



Organic



GARDEN TOOLS & TIPS



Gleaners Organic Garden

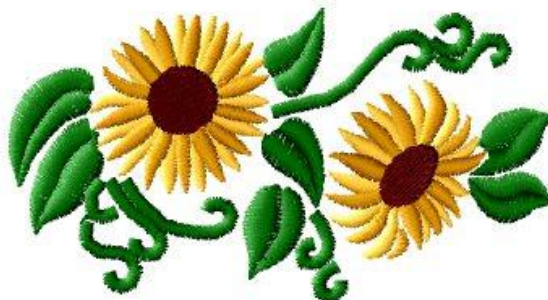
Organic gardening practices nourish the environment in which healthy plants can grow. In return these gardens provide: food for the growers, habitat for the local fauna, help to clean and freshen air quality, plus enhance and beautify the neighbourhood.

Our cultivating garden beds have been raised and spaced for easier accessibility. We use organic solutions for typical pest problems like companion plants, organic sprays and beneficial insect control.

The soil is fed a combination of natural ingredients that builds tilth and provides a balanced nutrient efficient growing medium.

The following donated funds, supplies and skills that enabled the garden to grow: TD Friends of the Environment, Quintessential Credit Union, TransCanada Pipe Line, Hastings County Staff Godiva Sales, City of Belleville, Fitzgibbon Construction, Avondale Flowers, and our many dedicated volunteers.

Good Soil + Healthy Plants + Rain Water = Good Food

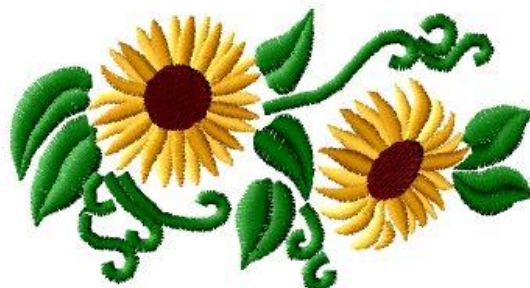


Organic Soil Components

Some of our organic choices for soil building might include:

- Compost
- Top soil
- Leaves (clean garbage free)
- Fish bone meal
- Sheep and animal manure
- Worm castings
- Peat moss
- Vermiculite
- Saw dust
- Kitchen greens
- Egg shells and tea bags
- Grass clippings
- Mushroom manure
- Leaf mould

If you have easy access and can help us with any of these ingredients let us know. Thanks! We have to collect a couple hundred bags of leaves each fall in dark plastic to create our own leaf mould.



How we make our compost!

Using our list of organic soil building choices, we can prepare composted sections, 1 of 3, and arrange layers of moist and dry ingredients until it is full.

Diversity within ingredients increases beneficial soil components. Add water (every two weeks) and let sit until the inner core temperature rises and then turn the pile often to hasten the process.

Our goal is to top our garden beds with this pre-made mulch compost 2” to 4” deep in the spring and the fall.

This compost is the best mulch. It fertilizes and helps the garden retain moisture. We also use it for container gardening and compost tea. We have three compost bins: #1 that we are filling, #2 that we are turning and #3 that we are using.

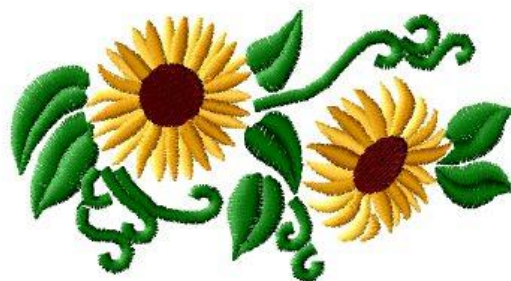


Watering our plants & rain water recovery system

Rain Harvesting allows the garden to be self sustaining. Water from the food bank's roof funnels into our large underground reservoir. A green solar panel runs the pump and motion light. The water reservoir unit & solar system was installed by Tab Mechanical and Fitzgibbon Construction. Currently half the garden should be watered about every other day. Our high raised beds warm up better in the spring and fall but lose water a little faster. On the hottest days we might need to supplement water every day. Certainly every day would be good to clean leaves, water the foliage and moisten the air and soil surface. This practice will help reduce stress and control bug infestations.

Watering will vary with rain and temperature. Gardens 17 and 18 have a buried soaker hose. All the other beds are watered by hand using the hose. Be sure to water thoroughly and not just spritz here and there. Plants that grow in pots require watering every day.

In the future we hope to also include a drip irrigation system. Such a system will help us to be more environmentally efficient in reducing water loss through evaporation and use manual labour more proficiently.



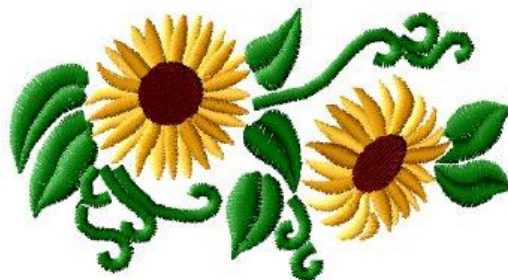
Heritage Seeds

Our ultimate goal is to grow food for our clients! Using locally available organic heritage seeds and plants, we choose to be proactive in ensuring this supply of food to be available for this year and future plantings.

Growing and producing hardy, healthy food for a good part of the year, also saving a portion of the new seed after our harvest for the next year. Keep the cycle going, gleaning as we go!

We also have some good friends and supporters who give us plants, help, seeds, supplies and time. Many thanks to our friends! Grow! Grow! Grow!

Gleaners Organic Garden purchases our Heritage Seeds at Terra Edibles located in Foxboro.



Organic Fertilizer

Our compost is an excellent way to fertilize when mixed with water. We simply fill an old pillow case with 2 litres of compost and let it steep in a bucket for compost tea.

However, remember to avoid using this method for about 7 days before harvesting, especially when foliar feeding has occurred.

In rotation we might also use manure tea, worm castings, fish or sea weed emulsion.

We also use egg shells, coffee grounds and create a mixture with water and this can be irrigated into the garden or place in your compost.

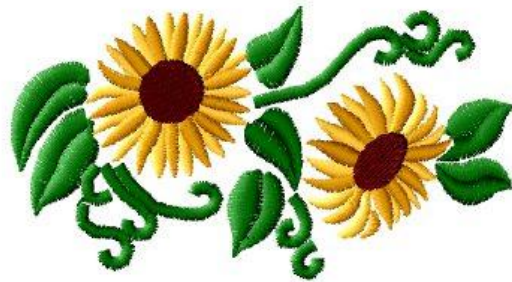


Companions in the Garden

Good people and volunteers make this garden as successful as they can. No small efforts have gotten us this far. Many thanks to the helping hands who have made this dream a reality.

Good people have donated their time, plants, efforts, seeds, sweat, gifts of support, old tools, spare pots, seedlings, knowledge and so much more!

Recently, volunteers from Day of Caring helped build a new shade shelter. This shade shelter was built for Gleaners Organic Garden by friends for friends.



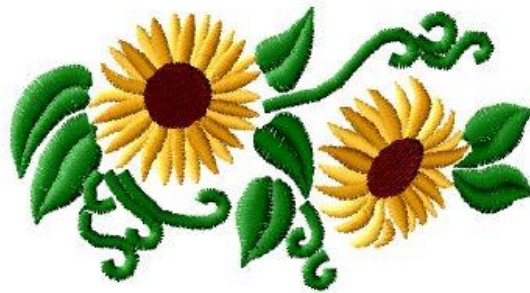
Learning and Sharing

In addition to raising fresh food for our clients, soon we will be offering hands on information sessions so we can share our experience with other friends and neighbours. Topics may include composting, organic gardening, companion planting, harvesting and recipes.

We also provide patio plants to seniors in affordable housing and this year we will expand to help The John Howard Societies Youth Program @ the Elgin Street Affordable Housing Units.

Do you know any great recipes you would like to share? We hope to compile special recipes to help educate excellent taste and nutrition.

We are always looking for great new ways to eat the vegetable variety that we are harvesting.



Cardboard Boxes

We are sure a few friends could be wondering what and why we use cardboard boxes in the garden? Reusing clean cardboard boxes is a green recycling. Used flat, the cardboard is great for suppressing weeds. Boxes are used to provide an outline or temporary container for our compost and are also an easy way to expand our growing space.

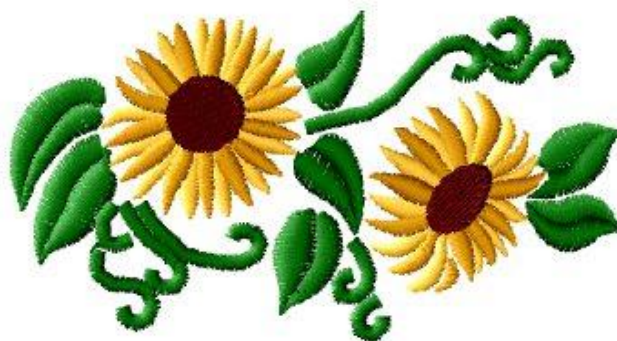
Another cycle is complete as the boxes decay they provide organic matter back into the soil.



Crop Rotation

We rotate our crops every year, like a special dance to confuse pests and maximize the use of previous years growth. Beans and peas fix nitrogen on their root nodules and should be turned into the soil after they're finished growing. Marigolds discourage nematodes and radishes can be used to attract flea beetles away from other crops.

Gardens 17 and 18 trade ends to rotate, these crops are spaced to provide enough physical distance between them in hopes of gleaning the seed for next years crop. Sometimes seed saving occurs at another location with the help of friends. Perennial crops, like strawberries, stay where they are. The other garden rows skip 3 rows or so every year providing diversity with-in the garden. This is the year of bio-diversity 2010- We celebrate here in our beautiful garden!



Inter-cropping

Inter-cropping is inter-planting two or more crops to grow in the same garden bed. We arrange plants within rows or in alternate rows, blocks, circles and other mixed plantings. Two or three crops are usually arranged in each bed, close to ensure the helpful effects of its neighbour.

We also intensively plant, putting the plants a little close together to maximize and save space like in square foot gardening.



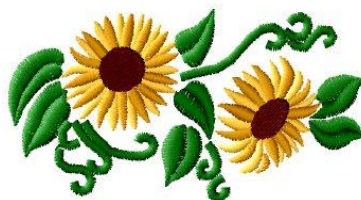
An old gardening belief or the science of growing certain plants together for beneficial interest is a fun and interesting guest.

Plants affect each other by improving the health or flavour of their neighbour, help repel pests, trap pests, or attract beneficial insects. Beneficial insects are pest predators, parasites, and often pollinators welcome visitors to the garden.

Companion Plant List

Some compatibles might be:

- Chamomile is thought to enhance cucumbers, onions and most herbs.
- Marigolds for potato, rose and tomatoes.
- Basil enhances peppers, tomatoes and carrots
- Garlic, roses and fruit trees
- Strawberries and onions
- Onions, lettuce, tomato, carrots, and squash
- Corn, beans and squash are good supports, three sisters and all old friends
- Nasturtium Are thought to enhance cucumbers taste in more ways than one
- Marigolds and mints repel aphids
- While geraniums and petunias repel leafhoppers
- Onions, rosemary and lettuce work to protect carrots from carrot fly.
- Nasturtium trap aphids
- Borage traps Japanese Beetles
- Radishes attract flea beetles
- Carrots savory and dill attract parasitic wasps
- Mints, rosemary and thyme attract beneficial insects like ladybugs and spiders
- Lots of flowers keep flying insects interested with available nectar and provide shade and habitat. Beneficial insects eat troublesome pests like aphids, white fly and others, while providing necessary pollination for food production.



Beneficial Insects

Some plants attract beneficial insects, the predators that hunt and kill other insects. “Good Bugs” as they’re labelled are very beneficial to the garden. Small white flowers of the carrot family attract parasitic wasps,

- Toads and birds feed on insects
- Spiders and beetles forage below the leaves
- Bees and wasps pollinate the flowers giving us precious fruit and vegetables.
- Flowers attract nectar loving creatures and they eat and they control troublesome pests, like aphids, white fly and slugs

We use snapdragons, comfrey, petunias, geraniums, cosmos, rosemary, lavender, marigolds and more.

Worms and micro-organisms work to improve soil conditions and produce natural organic fertilizer. Biodiversity in the garden brings about a balance, harmony pursues along with abundance. Lacewings, ladybugs, and praying mantises are always welcome to drop by anytime!

