

Norristown Community Garden 2019 Report



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Norristown Community Garden

BUILDING COMMUNITY TROUGH GROWTH

ABOUT NCG

The Norristown Community Garden was created to...

- help develop our community and create healthy relationships/partnerships,
- help us learn how to grow our own food and promote a healthy lifestyle,
- share our skills and gardening tips to support each other,
- encourage us to cook and share recipes, preserve and donate our harvest to the wider community.

Norristown Community Garden is located on Norristown State Hospital property in the middle of an impoverished urban area that is considered a "food desert". The garden has been in existence since 2012, and currently there are 54 plots. The plot sizes ranges from 8 X 4 to 16 X 4.

The garden utilizes "asset based" community development strategies to build on the amazing strengths that exist in Norristown. For instance, one of the gardeners is a Master Gardener trained by the Penn State Extension Office. She and her husband have had several demonstration plots within the garden and provide guidance to anyone that asked. The Master Gardener has a wide variety of educational materials that has been provided to the garden.

Here are some additional examples of using the strengths of the gardeners: There are many individuals or families that want to give gardening a try, but they do not know where to start. We encourage their interest by fostering mentorship of new gardeners by the more seasoned gardeners. This not only helps create confidence in gardening, but it also germinates connections between gardeners - cultivating community.

2019 Garden Season in Review

The 2019 season kicked off with a garden planning meeting in March discussing our budget, our clean-up and kickoff event, adding ducks and geese to the garden, weighing our produce for data collection and realigning the plots to make paths more accessible. We also discussed expanding the garden from 44 to 54 plots using the Wednesday's Greenhouse Market plot, which they were unable to continue using.

There were 22 garden members, with half the members gardening with us for the first time this year.

2019 Garden Map



Clean-up & Kickoff

Our clean-up and kickoff event was held on April 20th 2019, where there were over 20 people in attendance. For some people who were unable to attend they arranged to help at different dates and times.

Duck, Duck, Goose!

This year we introduced five (5) ducks and three (3) geese to the garden. There were 2 Embden geese, 1 Sebastopol goose and 5 Indian runner ducks. The geese were incubated from eggs and are very docile and comfortable with people. The Ducks were ordered as day olds and are of several color patterns. The intended function of the geese were to weed, ward off groundhogs, to provide organic fertilizer, as well as to protect the ducks from small predators. The ducks were to help with pest control.

The Boy Scouts and community members got involved in the coop-making process. A temporary structure was built by the community, while the Boy Scouts worked on building a permanent coop.

The one gardener who was very knowledgeable, experienced and had availability to care for the birds fell ill mid-way through garden season. As a community we created feeding schedules to help care for the birds. When we found out our experienced gardener was unable to come back to the garden we decided to relocate the birds before winter.

All five ducks went to the Last Chance Ranch and sadly two (2) of the geese died before rehoming. The last goose went to Chenoa Manor.

Next year, the coop will be transformed into a tool shed.



Anja – Letting sleeping Geese lay

Ameika with Diane's kids
feeding

Just taking a Duck Bath.

Weigh-in

For the past three years have been working on tracking the amount of food the garden produces annually as well as the distribution in the community. This has been one of our more successful years.

An e-scale is at the garden, and after each harvest the gardeners were asked to weigh produce and report to the garden point person.

Over 800 pounds of food was harvested and these were the numbers reported:

- 193.5 pounds was shared with local food banks, Coordinated Homeless Outreach Center (CHOC), and HopeWorx.
- 217 pounds was shared with general community (Friends and neighbors).
- 335.5 pounds was for personal use.



Note: The garden produced over a 1000 pound of produce but the numbers only reflects what was reported to the point person.

Realigning and Installing Plots



One of our main goals from 2018 was to work on clearly defining the plots and paths. The focus behind this venture was to accommodate people with physical limitation and to make the garden wheel chair accessible. We were able to accomplish this goal this year with the help of the community and grants from Penn State and Southeast Regional Community Support Program (See budget for more detail. In additional we were able to purchase wood from home depot at a 70 percent discount.

With the aid of N'ann Harp the garden got loads of leaf mulch from the Norristown Municipal, which was used to raise some beds and aid in organic soil improvement. The Wednesday's Greenhouse Market allowed us the use of their mulch to cover the paths.

As previously mentioned, the Wednesday's Greenhouse Market was unable to use their plot of land and it was given to us. We were able create an additional 10 new plots, house the ducks and geese and define an area for composting. Our composting goals are a work in progress and we will continue with them next year.

The garden members would like to thank Harry Chapin for installing a more user friendly gate.

Fiscal Report

Balance	\$1,013.35
PSU Community Garden Grant	\$250
Garden Fees	\$250.00
Donations	\$172.74
CSP Seed Grant	\$250.00
HopeWorx	\$892.67
The Pollination Project (TPP)	\$1,000.00
Total	\$2,815.41

Funds the garden received for 2019 Garden Season (see detailed spending below).

Over the past three years we have been supported by the Penn State Extension of Montgomery County, PA, though grants and information. The garden was awarded \$250 in 2018, which was used to buy materials to help with realigning and raising beds in the garden. Along with the Penn State Extension grant, we also applied for the Regional Community Support Program Seed Grant for which were approved for matching funds of \$250, which was used to weed cloth the cover the paths and lay mulch.

In efforts to ensure sustainability, we started collecting an annual membership fee for each plot. For people who are unable to pay, they can volunteer time to help with the upkeep of the garden and supporting other garden members. A total of \$250 was collected. In addition, there was \$1065.41 in donations from community members and HopeWorx.

Through our partnership with Maria Maneos, Director of Brush With The Law Re-entry Art Program, we were awarded \$1000 from The Pollination Project (TPP). The TPP mission is to, “unleash the goodness in every person. Through a daily practice of generosity and giving, we make seed grants – 365 days a year – to social change agents anywhere in the world, who seek to spread compassion in their communities and in the world for the benefit of all.”

See below for a detailed fiscal report for 2019.

Item	# of Items	Spent	Notes
Hose	2	\$61.42	
Weed cloth	3 rolls	\$262.74	
Water barrels	2	\$72.08	
Landscape Staples	1 box	\$20.00	
Wheelbarrows	2	\$70.00	
Food Scale	1	\$14.00	
Watering cans	6 cans	\$48.00	
Screws	2 boxes	\$30.00	
Tools	assortment	\$55.00	Did not get a receipt - tools were purchased through Facebook market place
wood	variety	\$86.56	Got wood from Home depot with 70% discount
Soil	50 bags	\$106.00	
Costco		\$44.04	Clean-up day - Snacks
Dunkin Donut		\$16.95	Clean-up day - Snacks
WaWa		\$6.75	Clean-up day - Snacks
Padlock	2	\$15.85	For Tool box
Duck Feed	5	\$189.95	
Duck Feed	20	\$344.00	
Wire Mesh (Coop)	2	\$108.72	Use to build Coop
Rehoming Ducks		\$50.00	Last Chance Ranch
Rehoming Goose		\$200.00	Chenoa Manor
Total		\$1,802.06	

2020 Garden Season Plans

As we go forward into 2020 the plan is to continue working on building an all-inclusive community and support system. We will also be working on:

- Adding some more water barrels and putting the hoses on the fences.
- Building more raise beds
- Finishing our composting areas
- Fencing Repair
- Transforming the duck coop into a tool shed and moving it into the garden
- Establish garden monitors to help reduce produce waste.
- Reach out to local business for additional support with woodchips and other garden supplies.

Acknowledgements

The Norristown Community Garden would not be as successful as it is with the help of the community and local organizations. We would like to thank and acknowledge:

- The Norristown State Hospital
- Municipality of Norristown and Municipal Council
- Hopeworx, Inc.
- Habitat for Humanity of Montgomery and Delaware Counties,
- Boy Scouts
- The Penn State Extension
- Greener Partners
- The Pollination Project
- Brush With The Law
- Timshel Coffee Shop
- BuxMont DSA
- Wednesday's Greenhouse Market.
- The Regional and Montgomery County PA Community Support Program (CSP)
- Founding Members: Vera Zanders and Olivia Brady and everyone who have and continue to participate in the garden.

On behalf of the Norristown Community Garden Gardeners thank you and we are looking forward to the 2020 garden season and our continued partnerships.

2019 NCG Highlights



Norristown Community Gardens

Garden Plot Application

Please return (signed) to: ntncommunitygarden@gmail.com

For more information, join us on Facebook (Norristown Community Gardens)



Date: _____

Community Gardens are in Norristown! Do you want to garden, but don't have the right yard to grow veggies? Apply now – applications will be approved on a first come/first serve basis.

Please check

☐ First time Gardener ☐ Returning Gardener ☐ Other _____

Primary Gardener (must be at least 18 years of age):

Last Name/Family Name: _____ First Name: _____

Mailing address: _____

Phone Number _____ E-mail: _____

☐ Home ☐ Mobile Best Time to Call: ☐ Day ☐ Evening

List all people (including children) that will be gardening with you.

Name	Name

Cultivating Community:

One goal of Norristown Community Gardens is to strengthen the Norristown community. It is our philosophy that each member of the community has value that can be shared with others. Please check off any ways that you would be willing to help build our community.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Share my gardening knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> Share my extra seeds |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help get the garden plots ready | <input type="checkbox"/> Help monitor the plots |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Share a healthy recipe that uses garden ingredients | <input type="checkbox"/> Share some of my harvest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help translate (languages spoken _____) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attend Garden based meetings and activities <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

How would you describe your gardening skills? Please Check One

- ☐ Beginner: Never gardened and need guidance
☐ Basic: gardened on small scale but may need some guidance
☐ Intermediate: do not need guidance
☐ Expert gardener: could provide gardening tips to others

Annual Gardening Fees and plots (Please Check One): There is an annual fee for participating in the garden.

- ☐ \$10 for Small Plots (4'x 6' - 4'x 8')
☐ \$15 for Medium plots (4'x10')
☐ \$20 for Large plots (4'x16')

The fees are to help support the garden to buy supplies and up keep. (HOWEVER, we do not want cost to prohibit someone from gardening. There is the option to volunteer 2 hours at the garden if you cannot afford the annual fee.) Please, no checks.

Fee included: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Would like to volunteer my/our time instead by doing the following:

Donations: Donations are greatly appreciated. Any cash given will be used to purchase items for the gardens. Additional materials can also be given to be used by all gardeners. Please let us know if you would be able to donate any of the following items:

Fencing material	Leaf Trash Bags	Hose
Shovel	Wheel Barrel	Watering Can
Gloves	Rake	Other _____

Location:

Norristown State Hospital (*All gardeners of this site must sign a confidentiality form which will be made available. There is a request to provide at least one hour of volunteer time to help weed the Serenity Garden near to the community garden.*)

Currently, there is not another available site. If you have ideas of other potential sites, let us know.

Green Gardening: Do you agree to not use pesticides/chemicals in the community garden space.
☐ Yes ☐ No

How did you hear about us?

I found out about Community Gardens of Norristown through:

I understand all these rules and regulations listed in the Community Garden Policy and promise to follow them. I understand that neither the Community Garden of Norristown or the owners of the land are responsible for the safety or success of participants, their family, or their garden visitors. I, therefore, agree to hold harmless Community Garden of Norristown and owners of the land for any liability, damage, loss or claim that occurs in connection with use of the garden by me or any of my guests.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

NCG Contact Information

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