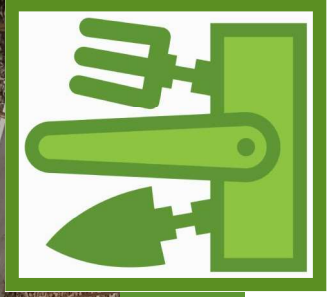


2015 Annual Report



This report was compiled utilizing data that was collected from network garden coordinators in spring 2016.

With support from...

A project of:



Hamilton



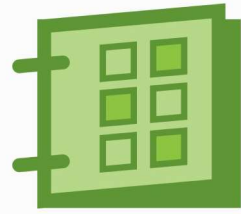
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Friends of the Environment Foundation

What is the HCGN?

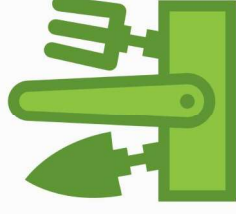
The Hamilton Community Garden Network (HCGN) is a program of Neighbour to Neighbour Centre that helps to build, support and sustain community gardens. The HCGN is a hub of the garden community by helping people:



Learn and Connect
through events, workshops, knowledge shares and social media.



Find Gardens
through the online garden directory and map.



Access Tools & Resources
to start, organize, or participate in gardens, and access support and supplies.

Vision:

A community in which everyone has the opportunity to benefit from and participate in gardens grown to meet their needs.

Mission:

To collaboratively support people in Hamilton in building and sustaining community gardening projects from the perspective of improving food insecurity and increasing community involvement.

History of the HCGN:

In 2007, guided by community interest, Hamilton Public Health Services approached North Hamilton Community Health Centre about resurrecting a Hamilton-Wentworth Garden Network. Interested parties came together and the HCGN was formed.

In 2010, stakeholders came together with the Community Food Security Stakeholder Committee to develop and pass the Hamilton Community Garden Policy. In 2011 and 2012, Green Venture developed the HCGN to include branding, outreach tools, and workshops with support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the City of Hamilton Public Works, Public Health Services and many partners.

In 2013, the Ontario Trillium Foundation supported Green Venture and Neighbour to Neighbour in continuing to grow and define the HCGN and support food growing garden projects in Hamilton. Today Neighbour to Neighbour continues to grow and support community gardening initiatives in Hamilton through the HCGN program. Learn more at hcgncan.ca.

HCGN 2015 Successes & Accomplishments

Community Outreach

1200+
Community members engaged through events and exhibits—including 800 attendees at the 2015 Green Venture Seedy Saturday

9909
Website visits to www.hcgn.ca

392
New follows in social media

43
Garden Coordinators
received network expertise and support

250
Inquires Answered
engaging and supporting community members interested in gardens.

11
Youth Gardens
were supported, engaging over 250 students and 20 educators.

4
Knowledge Swap Events
sharing best practices and expertise through participatory events

Network Engagement

- ✔ Maintained up-to-date directory featuring almost 90 gardens
- ✔ Created a bulk purchasing guide for gardening resources with discounts from local suppliers, a guide to helping sick and injured animals in the garden, and a guide on donating produce from gardens
- ✔ Highlighted Hamilton best practices and accomplishments in community gardens at Sustain Ontario's "Bring Food Home" Conference and the Community Food Centres Canada Food Summit and within the Ontario Community Garden Network
- ✔ Supported edible education by helping to launch the Hamilton Edible Education Guide.
- ✔ 30 youth interns participated in 4 garden skill-building workshops

Donations and Contributions

Approximately \$18,000 of in-kind donations and financial support secured/shared among HCGN networked gardens

Partnerships and Supporters

In 2015 the HCGN leveraged partnerships and worked with a diversity of Hamilton groups.

Partnerships Included:

- ⇒ City of Hamilton, Public Health Services and Public Works
- ⇒ CityHousing Hamilton
- ⇒ Hamilton Victory Gardens
- ⇒ North Hamilton Community Health Centre (NHCHC)
- ⇒ Tastebuds, Student Nutrition Collaborative
- ⇒ Royal Botanical Gardens
- ⇒ McMaster University
- ⇒ Hamilton Mountain Paramedics
- ⇒ Mohawk College
- ⇒ Hamilton Wentworth Public and Catholic School Boards
- ⇒ Green Venture Seedy Saturday
- ⇒ Local suppliers

“The HCGN has been very supportive of our Grub Club Garden, a free program that teaches healthy living skills to children in some of Hamilton’s most underserved neighbourhoods. The knowledge and resources they have provided have helped us expand our program over the last few years and increase our ability to reach even more children and their families in the North End.”

– *North Hamilton Community Health Centre*

“I know that the HCGN is one phone call or email away and is hard at work during the off-season making sure that knowledge learned each year is shared.”

– *Corktown Community Garden*

“For myself, it has been very important to know there are people in the community with the same goals and objectives that is beneficial to the gardening community. I would not have been able to access resources as readily as I have without HCGN.”

– *Hamilton Paramedics Volunteer Community Garden*

“I am new to community gardening as a whole. I was able to hook up with the HCGN and they were able to help me get resources and contacts I would have never been able to find on my own. With these new contacts I am able to build and increase my garden and productivity. This allowing me to grow more food to donate.”

– *Hamilton Urban Garden*

Community Success Stories

There are several benefits to community gardening. The HCGN supports community



Build Community

- ⇒ **Formation of McQuestion Urban Farm**
this initiative, now a huge, multi-acre community farm, was spearhead by a group of community members who connected through the Oriole Crescent Community Garden
- ⇒ **Monthly and Annual Workshops/Events**
Multiple gardens host regular potlucks and events that include the Park N' Party, Art in the Garden, Spring in the Garden, kids gardening activities, movie nights and more!

Highlights from 2014 and before:

- ⇒ Formation of the Mustard Seed Co-op was lead by local gardeners who met working together at the Hills Street Garden
- ⇒ Good Food Box Program was created by Bartonville Neighborhood Community Garden, partnered with a local church to create a summer food box program for vulnerable populations.
- ⇒ Heavenly Food Trucks at Bethel— After a suggestion from one of their gardeners, the Bethel Community Garden now hosts an ongoing food truck event that raises money for charity.



Enhance the Environment

- ⇒ Community gardens help the ecosystem by aiding water management and maintaining biodiversity, including important food sources for pollinators
- ⇒ 42,034 sq ft of green space was created in 2015 through community gardens
- ⇒ There is approximately 164,807 sq ft of community garden green space in Hamilton. That is the equivalent of 2.1 Canadian Football fields.

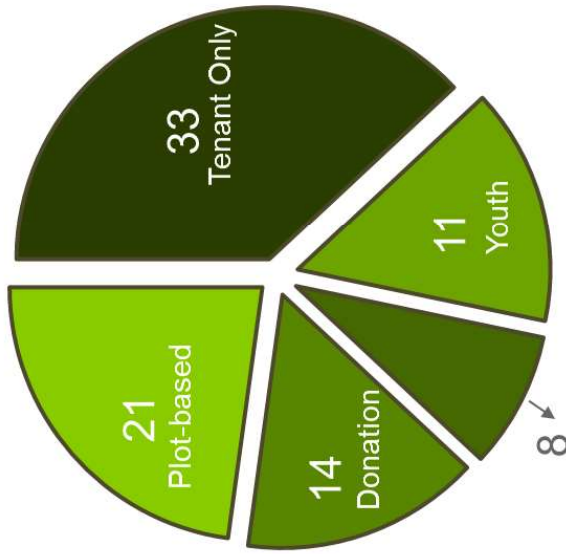


Promote Wellness

- ⇒ Community gardens increase access to fresh produce while promoting an active lifestyle and community involvement
- ⇒ 81,000+ lbs of produce was donated to over 15 food agencies in 2015
- ⇒ Approximately 2,500 people and 1900 families are actively using HCGN gardens

Community Gardening in Hamilton

There are a diversity of gardens organized by many groups, each unique in its form and purpose.



Plot-Based: Gardens offer small plots of land for community members to grow and harvest their own veggies, herbs, and flowers.

Communal: Community members share in the produce which is grown and harvested together.

Donation: All harvested produce is donated to food banks and local food programs.

Youth: Gardens have a youth focus and are either only open to those that are under 18 years old or students who attend the neighboring school.

Tenant Only: Gardens are open to people who live in the adjacent building.

**TOTAL
Gardens in the
HCGN:
87**

