

COMMUNITY GARDEN



By Patti O'Keefe

As Summer approaches do you yearn for fresh tomatoes, corn on the cob and zucchini? Do articles about the benefits of organic produce and the cost of fresh veggies make you wish for homegrown produce? For many of us in the Poconos, a home garden is impossible. The shade that keeps us cool also makes gardening difficult. Now there is a new alternative to having to buy your fresh vegetables and fruit. The Barrett Township Community Garden is alive and thriving at the Pasold Farm Nature Preserve off Spruce Cabin Road.

The Garden began as a project for the Concerned Citizens of Barrett Township. Dale Price plowed the field in the Fall of 2010 to begin breaking up the sod; in 2011 the area was re-plowed and harrowed. All work at the Garden is volunteer, and there is no cost to the Township. Plots are 10' by 25', and are free to township residents. Each plot is surrounded by a mowed path kept clear by the volunteer efforts of Paul Stotsenburg. Planting usually begins during the last week in May. During the first year, nine plots were used. In this second year for planting, about 12 individuals took advantage of the Garden.

Several Gardeners commented on how having a place with full sun and good soil was a big reason for choosing the Community Garden. Water is continuously supplied from a natural spring. Another plus for experienced gardener Rita Rutherford was the extra space not available at home, useful for crops like squash, corn, and potatoes. Ginny May enjoys getting her hands in the dirt and the satisfaction of seeing the bounty of her garden. Both Rita and Ginny mentioned giving extra produce to the CAME food pantry. Matt Jardel enjoys having fresh organic produce to share with neighbors and coworkers. He also likes the time outside in the fresh air and sunshine and sees it as exercise and an educational experience. Seeing the birds and wildlife is an added plus for Matt. Several people mentioned the help from fellow gardeners who are generous in sharing knowledge and mentoring the beginners. More organized programs on gardening and sharing information are planned for next year. Meeting new people and seeing old friends was an added bonus for many individuals. Everyone, young and old, is encouraged to join in gardening.

Gardeners were surprised that there was not more wildlife damage. Even those without fencing (provided by individual gardeners) have been able to keep deer away with routine spraying of commercial or homemade products.

Rita summed up the feelings of many people when she said the Community Garden is a positive thing and worthwhile for the community. Anyone interested in learning more or in being a part of the Garden next year can email Jody Hutton at hutherd@gmail.com