

Stettler Community Gardens have been in place for 2 seasons and have undergone steady growth. Despite some weather challenges, the gardens have provided a welcome and needed space for many families, individuals and groups to experience having their own garden space.

Stettler Community Gardens provide individual private garden plots to community residents and groups for a nominal fee. The gardens are open to everyone and are centrally located along walking pathways in the centre of town, within an easy distance of most neighbourhoods and the schools. Due to an overwhelming and increasing demand, the 5000 ft² gardens were expanded in 2010/2011 and a 2nd and final expansion will take place in the spring of 2012, bringing the total area to approximately 13,000 square feet.

Summary of Successes

- **Expansion due to demand** – 5000 ft² (50x100) to 8600 ft² to 13000 ft²
 - Added 7 raised bed garden planters for seniors or those of limited mobility
- **Many repeat gardeners**, with a regular waiting list for plots
- **Over 30 families**, individuals and groups have been provided with space to have a garden
 - In-ground spaces ranging from 100 to 484 ft²
- **Annual Food Bank gardens** planted and maintained by volunteers
 - Abundance of fresh produce given to Food Bank
 - 2010 – 45 large freezer bags of lettuce and Swiss chard over a 3 week period (most of the rest was flooded out)
 - 2011 – 16 cups of radishes, 180L of leaf and romaine lettuce, 18L of broccoli, 60L of swiss chard, 25 pounds of beets, over 100 pounds of carrots and potatoes and miscellaneous cauliflower, peppers, onions and beans
- **Excellent connections with the Public and Catholic Schools**
 - Garden shed and planter beds built by Fabrication program at Wm. E. Hay High School
 - Plots have been used by several school programs (HEART and Garden clubs)\
 - Many classes have come to tour the gardens to help, for their own interest or as a part of their curriculum (e.g. Grade 4, 5 & 6 students)
 - Grade 2 students made 80 decorative vegetable row markers
- **No vandalism** has been noted over the course of the program
 - focus is on awareness, advocacy, involvement and visibility
- **Scores of community volunteers** have helped to set up, plant, maintain and build the garden into a community landmark
- **Many donations** – seeds, materials, tools and equipment, including the water tank, most garden tools and other key pieces have been donated by local residents and businesses
- There have been many, many **positive comments** about look and features of the Community Gardens
- As a part of Stettler's participation in the national **Communities in Bloom** competition, the Community Gardens were noted and praised repeatedly by the CinB Judges. The community gardens were the special mention that accompanied the 5 Bloom rating and were featured prominently in the magazine write-up on Stettler.
- **Other communities** have begun modelling their new community gardens after our plans (e.g. Hanna)



"Stettler Community Gardens is an excellent project, including a portion of the gardens being dedicated to the Stettler Food Bank. All of plots are occupied, well kept, and are an inspiration for the community at large... The Stettler Community Gardens demonstrate true pride and commitment of residents to the well-being of their community."

– Diane Clasen & Gerry Teahen
– National Communities in Bloom Judges

