



The Hamilton Community Garden Network is a project of Neighbour to Neighbour Centre in partnership with Green Venture and support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. This report was compiled utilizing data that was collected from network garden coordinators in spring 2015.

# Program Overview

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



**Learn and Connect** through events, workshops, meet-ups and social media from a local to a national level



**Find Gardens** through the interactive garden directory and map.



**Access Tools & Resources** to start, run, or participate in gardens, and access donations/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 Hamiltonians in building and sustaining community gardening projects from the perspective of improving food security 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 [hcgnc.ca](http://hcgnc.ca).

# HCGN 2014 Successes & Accomplishments

**40**

**Garden Coordinators**  
received network expertise/support  
(including 6 new community gardens).

**250**

**Inquires Answered**  
(over twice as many as 2013)

**7**

**School Gardens**  
were supported, engaging over 200  
students and 20 educators.

**4**

**Knowledge Swap Events**  
were hosted where over 66 gardens  
were represented at the table.

## Community Outreach

**1500+**

Community members  
engaged through  
events and exhibits



(Including 500 attendees at the 2014 Green Venture Seedy Saturday)

**400**

More followers  
on social media



**6000+**

Website visits to  
[www.hcgn.ca](http://www.hcgn.ca)



## Donations and Contributions



**\$7,000** of In-Kind Donations  
secured/shared among member gardens.

**\$2,200** of Donations Raised  
at the annual Seedy Saturday event.

**\$48,000** of Financial Support  
leveraged for member gardens.

## Network Engagement

- ⇒ Compiled and created resources on topics identified by garden coordinators such as bulk purchasing, legal issues, and seed starting.
- ⇒ Shared Hamilton successes and best practices through avenues like the Ontario Community Garden Network and related conferences.
- ⇒ Supported edible education by helping to launch the Hamilton Edible Education Network.
- ⇒ Maintained directory with 80+ gardens.

# Partnerships and Supporters

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In 2014 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

“Having a person I know that can connect me to other coordinators or give examples from other gardens takes off a lot of the pressure that comes with coordinating a neighborhood garden as a volunteer.”  
— *Jennifer Friesen, Corktown Community Garden*

“The HCGN plays such an integral role in bringing together community gardens across the city, strengthening these vital programs, and supporting food security and access in Hamilton. They are our go-to source for support and information.”— *Monica Palkowski, North Hamilton Community Health Centre*

“HCGN has been a BIG help to me and my team for growing a garden. I feel confident moving forward, and it's a real load off to know that there are other people out there who are growing gardens.”  
— *Erin Davis, Ancaster Discovery Gardens*

“Hamilton Community Garden Network enables the community to learn and grow their capacity to have community gardens.”  
— *Dave Carson, Rotary Sunrise Garden*

# Community Success Stories

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

## Build Community



- ⇒ **Formation of the Mustard Seed Co-op**—After meeting and working together at the Hill Street Garden, the local gardeners banded together to form Hamilton’s first locally-focused full service grocery store.
- ⇒ **Creation of a Good Food Box Program**— The Bartonville Neighborhood Community Garden, in partnership with Faith Lutheran Church created a summer food box distribution 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. The garden has also partnered with the Niagara Beekeepers Association to host bees.
- ⇒ **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, and movie nights.
- ⇒ **Formation of 2 Farms**— Weathervane Farms and Inner City Acres are now Hamilton farming ventures both started by families who coordinate community garden sites.

## Enhance the Environment



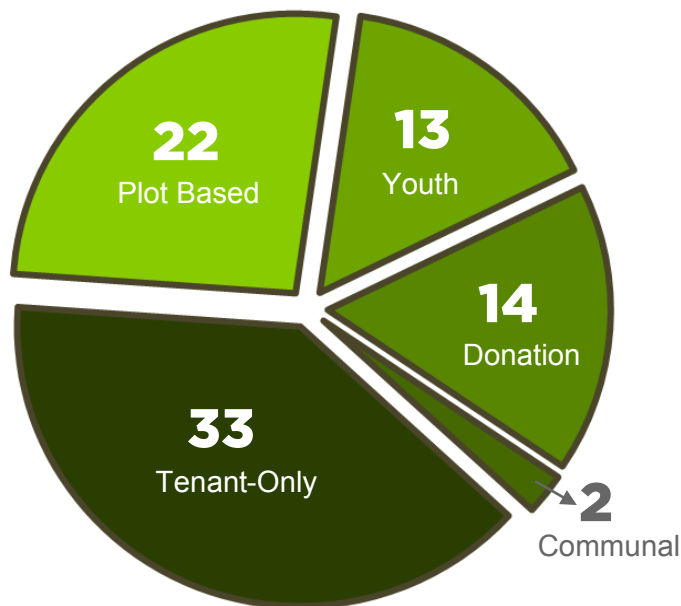
- ⇒ Community gardens help the ecosystem by aiding water management and maintaining biodiversity
- ⇒ 42,033 sq ft of green space was created in 2014 through community gardens
- ⇒ There is approximately 189,672 sq ft of community garden green space in Hamilton. That is the equivalent of 2.2 Canadian Football fields.

## Promote Wellness



- ⇒ Community gardens increase access to fresh produce while allowing individuals to exercise and build social relationships
- ⇒ 82,000+ lbs of produce was donated to over 15 food agencies in 2014
- ⇒ Over 2000 people and 1600 families are actively using HCGN gardens

# Community Gardening in Hamilton



**Plot-Based:** Gardens offer small plots of land for community members to grow and harvest their own produce or flowers.



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



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



**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.

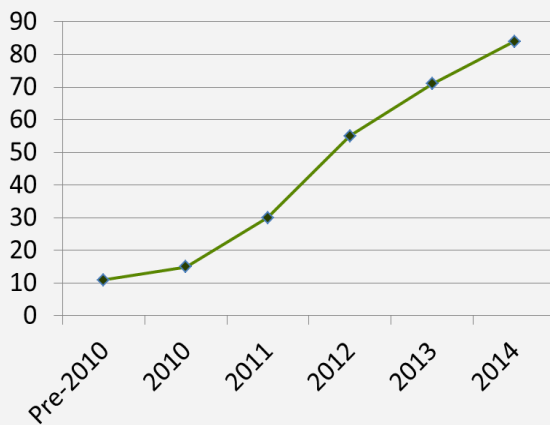


**Tenant Only:** Gardens are open to residents who live in the adjacent building.

**TOTAL  
Gardens in  
the HCGN  
as of 2014:**

**84**

**Community Gardens in Hamilton**



**Community Gardens by Ward 2014**

