

2015 Colgate Community Garden Annual Report

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The 2015 garden season was the first full growing season at the new garden location on Broad Street. The entire garden space was able to be utilized, and close to 4000 pounds of produce was grown by the garden team and numerous volunteers.

Staff/Volunteers:

This year Beth Roy continued on as the head of the garden team, now for her 3rd full garden season. The two Spring/Summer Garden Intern positions were filled by Grace Littlefield '16 and Seamus Fitzhenry '18. Grace and Seamus worked 6 hours per week during the end of the 2014 spring semester, then 40 hours per week over the summer. For the Fall Semester, Quincy Pierce '16 rejoined the garden team. She was joined by Jenna Walczak '17 and Jeremy Nadison '16, all three working for up to 6 hours a week from the end of August until the end of October.

Green Thumbs members continued to have a large presence at the garden during the Spring and Fall semesters. Green Thumbs co-presidents during the Spring 2015 semester were Grace Littlefield '16 and Renee Berger '16. Due to many of their upper-class members being away on term abroad in the fall, Grace and Renee continued with their leadership during the Fall of 2015. The Green Thumbs faculty advisor for 2015 was Chris Henke, Associate Professor of Sociology and Faculty Director of the Upstate Institute. John Pumilio, Director of Sustainability, continued to play a major role in the garden team for 2015.

The garden saw more than 100 visitors throughout the season for special events or to volunteer their time. Several Building and Grounds staff members helped at the garden with final relocation tasks such as recovering the greenhouse.

Produce:

In the 2015 growing season, about 38 types of vegetables, 10 types of herbs, 3 types of fruits and several types of flowers were grown at the Colgate Community Garden. Produce was harvested by the garden consultant, interns, Green Thumbs members, and volunteers. Approximately 2/3 of the garden space was utilized for growing the vegetables, herbs, fruits and flowers. The remaining space was dedicated to Community Garden Plots and the new Demonstration area. Several new vegetables and fruits were grown in 2015: popcorn, pumpkins, gourds, raspberries, apples, several varieties of kale, purple beans, scallions, and pak choy. Other vegetables and herbs included: tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, garlic, peas, beans, turnips, beets, peppers, zucchini, yellow squash, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, kale, carrots, lettuce, spinach, radishes, watermelon, muskmelon, swiss chard, acorn squash, potatoes, basil, dill, cilantro, oregano, chives, thyme, tarragon, mint, and parsley.

The summer garden team again paired with Hamilton Central High School and helped them harvest and tend to the schools' garden beds. The HCHS agriculture program donated several plants to

the Colgate Community garden in exchange for the assistance given over the summer. Over 125 pounds of produce was harvested from the HCHS garden by the CCG team and donated to the Hamilton Food Cupboard over the 2015 summer growing season. The CCG garden team helped with the high school beds during the months of July and August, two days per week.

During the summer of 2015, approximately half of the produce that was harvested at the Colgate Community garden was sold at either the weekly Farm Stand or to Colgate Dining Services via Chartwell's. The summer Farm Stand was held once a week on Tuesdays from 5-6:30pm. It started at the Colgate Townhouses, but later moved to 104 Broad Street. This farm stand continued on a weekly basis through the remainder of July and all of August. Once students returned to campus for the Fall semester, the Farm Stand was moved to the COOP on campus. The Farm Stand at the COOP was held every Tuesday from 11:00-1:00 until the end of October. The 3 fall garden interns worked in cooperation with Green Thumbs members to make the Farm Stand successful each week. Any produce that was not sold was donated to the Hamilton Food Cupboard. Students were able to pay for their produce with either cash or using their gate card.

For the 2015 growing season, about half of all produce that was grown was donated to the Hamilton Food Cupboard. For the third year in a row, Sam Stradling and the Food Cupboard donated several hundred plants to the CCG in exchange for the donation of fresh produce later in the season. This arrangement continues to be agreeable for both parties- the Food Cupboard has access to a heated greenhouse in which to grow seedlings, and they are able to utilize and give away all of the produce that is brought to them by the CCG team later in the season. The Food Cupboard was open two days a week for vegetable drop-off, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00-6:00pm. The CCG garden team would bring vegetables to the Food Cupboard in several reusable plastic containers. They would then collect any empty containers that were at the Food Cupboard from past drop-offs. Approximately 2000 pounds of produce was donated to the Food Cupboard by the Colgate Community Garden in 2015.

New to the garden's operations this year was the selling of produce to the dining halls via Colgate's new dining services company, Chartwell's. Produce sales to Chartwell's started in late July and continued weekly until early November. An email was sent to the appropriate Chartwell's staff persons on Monday morning, outlining what the garden team believed they would have available to offer to them for that week. Chartwell's would then respond confirming that they could use all of the items listed, and the garden team delivered the produce directly to Frank dining hall on Thursday mornings.

Garden conditions:

The 2015 growing season was the first full growing season at the garden's location on Broad Street, south of the townhouses. The garden team was able to plant the garden in a timely manner, and utilized the entire garden space for the first time since the garden moved in 2014. Growing conditions for the year were, on the whole, very favorable. No major weather events, insect infestations, or plant diseases marred the progress of the garden's operations in 2015.

One of the final projects leftover from the 2014 relocation process was able to be completed in early May 2015: a new greenhouse cover. A team of about 15 individuals gathered early in the morning, led by local farmers Brendan O'Connor and Colin Nevison from Highland Farms. With the help of

scaffolding set up by the Colgate building and grounds crew, the old white plastic cover was taken off and a new clear plastic cover was put on. In total, the project took about 5 hours to complete and the warming effects of having a clear cover were noticeable almost immediately. The clear cover allowed a larger variety of crops to be grown inside the greenhouse, and also added several weeks onto the end of the growing season in the fall.

About 1/3 of the Colgate Community Garden is dedicated to flower gardens, the herb garden, community garden plots, and a demonstration area. While the herb garden and flower garden were installed soon after the 2014 garden relocation, 2015 was the first time that the entire community garden plot and demonstration areas were used.

The community garden plot program had 7 active members during the 2015 garden season. Six of these members started their involvement in the spring, while one joined the program toward the end of the summer. By the end of the 2015 growing season, the Community Garden Plot program had 8 individuals who were committed to joining or continuing on with the program for the 2016 growing season.

The Demonstration area in the garden was a huge success during the 2015 growing season. The demonstrations included: straw bale gardening, potato towers, composting bins, and a three sisters garden. All of these techniques provided plenty of talking points on tours, as well as producing extra vegetables and herbs to distribute amongst the CCG's main recipients of produce.

2015 also saw the first useable garden compost created from the garden's 3-bin composting system. Garden scraps and food scraps continued to be added to the piles and turned throughout the season. By the end of the fall, there was a large amount of composted soil that could be returned to the garden and worked into the garden rows to prepare for the 2016 season.

Activities/Special Events:

The 2015 Colgate Community Garden team had an active and successful year. They continued to host events at the garden, as well as reach out into the community for various volunteer activities.

The Green Thumbs student group continued to play a large role in assisting in the operations of the garden in 2015. They held a work party at the garden in late April, assisting with spring cleanup and preparation for spring planting. For the second year in a row, they assisted Sam Stradling at the Hamilton Food Cupboard in starting seeds early in the spring. The seedlings were then donated to the CCG, grown at the garden, and the produce was later donated back to the Food Cupboard. Green Thumbs members also played a large role in planning for and hosting the annual Fall Open House in September. During the Fall Semester, they were helpful in harvesting produce for the weekly farm stand, as well as manning the farm stand and/or delivering the leftover produce to the Food Cupboard.

Beginning in June, monthly work parties were hosted at the garden. Students, staff, and community members were invited to be a part of the activities scheduled for each work session. Once the work was completed, all participants were treated to free pizza and salad (made from ingredients found in the garden). Some of the tasks that were completed during the work parties included: building 5 new community garden plot raised beds, mulching tomato plants, transplanting flowers, building and

painting shelves and the new farm stand, making stepping stones for the flower garden, mulching pathways, harvesting crops, and plenty of weeding.

The spring/summer interns had the opportunity to visit and volunteer at several local farms and organizations. They spent two mornings at Common Thread CSA and one morning at Highland farms. They toured and spent a morning volunteering at Hamilton College's student run garden. They also visited Hamilton Central High School where they taught the students about growing potatoes and led students through the task of making their own potato towers.

The garden team had the pleasure of hosting two tours at the garden for Reunion weekend in May. Several alumni were in attendance and were intrigued by what the garden had to offer. Alumni also had a chance to learn more about the CCG when a presentation about the garden was given to the Alumni Club at the Colgate Inn in mid-October.

Open volunteer hours were created again in 2015 in hopes of drawing the interest of students staying on campus over the summer as well as local community members. During the summer, open hours were on Mondays from 5-7pm and Fridays from 2-4 pm. During the fall semester, open hours were on Mondays from 4-6pm. Community Plot members were invited to the garden for two potluck dinners over the summer, both of which had a great turnout.

The garden was the recipient of many different groups of volunteers before the fall semester began. A large group of students from the Outdoor Education Wilderness Adventure program came to the garden and helped with a number of different tasks. They also purchased some fresh produce from the garden to use to cook their meal later that same day. Another group of freshman from the COVE came to volunteer as well. These large group volunteer work parties helped to complete a couple of large tasks that were left from the garden team's summer "to do" list.

The fall garden team had an opportunity to participate in a new event called "Meet the Farmer", in conjunction with the new dining service provider Chartwell's. Several members from the team spent time at Frank Dining Hall talking with students about the garden and offering several different free samples of produce straight from the garden. Students were thrilled with the yellow fleshed watermelon, zucchini bread, and mozzarella/tomato/basil snacks they were offered.

The second annual fall garden Open House was hosted at the garden in late September. Chartwell's used some garden produce to provide food for the event and several activities were available to those who came to visit. Two different a cappella groups performed several songs, garden tours were given, free planting activities were provided, fresh produce was sold at a Farm Stand, and the Cornell Cooperative Extension had a table with information about composting.

Towards the end of the season, the garden had an opportunity to begin a relationship with Rogers Center in nearby Sherburne. Several of the pumpkins that were grown at the garden were donated to Rogers for their annual pumpkin carving event.

Future Plans:

The garden team hopes to continue the success from the 2015 growing season in the coming year. The garden will remain in its' current location, and continue to be managed by Beth Roy.

Interviews for the two spring/summer intern positions will begin in early 2016. Upon completion of this annual report, there is still some uncertainty about how Good Nature Brewing's potential move to the Snyder property will impact the Colgate Community Garden. Until their plans are made more firm, the garden will continue to operate as it has in the past.

There are currently 8 Community Garden Plot members signed up to garden in the raised bed plots within the garden fence for 2016. There is space for 3 more individuals or groups to participate. It will be a goal of the garden team to fill these remaining 3 spots for the 2016 growing season.

While there were several students who came to events that the garden hosted in 2015, getting students to make their way down to the garden remains a concern of the garden team. The garden is just off-campus, and for those without vehicles or bikes it can take some effort to actually get to the garden. The garden team hopes to continue looking into the possibility of making the garden part of the Cruiser system. It may also be worth considering hosting some events on campus. For example, in the fall a pumpkin-carving event could be hosted on campus in an area where many students will walk by. This could be a great chance for the garden to reach out to students who might not otherwise be involved with the garden.

In 2015, some money was donated to the garden in honor of Chris Henke. The garden team will be discussing how they would like to allocate that money for the 2016 garden season. Some ideas include: a new sitting bench, tools, or some kind of art sculpture.

At the end of the 2015 season, the CCG was able to begin a partnership with the Rogers Center in Sherburne. That relationship will be expanded upon in 2016, beginning with a community event in March at Rogers where the garden team will give pointers to people hoping to start their own garden. It is the hope that the spring/summer interns will have monthly involvement with the Center during their internship.

One of the first major projects on the agenda for the spring will be building another raised garden bed for inside the greenhouse. Green Thumbs has secured funding for this project, and will gather at the garden in the spring to help put together and plant this new raised bed. This will allow the garden team to utilize the greenhouse even further, with the hopes of adding a few weeks of additional growing time on either end of the 2016 growing season. If the early spring weather is favorable, this could even lead to having a spring farm stand at the COOP with some cool-season crops (spinach, lettuce, radish, etc.) as well as some popcorn that was grown in the garden last summer. In the past, the farm stand usually didn't start until late June or early July.

The garden team also hopes to continue working closely with Chartwell's Dining Services. In 2015 the two entities worked hard to bring fresh produce from the garden into the food at the dining halls. This is something that is valuable to the garden's mission and something that the team hopes to continue and even expand upon in 2016.

SUMMARY:

The 2015 growing season was the garden's most successful one since its inception in 2010. The garden team worked closely with Colgate and the surrounding community to bring fresh produce to individuals and educate them about small-farming methods and healthy food choices. It is the garden team's goal to continue their efforts in this realm and to have an impact on even more people in the 2016 growing season.