

# Hatfield Community Garden

## 2018 Season Review



After working under the guidance of the Agricultural Advisory Commission in 2017, a core group of six individuals started the Hatfield Community Garden, which finished its first growing season in 2018. The garden is located on a four acre parcel on Billings Way on town-owned property. The garden took up approximately one acre, with neighbor Harrison Bardwell of Bardwell Farm stewarding and growing crops on the remaining land.

## **Data**

There were 41 plots used in total for our first year.

- 29 gardeners maintained 36 plots, plus two school plots that were maintained by a communal effort
- Three plots (7.3%) were abandoned (gardeners quitting or moving in the middle of the season).
- 3 gardeners (10.0%) lived out of town
  - Two moved out of town during 2018
  - One is a grandparent of children in Hatfield schools
- 3 gardeners (10.0%) have said they will not return next season

We sent a garden survey at the end of the season. All but one gardener completed the survey. The purpose of the survey was to share experiences and seek feedback from gardeners to make our 2019 season more successful.

- Only one survey respondent said they feel that they **do not** have enough of an opportunity to participate in the decision making process related to the community garden.
- 100% of survey respondents said they enjoyed more social interaction because of the community garden
- 76% of survey respondents said they got more exercise because of the community garden
- 76% of survey respondents said they saw an improvement in physical/mental health because of the community garden
- 65% of respondents said they ate healthier because of the community garden
- Tomatoes were the most grown item in the garden, followed by alliums (onion, leek, etc.) then followed by a tie between flowers and peppers

## **Financials**

### CPA Account

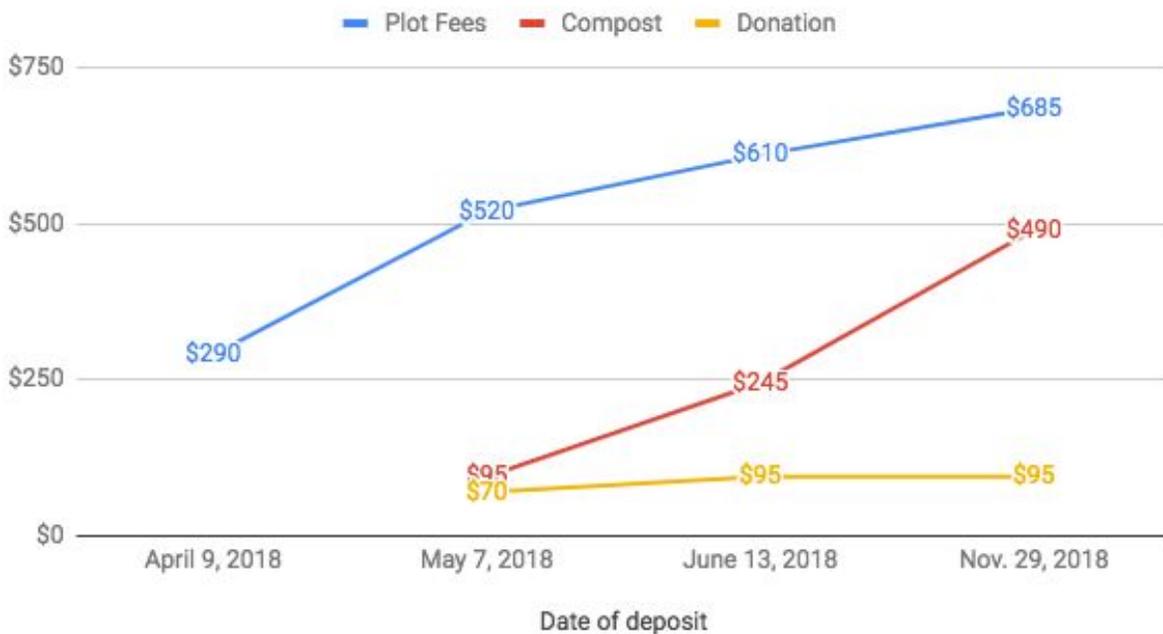
We received \$5,000 in Community Preservation Act funds at the 2018 Town Meeting. We've spent \$2,465 on a shed and \$185 on a rototiller tune up (in lieu of purchase). We have \$2,350 left to use on start-up costs. We plan on purchasing a weed whacker and/or lawn mower, picnic tables and benches, and possibly adding another water spigot.

Ag Commission Sub-Account

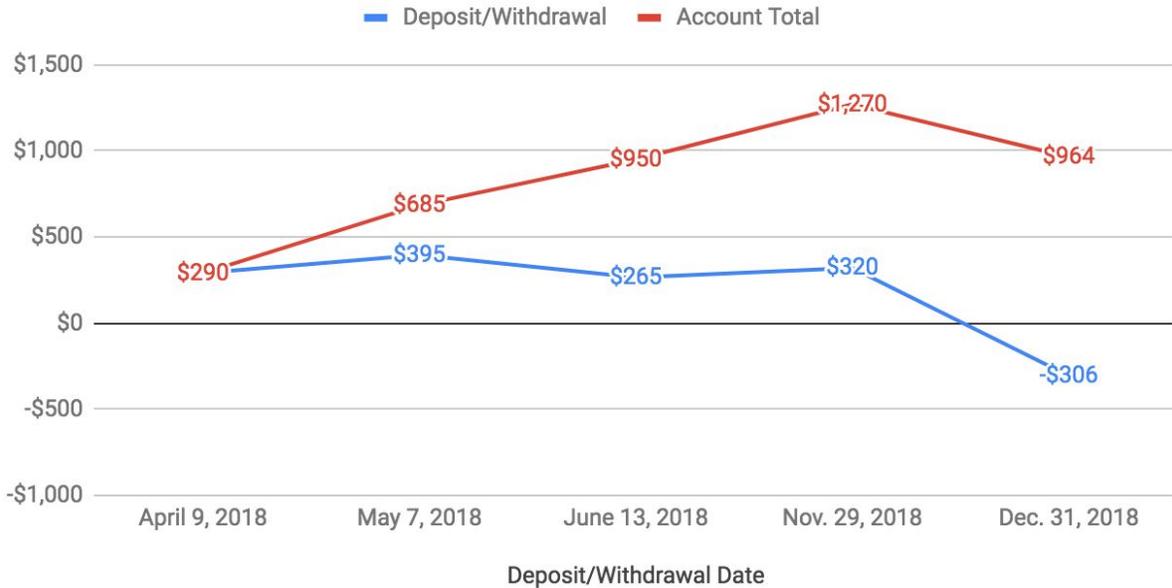
This account is where we deposit donations, plot fees and compost cost. We use this fund to pay for items not covered by our CPA funds. This year the only expenses were paying for compost at \$306.

Date	\$	Notes	Account Total
April 9, 2018	\$290	Deposit: \$290 plot fees	\$290
May 7, 2018	\$395	Deposit: \$230 plot fees; \$95 compost payments; \$70 donation	\$685
June 13, 2018	\$265	Deposit: \$90 plot fees; \$150 compost; \$25 donation	\$950
Nov. 29, 2018	\$320	Deposit: \$75 plot fees; \$245 compost	\$1270
Dec. 31, 2018	-\$306.00	Withdrawal: Bear Path Compost for 6 yards of compost, complimentary delivery	\$964

### Community Garden Deposit Breakdown



## Community Garden Account Activity



### Compost

The garden bought 6 yards of compost for \$51.00 per yard for a total cost of \$306. Bear Path Compost waived their delivery fee, as they do with all of the community gardens they service. We provided compost to gardeners at \$2.50 per 5-gallon bucket and raised \$490 in compost payments. We should have raised \$605, a shortfall of \$115. After accounting for free compost for the school plot, and some shrink, this amount would be less.

### Plot Fees

Our fees for 2018 were:

- **\$20** for a 20' by 20' plot
- **\$15** for a 10' by 20' plot
- Discount of **\$5** for seniors (65 and older) or SNAP recipients

We raised \$685 in plot fees with 39 paid plots. Five plots were 10' x 20', and thirty-four were 20'x20' in size. Two plots qualified for the SNAP discount. Twelve plots qualified for the senior discount. The plot fee average was \$17.56.

Plot Size	Cost	Paid plots	Snap Discount (-\$5)	Senior Discount (-\$5)	Fees raised
10' x 20'	\$15	5	0	3	\$60
20' x 20'	\$20	34	2	9	\$625
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$755</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>-\$10</b>	<b>-\$60</b>	<b>\$685</b>

Donations

<b>IN- KIND DONATIONS</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Cost per item</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>Description of use</b>
Soil test	1	\$25.00	John Pease	\$25.00	fall 2017 soil sample
Plowed, harrowed	3	\$50.00	Tom Petcen	\$150.00	Petcen Farm plowed and harrowed the field in fall 2017
Seeding field	3	\$35.00	Bardwell Farm	\$105.00	seeded the field in the fall with cover crop
Soil test	1	\$25.00	Bardwell Farm	\$25.00	spring 2018 soil sample
Garden stakes	75	\$1.00	Brockway Smith	\$75.00	for staking out our community garden plots
Seeds	10000+		Atlas Farm	\$300.00	"old" seeds available for gardeners
Water spigot installation	1	\$1,000.00	Hatfield DPW	\$1,000.00	estimate from DPW in materials, not including DPW labor
Buckets	12	\$5.00	Crane Cesario	\$60.00	for gardeners to haul water, weeds, compost etc
Farm starts	80	\$3.00	Atlas Farm	\$240.00	6 pack second organic seed start packs
Rototiller	1	\$200.00	Hannah Zahn	\$200.00	donated rototiller
Picnic table	1	\$100.00	Smithsonian Chowder House	\$129.99	unfinished picnic table from rk Miles
Picnic table stain & labor	1	\$34.14	Amy Hutchins Food Service Director	\$34.14	stain and labor to preserve donated picnic table
Compost delivery	1	\$60.00	Bear Path Compost	\$60.00	waived delivery fee for 6 yards of compost
Volunteer labor	6	\$24.14 per hour	Department of Labor	\$4,779.72	6 steering committee members meeting 22x for 1.5hr each at \$24.14 per hour (2017 to garden launch April 2018)
Volunteer gardener labor	29	\$24.14 per hour	Department of Labor	\$2,800.24	29 gardeners volunteering 4hr each at \$24.14 per hour (April 2018-Dec 2019)
<b>TOTAL IN-KIND DONATIONS</b>	<b>\$9,954.10</b>				

## Successes

The inaugural summer for the Community Garden was very successful, as shown by the data, community input and donations, as well as organized plots and paths.

In addition to abundant rain last summer, we had bountiful harvests of flowers and edibles, flax and broom corn for the Farm Museum. Gardeners deepened their inter-generational community connections, along with their knowledge of growing plants and controlling weeds organically. Over the course of the growing season, we heard so many compliments. Harrison's buffer zone planting of sunflowers was beautiful, and also nourished many birds for months. It's expected he will plant those again in 2019. The elementary school plot was productive, and a master gardener team pollinator plot was educational as well as joyful to see. The season concluded with an end-of-year potluck meal with nearly twenty in attendance.

Anonymous quotes from gardeners:

"Due to a recent job change, I was able to spend less time in my plot this summer than I expected. Therefore my plot sometimes became rather weedy. When I did visit my plot to tackle my weeds, I braced for the potential scorn of my tidy neighbors. But I was not scorned. Instead, all of my gardening neighbors were kind, encouraging and generous. Every one of them. It really touched my heart and made me appreciate all the goodness there is right here in Hatfield. (I still made sure to tidy up my plot periodically anyway!) Thank you so very much, Hatfield!"

"I was introduced to several vegetables that were new to me by other gardeners. I liked meeting new friends at the garden."

"This was my first time ever having a vegetable garden, and it was an amazing experience. It brought more sunshine, strength, sense of community, and overall health into my life. ...I felt like there was a great balance between guidelines & regulations, and freedom for doing it my own way. The work days were helpful in keeping up a sense of community, as I work evenings, and was never able to attend any of the meetings. Not only did I gain knowledge about gardening, but I learned about Hatfield history from conversations with longtime locals. Also, I met a few neighbors for the first time...and got to know a neighbor I already knew only briefly, much better. All these experiences are invaluable, and I remain awed by the generosity (in time & energy), of those who made this project possible...I am so grateful, and feel so lucky to have been part of this first season!"

"It is a positive community-oriented place to meet up with people and discuss gardening."

"Loved my son's excitement when the plants started bearing vegetables."

“The sunflower buffer zone Harrison [Bardwell] planted was gorgeous! It was great to see so many birds feeding there. It was also heartwarming to see people being so cooperative and sharing - and the numerous water features for pollinators!”

### **Next Steps for 2019**

We will not expand our garden footprint for 2019 and anticipate adding 12-15 plots, bringing our total to 50-55 plots. We anticipate charging the 2018 rate for plot fees in 2019.

During the 2018-2019 winter, several subcommittees are working on community garden developments and planned improvements. The subcommittees include garden upkeep, water delivery, recruitment, communications, and governance. It's expected that we'll use some of our plot fee money to support a website. The gardener survey also solicited input on activities for next summer, including workshops shared resources, and suggestions for improvement. We expect to have other activities of general community interest this coming summer, including workshops, new gardener orientation, supporting the Fall Festival, among others.

We had a component of registration where gardeners were asked to contribute three volunteer hours (helping to maintain the common spaces, cutting grass, organizing tools, etc.) on an honor system. We didn't keep track of this but put the onus on each gardener to pitch in on gardening days, attending meetings, and maintaining garden paths. Next year we will implement a system with a binder in the shed where gardeners officially document their volunteer hours and tasks. Many gardeners contributed additional service hours well in excess of the minimum. A steering committee member has volunteered to track community service hours for the 2019 season.

The Hatfield Community Garden is thankful for the support of its gardeners and the greater community for a successful year and is looking forward to its second growing season.