spinach, leeks, cucumber, banana peppers, carrots, patty pan squash



Many varieties of tomatoes make for a colorful harvest....



.....and a delicious tomato sauce!

How much would you say you have harvested from your plot this growing season?: ~1320 lbs of produce (author's note: many gardeners responded to this question with "1/2 bushel" or "4 bunches of lettuce". The number in pounds is mine, and a best estimate)

Growing Food, and Community

The 2012 growing season resulted in a bountiful harvest at our community garden. Gardeners cooked up, canned, donated, froze, dried and shared hundreds and hundreds of pounds of produce. The garden itself is easy to get to, a pleasure to work in, conveniently located and a program which has run smoothly for 3 years thanks to the enormous support of the Village.

Growing food, building community, fostering friendships: Village of Dexter Community Garden

"I LOVED GOING TO OUR PLOT TO WATER THE PLANTS AFTER MY RUN IN THE VERY EARLY MORNING HOURS! SO PEACEFUL AND CALMING..."
