



The 2016 Meridian Township financial contribution brought about two long-needed infrastructure projects at Okemos International and Wardcliff Community Garden this season. Both gardens now have new, 10-foot tall welded wire deer fences installed on site. These fences were both a replacement and an upgrade to the plastic, tenax fencing that were installed over 6 years ago. GP staff member, Ben Crocker, took the lead on design, planning, purchasing and installation at both of the sites. Another 2016 success is the continued visits from Meridian Township gardeners to the Garden Project Resource Center over the course of the growing season. Garden Leaders and community gardeners alike continue to access free plants, seeds and tool lending at our Resource Center from April through July.

Okemos International Garden at Central/Cedar Creek



Garden Project worked in conjunction with Okemos Public Schools to obtain permission to shift and slightly expand the garden during the installation of their new, 10-foot tall fence. The garden was pushed further north, away from the tree line, to allow full sun in all plots. The spring weather cooperated and OPS was able to give the garden an early till, which resulted in a mid-May opening; earlier than the last few seasons. Despite the dry summer, garden plots flourished due to the water access that continues to be provided by the Cedar Creek Apartment complex next door. Okemos

International gardeners are frequent visitors to the GP Resource Center and we continue to provide staff for on-site registration, garden plotting and plot assignments, as well as hosting volunteers to help with spring and fall clean-ups. (Photo of GP staff and volunteers next to new Okemos International fence.)

Marsh Pointe Garden



Marsh Pointe gardeners tended their plots in a bit less peace and quiet than usual, as repairs to the parking area next to the garden were underway. It was a successful season though, thanks in large part to the MP leadership team, who are active and inclusive. Garden Project was able to organize multiple volunteer work groups to come out and lend a hand, as well as tools and supplies. We continue to have a strong partnership with the garden

leaders on site who frequent the Resource Center for seeds and plants on behalf of their fellow gardeners, many who have limited transportation. (Photo of GP volunteers distributing plants at GP Resource Center)

Edgewood Village Community Garden



Edgewood Village continues to expand their garden program, involving multiple staff, and this year, a summer AmeriCorps member. Their hoop house was utilized to a larger extent this season, increasing the amount of produce grown. Rebecca Taylor, Edgewood Garden Leader, utilized the Resource Center on a regular basis, bringing over 250 plant starts back to community gardeners, as well as borrowing tools for work days and other GP resources. In her words... “Thank you to for the compost connection that gave our garden a brilliant start! Thank you for the helping us till, for the seeds, plants, and water barrels! Thank you for all of the knowledge and support you all provide! We are very pleased with how well it is growing and how many people have been involved in helping to nurture it. I also want to share that the containers donated last year are being used all over the property for container gardening and some have even found their way to another property owned by our management company!”

(Photo of Edgewood Village Community Garden and hoop house)

Grange Acres



After 3 continual seasons of expansion, Grange Acres was able to provide access to all interested residents this season. There was a change in garden leadership this year, as their long-time garden leader resigned. A new garden leader has stepped forward and GP is already in communication with them to help organize multiple spring work days to help with clean-up and repairs in 2017.

(Photo of Grange Acres Community Garden entrance)

Wardcliff Garden



Wardcliff now has a new, 10-foot tall deer fence, which is a huge improvement over the disintegrating plastic fence that had been zip-tied together over the last couple of seasons. The garden’s 60 plots were again full. This spring, straw was delivered on site, saving the garden leader from having to do pick-ups himself, as he has in years past.

(Photo of Wardcliff straw delivery, used for mulching, especially helpful for weed suppression and water conservation during this dry growing season.)

Northwind Community Garden



Garden Project again provided a dozen yards of compost and had straw bales for mulching delivered to Northwind Community Garden this season. The garden leadership remains strong, organizing gardener service projects and potlucks. Garden Leaders visit the Resource Center to pick up plants and seeds on behalf of gardeners. East Lansing Food Co-op, which sits next door, continues to be an active partner and supporter of the garden. One community gardener provided us with this snapshot of their season... "This is not so much a story as it is an observation. This year's weather has been a tricky one and I loved the challenge. This year I faced a huge infestation of potato beetles, powdery mildew that spread like wild fire, and a drought that had me out watering 3 times a day! But it made me a better gardener to go through those trials and has me more prepared for the future. Thanks for all you do!"

(Photo of a friendly, do-no-pick sign at Northwind Garden)

Haslett Middle School & St. Paul Lutheran Church



Both the HMS garden and St. Paul Lutheran Church Garden continued into their second growing season this year, after attending Garden Leaders Training and receiving startup funds from GP last year. Interactions with GP were minimal this season, though garden leaders from both sites continued to receive resource emails from us listing support options ranging from volunteer groups, improvement funds, seeds, plants, trainings and more. We will actively outreach to both gardens this winter to hear what plans are underway for 2017 and what support GP can lend.

(Photo of St. Paul Lutheran Church Garden in July)