

Hamilton Community Garden Networking Program

2022 Annual Report

Annual Report Overview

Neighbour 2 Neighbour's Hamilton Community Garden Networking program provides support for garden coordinators, gardeners, and community members wanting to connect with community gardens in Hamilton. An annual report is produced to reflect on the program and for the greater community to see what was accomplished. In order to assess how Neighbour 2 Neighbour provides support to community gardens, an annual program survey is conducted with garden coordinators. The results help to adjust programming and improve the ways help is provided to gardens in the city. The findings of the survey are included in the Annual Report.

2022 HCGN Annual Report features:

- Current partners and supporters of the HCGN program
- The ways Neighbour 2 Neighbour has engaged community through the HCGN Program
- The ways Neighbour 2 Neighbour has provided support to gardens
- The successes of the community gardens in the city
 - Successes are organized into 3 areas: building community, enhancing the environment, and promoting wellness
- Hamilton Community Garden Networking Program Statistics

Partnerships and Supporters of the HCGN Program

In 2022, Neighbour 2 Neighbour leveraged partnerships and worked with a diversity of Hamilton groups to strengthen the HCGN program.

Partnerships included:

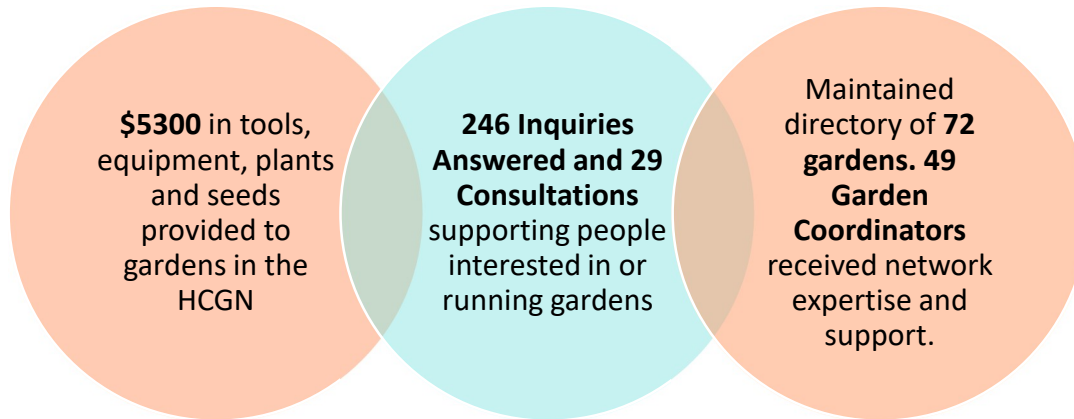
- City of Hamilton, Public Health Services and Healthy and Safe Communities Department
- CityHousing Hamilton
- Hamilton Victory Gardens
- Compass Community Health Centre
- Hamilton Mountain Paramedics
- Mohawk College
- Green Venture
- Community Food Centres Canada
- McQuesten Urban Farm

Support was provided by:



TD Friends of the
Environment
Foundation

HCGN Program Engagement



HCGN Program Support for Gardens

Neighbour 2 Neighbour offers annual Resource Boost opportunities for community gardens to access tools, equipment, and materials to improve their community gardens. In addition to this support, a webpage featuring an online Hamilton Garden Directory, interactive map and library of online resources for coordinating gardens is maintained and a garden coordinator email list-serv is moderated.

- Resource Boosts in the Spring and Fall of 2022 provided over \$5000 in new gardening equipment. Through the HCGN, \$300 in native plants were distributed to community gardens in 2022.
- 58% of gardens surveyed said that the HCGN Resource Boost was a significant means of financial assistance. Rental fees, grants and donations were the next most significant sources of funding.
- Top 3 garden expenses in 2022 were the same as the last 3 years: 1. Soil/compost, 2. Garden Equipment (tools, hoses, etc), and 3. Plants and seeds.
- Email List-serv, online directory and online resources remain important and useful to coordinators of community gardens.

Impact of HCGN Program for Coordinators of Community Gardens in Hamilton:

"I personally am thankful for the HCGN for being the one place to look for community gardens in Hamilton. The city expanded our gardens considerably two years ago. This Resource Boost will help us catch up on tools etc with the increase in garden members." - Community Garden Coordinator

"With lumber prices skyrocketing being able to maintain the community garden in good shape has become a worry, the resource boost provides relief offsetting rising costs." – Community Garden Coordinator

"HCGN has provided our garden regular supports on resources, network and knowledge. The Resource Boost has become the major input for our garden resources. While we don't have to worry about fundraising for resources, we can focus on the work on growing food and relationship with the community." – Donation Garden Coordinator



Community Gardening Benefits

Community Gardens improve life in the City of Hamilton in the following ways:

Build Community

People develop and leverage relationships and new partnerships out of gardens.

- The Children’s Garden in Gage Park was built in 2022 and run by community members with an emphasis on all decisions being made with child and youth input.
- Roots to Justice Hamilton built a new accessible Communal Garden in Tweedsmuir Park to expand their mutual aid and community capacity-building work.
- Powell Park Community Garden fostered partnerships with Compass Community Health, LIFT, St Matthews House.

Enhance the Environment

Community gardens help the ecosystem in many ways.

- As in previous years, community gardens are using organic practices, have pollinator species, are composting on site, growing native plants, watering in part with water harvested from rainwater and rotating crops.
- Approximately 108,800 square feet of community garden space was created in 2022.
- 60 native plants were given out to gardens in the HCGN, converting over 600 square feet back to natural habitat for pollinators and other beneficial species.
- In partnership with Green Venture, The Riverdale Salad Bowl Community Garden received a Placemaking Grant to add a pollinator patch using native species, three sisters planting and Lowbush blueberries to their garden.

Promote Wellness

Community gardens increase access to fresh produce while promoting an active lifestyle and community involvement.

- More than 2100 gardeners grew food in gardens across Hamilton and over 240 volunteers helped out in gardens in 2022.
- 10,000 lbs of produce was donated to Hamilton food banks and meal programs in 2022.
- Hill Street Community Garden received a Silver Community Trillium Award for their contribution to the beautification of the City of Hamilton.
- A number of community gardens provided fresh produce for Community Fridges, including Powell Park Community Garden which has a section of the garden designated for growing food for donation with the help of gardeners and volunteers.

Success Stories

“The Children's Garden Project did not only grow a garden, it grew a community and it was lead by our children. We saw families come together and children blossoming under their passion of Gardening. We saw our community landscape change - inclusion and diversity came out winners, our Indigenous community offered teachings and knowledge, our green industry came to the table to help and support and as a result our children showed leadership, freedom and passion for gardening and green spaces. The Children's Garden Project is growing the next stewards of the land.” – Coordinator of The Children’s Garden at Gage Park

“This year was the first time ever that we divided up some perennial plants and exchanged them for other seedlings and perennials with other gardeners. It was a great experience and interesting to exchange information and plants with other like-minded folks and hopefully we can continue this practice going forward.” – Stuart Street Communal Garden Coordinator

Hamilton Community Garden Networking Program Statistics

HCGN Program Stats by Ward	
Ward Number	Number of Gardens in 2022
Ward 1	6
Ward 2	14
Ward 3	14
Ward 4	5
Ward 5	3
Ward 6	4
Ward 7	4
Ward 8	7
Ward 9	1
Ward 10	3
Ward 11	1
Ward 12	1
Ward 13	4
Ward 14	2
Ward 15	3
Total	72

HCGN Stats - Total Gardens Per Year by Type 2017 to 2022						
Type	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Plot	25	23	21	19	19	21
Youth/School/Education	13	14	13	0	1	7
Donation	3	8	9	9	9	9
Hamilton Victory Gardens	17	10	8	6	6	4
Communal	7	6	4	4	4	5
CityHousing + Tenant	34	36	37	23	24	24
Other	2	2	2	2	2	2
Total	101	99	94	63	65	72

Garden Openings and Closures:

- Temporary garden closures continue into 2022 including school/youth gardens and gardens located on university or other institutional property.
- The Hamilton Victory Garden at Macassa Lodge reopened in 2022.
- New gardens include: The Children’s Garden at Gage Park and the Roots to Justice Community Garden in Tweedsmuir Park (both are located in Ward 3).