



ST. ANDREW'S COMMUNITY GARDEN

June 2018

A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

The Garden is now in full production mode with all plots contributing. All of our plots are taken and at the moment there are 4 people waiting for an opportunity to be part of our community. In general, the Garden shows well and is tidy and pleasing to the eye. Thank you so much to those of you who care for making it into a place of refuge from the busy world outside. There are however always a few who are less diligent and require a little reminder about the commitment they made to the Town in return for being given a plot. I'm sure in the days ahead we will all be in sync and the Garden will be flourishing.

At this time, I'd like to pass on some of the areas that we need to focus on moving forward. Pathways are always an area of frustration and in spite of the fact that we have twice downsized the gardener's responsibility, we still have a number plots where the plot itself is very well maintained but the pathway is untidy and, in some cases, overgrown with weeds. Remember your pathway is the north side of your plot, or, on the left-hand side entering the Garden from the parking lot.

Along the same lines please do not leave your garbage in on or around your plot, or anywhere in the Garden area. The Town bylaws are quite explicit regarding dumping in Town parks, and By Law officers can fine you if you are in contradiction of that By Law. Until further notice all garbage and yard waste must be taken home and disposed of utilizing the Town garbage collection system.

Over the past few weeks there have been a few issues regarding water. At the outset let me make something very clear. The water we receive is a gift from the Town of Ajax, a gift that we need to respect by being good custodians of what is a very valuable resource. Our Garden consumes over 7,000 litres of water a week which is far more than is actually needed to sustain our plots and generate a healthy crop of produce. Because we continue to waste a large portion of the water we draw from the Town, there is no consideration being given to increase the supply. It's not a matter of availability, it's a matter of over consumption.

There is a grave misconception held by some within our community that the more we water the better the crop. In fact, the opposite is closer to the truth. In general terms your vegetable garden needs an inch of water per week to sustain itself. This should be applied no more than once a week. The rule of thumb is water hard and water deep. Soaking your garden once a week is far more beneficial than watering a little each day. Deep watering draws the roots of your vegetables into the ground in search of water whereas the shallow frequent watering encourages the roots to stay on the surface. Shallow and frequent watering results in a plant that is weak, more susceptible to disease, and less likely to produce a good crop. If you're wondering why your garden hasn't done so well in the past, check out your watering habits.

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The water barrels are filled 3 times a week. Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday. The amount of water we provide to our gardeners is unparalleled in the gardening community at large. There are many gardens that do not supply any water outside of what can be collected naturally in rain barrels. In fact, the first year of our Garden there was no filling of barrels and our first-year gardeners basically carried water to the garden when they wanted to water. I can attest to the fact that they weren't showing up almost daily carrying 10 gallons of water on their backs.

Finally, as I said at the outset, the water we use is a gift from the Town and they pay our water bill every month. If they suddenly look into the situation and realize how much water we are using for the number of plots we have, we may well find ourselves either having to pay for what we use, or, revert to the old way by humping in water every time we want to water irrigate plots.

Finally, a word about safety in the Garden. A few weeks ago, we had an incident where a woman tripped and almost fell. Please be careful moving around the Garden and make sure the area around your plot is free from hidden hazards that could cause a fall. In the west shed there is a small medical box with Band-Aids and such that can help for minor bumps and scrapes.

Also, you will notice that a new piece of literature has appeared in our notice board regarding keeping safe when working in hot weather. Please give it a read and think about how you could make your safety a real priority. I know it's not always possible but try and arrange your time in the Garden when others will be there. Gardening alone is not recommended especially in very hot and humid conditions. Find yourself a garden buddy.

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A FEW IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- Please remember to close the sheds correctly when you are leaving the garden. This includes moving the numbers, so that the combination is no longer visible. I would like to ask the member who scratched the combination into the western shed to please refrain from doing such a thing again - not only is it a security risk, but that act now requires that section of the shed to be sanded and refinished again in order to remove the vandalism
- Please check your plots, garden bags and vehicles for any garden tools that aren't yours. In the last week we have 'lost' seven hand trowels from the western shed alone. Please also remember to clean your tools before returning them to the shed, so that they are fresh for use by the next member
- You may have noticed that the area just north of the western shed was cleaned and planted. We ask that you no longer use that area to dispose of your garden waste (old wood, etc.). The pollinator garden at the back of the garden is also an inappropriate place to throw your waste. If you have materials that you no longer wish to use in your garden, there are two choices: either take them home for proper disposal, or offer them up to your plot neighbours by talking to them and asking if they'd like them. Until they are rehomed, they stay in your plot, do not leave them 'just in case someone else wants them'
- If you are in search of a garden buddy, please contact us with your name and which days of the week you'd prefer to garden. We will try to match you up with another member with the same time frame as you



UPCOMING EVENTS

June 19th: Pollinator Week - Free Documentary Screening "The Guardians"

Carruther's Marsh Pavilion, 7:00-8:30. A film outlining the delicate balance between human and nature, The Guardians interweaves the lives of the iconic monarch butterfly with an Indigenous community in Mexico. Both depend on the same ancient forest for their survival and now face an uncertain future.

[Register here!](#)

June 21st: International Yoga Day Veterans' Point, 7:00-8:30. Celebrate International Yoga Day with us! Connecting movement and breath, participate in this outdoor yoga class and celebrate the practice of yoga. Our instructors will guide you through a gentle workout that will engage all of your muscles and boost your heart rate. Embrace a holistic approach to wellness by taking in the peace and serenity of the beautiful Ajax Waterfront as a back drop while watching the sun set. Bring a yoga mat, ground sheet and a blanket or towel. All levels welcomed. Weather permitting, [register here!](#)

AWARDS & VISITORS

On May 30th, the Durham Environmental Advisory Committee Awards were held in Whitby. St. Andrew's Community Garden was nominated for the George A. Scott Stewardship Award, which is given to those whose efforts have helped maintain, protect and preserve our natural and/or agricultural environment.

We did not win, but we came in second to Scugog Lake Stewards Inc. Jade Schofield and Councilor Joanne Dies accepted the nomination on our behalf, and it will soon be posted inside our shed for all to see.

This past Wednesday, St. Andrew's was included on a DIL walking tour for participants of the [Great Lakes St. Lawrence Cities Initiative](#), a collective of Mayors from Canada and the United States whose mandate focuses on protecting and restoring the Great Lakes & St. Lawrence River. Their annual conference took place in Ajax last week, and they were quite impressed not only by the Town of Ajax's work to keep their waterfront clean & healthy, but by our very own community garden! With delegates from across Ontario, Quebec, New York, Minnesota, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin and Ohio in attendance, St. Andrew's Community Garden is well on its way to being very well known! Visitors were particularly impressed with the variety of produce that our members grow, as well as the bee hotel in our pollinator garden. Many thanks to the members who helped clean up on our last Maintenance Day, your work helped make such a great impression to these visitors!

Have a question about our garden? Have a concern or suggestion? Want to know how YOU can get more involved? Want us to feature a specific topic in our next newsletter? Or are you looking for information on how to join our community?

Please send an email to ajaxcomgarden@gmail.com, and one of our volunteer committee members will get back to you as soon as they can!