



Gardeners' Welcome Packet Linda Civill Community Garden

Thank you for your interest in the Community Garden sponsored by Hope Full Life Center and STARS InterGen. The garden is named after long-time area resident, Linda Civill, who helped the less fortunate in our community in many ways. Linda loved to garden and we know she would be delighted to have this effort named in her memory.

The Linda Civill Community Garden gives people who would like to garden, but don't have a yard to create his/her own, the opportunity to grow fresh produce. No experience is needed to participate; other experienced gardeners will help you get started and answer your questions throughout the growing season.

If you have a garden of your own and still want to help, or you wish to lend a hand without the responsibility of a bed all your own, we'd be happy to put you to work! Other community groups are also welcome to participate.

The Community Garden would not be possible without the help of these generous local businesses:

Persico's True Value donated many of our tools. **Flach Development & Realty** donated our shed and gave us permission to put the garden on their property. We get water from **a kind neighbor**. Thank you, thank you, thank you to these bighearted contributors!

This Welcome Packet contains important information about how our garden operates and who to contact with general and specific questions. It also contains information about how you can pitch in to make the garden run smoothly and efficiently. Because the garden requires a fair amount of work beyond tending your own bed, every gardener is asked to participate to the best of his or her ability in the management and upkeep of the entire garden.

Be prepared to get some dirt under your nails and have fun!

Happy Gardening.

Table of Contents

Welcome to Community Gardening	3
Success and Security at the Garden	4
Community Garden Maintenance	5
Frequently Asked Questions	6
Gardener Guidelines	8

Welcome to Community Gardening

A community garden means many things to many people. For some, a community garden is a place to grow food, flowers and herbs in the company of friends and neighbors. For others, it's a place to reconnect with nature or get physical exercise. Yet others use community gardens simply because they lack adequate space to have a garden at their house or apartment.

Regardless of why you are choosing to take part in our community garden, the activity comes with both responsibilities and rewards.

Responsibilities: Successful and vibrant community gardens rely on the dedication of each and every gardener to 1) maintain his or her own bed and 2) contribute to the upkeep and management of the entire garden. There are many jobs that need to be done to help the garden run smoothly, including maintaining tools and equipment, watering and weeding among other things. The adage many hands make light work is appropriate. If everyone pitches in according to their ability and desire, then the garden will prosper.

Rewards: Community gardening has the potential to offer a range of benefits to individuals, families, communities and the environment. Obvious benefits include food production, nutrition and exercise, but there are other rewards too:

Mental health — Interacting with plants and nature helps reduce stress and increase gardeners' sense of wellness and belonging.

Community — Community gardens foster community identity and stewardship among gardeners. They provide a place for people of diverse backgrounds to interact and share cultural traditions.

Environment — Gardens help reduce the heat island effect in cities, increase biodiversity, reduce rain runoff, recycle local organic materials and reduce fossil fuel use from long-distance food transport.

Learning — People of all ages can acquire and share skills and knowledge related to gardening, cooking, nutrition, health, culture, etc.

Youth — Community gardens provide a place for youth to explore gardening, nature and community.

Income — Produce grown at community gardens offsets food purchases from the grocery store.

Crime prevention — Gardens can help reduce crime because of increased activity in the area.

Property values — Some research indicates property values around community gardens increase faster than property values in similar areas without gardens.

Above all, community gardening can provide a real sense of satisfaction and accomplishment for all involved.

Success and Security at the Garden

The following tips are intended to help ensure your success at the garden, minimize theft and vandalism and keep you safe while gardening.

- The garden beds dry out quickly and in past seasons we have created a schedule where each gardener volunteers to water one or two days a week. Be sure to note your watering day(s) on your calendar and plan additional time to weed and harvest produce while you're there. Because the garden is not located outside your front or back door, it's easy to forget about it.
- Attend garden workdays, if scheduled. This will help you meet other gardeners and become part of your gardening community. You'll also learn about the various jobs and projects that need to be done to keep your garden in shape.
- Make friends with other gardeners. Experienced gardeners are an invaluable resource. Pick their brains for gardening tips. Visit their beds to see how they stake their tomatoes or trellis their beans.
- Volunteer for a garden job. Community gardens don't manage themselves. They require a fair amount of work. By pitching in on a certain job or project, you'll be supporting the garden as a whole and ensuring that the work is spread among many people.
- Educate yourself. Check out books from the library. Attend classes. Become a Master Gardener through Cornell Cooperative Extension. There's always something to learn about gardening. The more you learn, the more success you'll have.

Security and Personal Safety at the Community Garden

- Know your neighbors. Share some extra produce. Take the time to visit with them about how the garden works if they're not familiar with it. You may be surprised to find people just assume they can take food from the garden. "Hey, it's for the community, right?"
- Harvest produce on a regular basis. Some people use the excuse that "a lot of food is going to waste" to justify taking food from a garden without permission. During harvest season, let garden leaders know if you plan to be out of town for more than a few days. Other gardeners can harvest for you and get the food to Helping Harvest, Hope Full Life Center's food assistance program.
- Consider growing unpopular, unusual, or hard to harvest varieties. People generally go for easy to snatch things like tomatoes, peppers and corn.
- Grow more than you need.
- Use common sense. Only garden during daylight hours. Garden in pairs or keep a cell phone nearby if it makes you feel more comfortable.
- Report theft, vandalism and unusual activities to garden leaders and the police. The more people who are looking out for the garden and talking about what's going on, the more success you'll have at being safe and curbing unwanted activities.

Community Garden Maintenance

Community gardens depend on gardeners' willingness and ability to take responsibility for a number of important tasks. Please help us:

- Pick up trash, keep the shed organized and take care of all equipment.
- Use the compost bin for weeds and rotting or unwanted produce. Please don't put meat or dairy products in the compost bin as it will smell and attract vermin.
- Report theft, vandalism and other unwanted activities to garden leaders and authorities, if necessary.
- If you possess gardening experience, please share it with others. Mentor new gardeners and circulate new gardening resources.

FAQs

Questions about how the garden operates will arise throughout the year. The following answers to some frequently asked questions may help shed some light on a few questions. Other questions can be directed to garden leaders.

Q. Where is the garden be located?

A. The garden is located in Faith Plaza, right next to the stockade fence across from the stores.

Q. How much does it cost to garden here?

A. Other than seeds and/or starter plants for your plot, it will cost you nothing to garden with us (except your time and perhaps a good pair of gardening gloves!). Depending on what you want to grow, we may even be able to provide seeds/plants. Generous supporters have provided most of the other essentials for a garden.

Q. Do I get to keep all the produce I grow?

A. Yes! Everything that you grow in your bed is yours. If you have excess produce you would like to donate to our food assistance program, Helping Harvest, please notify a garden leader or drop it off at Gracefully Chic Boutique during business hours (Tues - Sat 10 -5).

Q. What kinds of tools, equipment and supplies are available at the garden?

A. A wheelbarrow, a variety of hand tools, work buckets for collecting weeds and watering supplies will be available.

Raised bed boxes will be supplied along with soil, compost and mulch.

If you have extras of gardening equipment you are willing to donate, please let the garden leaders know. You are welcome to bring your own tools to work with although we encourage you to take everything home each day as we can't be responsible for missing or broken equipment.

Q. How will I water the garden?

A. A supportive neighbor on Wendell Street allows us to use their water. We run hoses to the garden and there is a valve to turn it on and off. We also rely on filled water barrels located on each side of the shed.

In past seasons we have created a watering schedule. Each gardener volunteers to take a day or two to stop by and water all the beds. This has worked very well and decreases the burden of caring for the garden.

Q. What do I have to do to stay in good standing with the garden?

A. Take care of your bed and follow through on your volunteer obligations! Please check on your bed each week to weed, harvest produce and water. If you agree to help with a task, please complete it. Finally, please follow all Garden Guidelines found in this packet.

Q. Can I bring fruit and vegetable scraps from home to compost in the bins at the garden?

A. Sadly, no. The garden will produce enough compostable material on its own. Excessive fruit and vegetable scraps could lead to a compost pile that's out of balance and stinky, which could attract rodents and make us unpopular with our neighbors!

Q. How are plot sizes determined?

A. Bed sizes are predetermined. Each raised bed is 4' wide x 8' long. If this is too large for your purposes, please ask a friend to join you or let the garden leaders know as they may have someone else who only wants a little space.

Q. How many beds can I get?

A. Please inquire. Depending on the number of interested gardeners, you may be able to have multiple beds.

Q. Is this an organic garden?

A. This is your choice for your bed. We will not, however, market the garden as strictly organic. Please be on the lookout for veggie and fruit loving insects like Squash Borers; garden advisers will help you treat plants safely and effectively.

Q. Who do I contact for gardening advice?

A. Call or email garden leaders with questions.

Q. How much time should I expect to spend at the garden?

A. You should plan on visiting your garden at least 2 times a week.

Q. What should I do if I experience or see theft or vandalism?

A. Call the Coeymans Police Department and one of the garden leaders immediately. The police can be reached at 518-756-2800.

Q. What should I do if I am threatened or harassed at the garden?

A. Get to a safe location immediately! Then call the Coeymans Police Department and one of the garden leaders. We recommend all gardeners keep a cell phone nearby and work during daylight hours only.

Q. What is Hope Full Life Center and STARS Intergen?

A. **Hope Full Life Center** helps the needy in our community through Helping Harvest, a food assistance program; Gracefully Chic Boutique, a gently used clothing shop; Peace of Home, which sells affordable furniture and home décor, and this community garden. All of these programs are located in Faith Plaza. Learn more about Hope Full Life Center at HopeFullLifeCenter.org.

STARS Intergen strives to enrich the lives of students and older adults through quality programs that benefit all participants and the community as a whole. Learn more about them at www.starsintergen.org.

Gardener Guidelines

The following guidelines have been established for this garden. Please read the guidelines and direct any questions or comments to the garden leaders.

1. All gardeners are required to complete an application form.
2. Garden meetings and work parties may be scheduled throughout the season. Please attend!
3. Keep your plot and the adjoining pathways tended. If your plot appears to be untended for a period of time, and you haven't contacted a garden leader, you will be contacted and your plot may be assigned to another gardener. Call a leader if you need help or if you will be out of town for an extended period of time. If you plan to discontinue use of your space, please let a leader know as soon as possible so your plot can be assigned to another gardener.
4. Plant tall plants and vines in places where they will not interfere with your neighbor's plot.
5. Planting illegal plants is prohibited.
6. At the end of the gardening season, all dead plants and non-plant materials (string, wire, wood, metal, plastic, etc.) must be removed and disposed of properly and all gardens left neat and tidy.
7. Pick up litter when you see it. There is a trash bin in the shed.
8. Please put weeds and dead plants into the compost bin provided. Do not leave them in the pathway. Any diseased plants or seedy or invasive weeds are to be bagged and put in the trash so as not to contaminate the gardens.
9. Do not apply anything to or pick anything from another person's bed without their express approval.
10. When finished gardening for the day, please return tools to the shed and lock it before leaving the garden. Please make sure all water sources are turned off.
11. Smoking and chewing tobacco is not allowed. Tobacco can transmit a lethal virus to tomatoes and cigarette butts are loaded with toxins.
12. Pets, drugs (including alcohol), radios and fires are not allowed.
13. Please supervise children in the garden.
14. For your safety, only garden during daylight hours. Consider gardening in pairs or keeping a cell phone nearby.
15. Report theft, vandalism and unusual activities to the garden leaders and police.
16. Use common courtesy, be considerate of your gardening neighbors and ENJOY.
17. Violation of Gardener Guidelines: If any of the guidelines are violated you will be contacted by phone or e-mail and have one week to address the issue. After one week, if the problem has not been remedied, you may lose your gardening privileges.

Have questions? Call Rebecca Flach at (518) 526-4057 or email her at RFlach@HopeFullLifeCenter.org.

If you're interested in participating in the Linda Civill Community Garden, please fill out the accompanying application and submit it per the instructions provided. Thank you!