

Garden Club of Downers Grove
Application for Award # 28
Gardening Consultants Community Project Award
Restoration of vegetable garden at the Wandschneider Park in Downers Grove

The Downers Grove History Museum is located in a large park close to the downtown area. While on a walk to see its wildflower garden with another garden club member, we were saddened and a little shocked to see that the old vegetable garden was in a very bad state of neglect. It had been cared for in the past by a group from the U of I Extension, but because of the Covid 19 pandemic, it was dropped from their care. The previous fall the History Museum had installed some permanent signage about the museum and a special sign specifically about the Heritage Garden. My friend and I looked at each other and said we had to do something about it. I contacted the Recreation Supervisor for the Museum, got permission to work there and a restoration idea was formed.

In late July just the two of us started digging out massive quantities of thistle, goldenrod, and other assorted weeds that were well over 6 ft. tall. We convinced several other garden club members to help and a new club project was formed. An area approximately 20 ft. x 30 ft. was cleared within the larger fenced garden. Since it was already so late in the season, we felt that this was adequate. Donated vegetables were finally planted on August 6th. Five club members participated with the ground preparation, planting, weeding and bi-weekly watering of the garden. Approximately 28 volunteer hours were spent over the four months that this garden was tended. The Museum's first public outdoor event for 2021 was held on September 18th and we were able to show attendees that the historic garden was finally being cared for again.

No expenses were involved to complete this project. All plants were grown from seed and were donated. We had four types of tomatoes, three kinds of peppers, zucchini and eggplant. Not all plants produced fruits. Existing supports and tomato cages were utilized. Our crop, although late and very small, yielded 30 lbs. and was donated to a local food pantry.

This fall it is our intention to finish clearing the rest of the garden area of extensive weeds. In the spring of 2022, we will plant vegetables like lettuce, radishes, beets, cabbage, carrots, beans, eggplant, tomatoes, onions, zucchini, herbs and winter squash. The vegetables harvested will then be donated to a local food pantry. As a new venture for the club, we expect to have more participation in the preparation and maintenance of this garden in 2022.





Garden Sign – July 29, 2021



Garden Entrance – July 29, 2021



We had weeds taller than us!



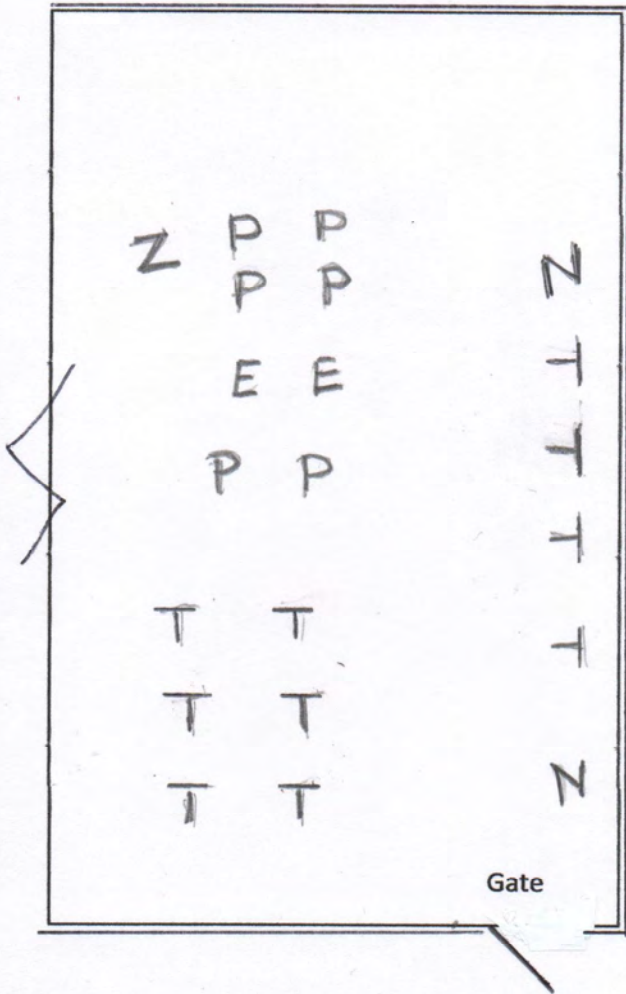
After 3 hours of weeding



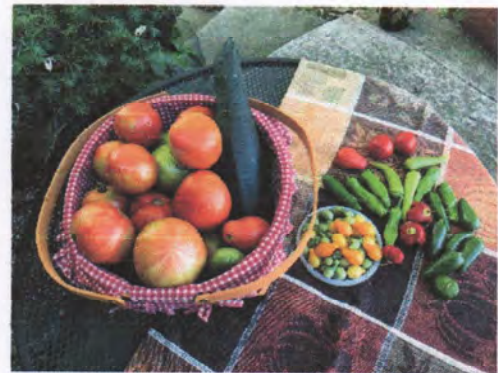
Planting Day - August 6, 2021

Heritage Garden Landscape Plan

Approx. Size 20 ft. x 30 ft.



E	Eggplant
P	Peppers
T	Tomatoes
Z	Zucchini



Volunteers - L to R
June V., Dave W., Debbie W., Julie I., Barbara G.