

- Committee(s): Alton Village Square
- Community Gardens
 - Butterflyway

Alton Village Community Gardens

Background

The existing raised bed planters in the Alton Village Square were built in 2014. They have been operated and maintained as community gardens by volunteers and the vegetables shared with village residents.

In 2022, one of the raised beds was transformed into a native pollinator garden (Butterflyway). The plants were donated by a local business and maintained by volunteers. A hand carved birdhouse was also donated by a resident to the square. The water feature was put into operation and maintained by volunteers until October, when it was winterized. The Heritage Caledon Bicentennial plaque and cornerstone was installed by the Town of Caledon, and signage for the square has been drafted. The Alton Village Butterflyway Facebook Page was created for communication and education and is maintained by a volunteer. Plans were developed for expansion of the community gardens and the Town of Caledon Climate Action Plan was applied for by AVA in October 2022.

Community gardens benefit communities in many ways. The [Waterloo Region Community Garden Network Website](#) lists the following: Community gardens build welcoming, safer communities, improve the look of neighbourhoods, reduce pollution by sequestering carbon and reducing the shipping of food over long distances, support pollinator habitats that are necessary for community well-being, reduce food insecurity, connect people to nature, educate people on where food comes from and provide opportunity for people, especially in urban spaces, to engage with their food system, and provide an inclusive

meeting area where people of all ages and cultural backgrounds can come together to share experiences and knowledge.

OUR Mission:

To build, maintain and promote a network of community gardens, starting with the Alton Village Square, that will meet the purposes of the Alton Village Association (AVA) “To work collectively to protect and enhance the quality of life, the environment and the character of the community of Alton, its residents and businesses” and to support projects within the community that address climate change in Caledon and are in line with the targets and objectives of the [Resilient Caledon Climate Change Action Plan](#).

Goals and Objectives:

2022/2023

1. Develop a plan to expand community gardens in the Alton Village Square; an inviting and creative landscape of connected community garden patches for residents and visitors to enjoy and learn from
2. Seek out funding to support the expansion of community gardens in the Alton Village Square, educational materials and signage
3. Develop and print an educational booklet as a tool for learning about the gardens in the Alton Village Square as well as a reference and guide to help families start and maintain their own native plant and vegetable gardens
4. Promote and support the establishment of gardens in residential yards through information sharing and education; Facebook (AVA and Alton Village Butterflyway), AVA website, emails to interested residents, educational booklet, community events and communicating with visitors to the gardens

-
5. Encourage businesses and institutions to add native plants and food gardens to their properties through similar channels and direct outreach to businesses
 6. Connect with other communities and organizations for support and knowledge sharing

Future and on-going plans

1. Continue to maintain community gardens in the Alton Village Square
2. Continue outreach and advocacy efforts to support local residents and businesses that wish to include native plantings and vegetable gardens in their landscapes and provide a hub for information sharing among individuals and businesses planting native species
3. Advocate for pollinator friendly practices at local and regional levels
4. Host educational and community garden events, plant and seed giveaways and sales to support efforts to increase the number of native plant and food gardens in Alton. Example: Presentation by CVC on Native Plants for Pollinators

References:

Resilient Caledon Community Climate Change Action Plan 2021:

https://www.caledon.ca/en/news/resources/Community-Climate-Change-Action-Plan_2021.pdf

WRCGN - Waterloo Region Community Garden Network, Benefits of Community Gardens:

<https://sites.google.com/view/community-gardens-ca/gardens/benefits-of-community-gardens?authuser=0>

The value in community gardens: A return on investment analysis

<https://canadianfoodstudies.uwaterloo.ca>

[Youtube presentation \(55 minutes\): Stanford Contemplation by Design Summit](#), The Well-gardened Mind: The Restorative Power of Nature with Sue Stuart-Smith

Alton Village Square Community Gardens 2022



“Il faut cultiver notre jardin” means accepting that life has to be nourished and that we do that best through shaping our own lives, our communities, and the environments we inhabit. ~ [Sue Stuart-Smith](#), *The Well-Gardened Mind, The Restorative Power of Nature*, Pg. 287.