

ANPC Grant Report for Sakaw Gardens

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Project Goals

This project proposed to create a community garden in the Sakaw neighbourhood.

Once the first two phases are complete, the Sakaw Gardens project will have two main areas that will function together to create a cohesive garden space for the community to enjoy. The first component is the vegetable garden plots that are now available to community members to rent each year. The second component, which began in 2021 will be the communal garden and activity area which will contain fruit trees and shrubs that both the renters and the community at large can use. The activity area and communal garden will focus on plant, tree and shrub species that are native to Alberta.

The orchard and activity area will be multi use. It will include fruit shrubs and trees that will be available to the entire community. Our goal was to also incorporate native trees and shrubs to this area for community beautification purposes, as the site is currently a grass field and has very little ecological diversity. We plan for a seating area in this space, along with a dry pond that will catch excess rainwater from a rain roof that will be constructed as part of phase 2 of the project. Going forward, we also plan for a gazebo and shade trees as part of the activity area. This area will be used for community and educational events that bring together gardeners and community members of all ages.

Methods

Phase 1 of the garden project was completed in the 2021 gardening season and was coordinated by a volunteer committee operating as a subcommittee of Millhurst Community League. Construction began on May 28th, 2021 and gardeners were able to begin planting produce beginning just 8 days later. Phase 1 included garden plots (including those for food bank and community use), mulched pathways, water tank installation, as well as the orchard area and native plants/shrubs. The first task (garden plots) was completed in approximately 1 week, but the work of laying tree mulch between garden plots, construction of compost bins, and other required tasks continued throughout the summer and into the fall.

On July 11th, a skidsteer operator cleared the orchard and shrub area to prepare for planting. On July 15th, members of the community garden gathered with a local church youth group to spend an evening digging holes, planting trees/shrubs, and laying mulch in this area. The new trees continued to be watered throughout the rest of the summer months.

Initial Project Outcomes

Community participation has been amazing, especially at the beginning because we were in a hurry to get the plots constructed so that gardeners could get their plants in. Many members of the community (both garden members and others) showed up to help build boxes, tilling and leveling the site, laying mulch, filling boxes, and planting trees. Sakaw Boys and Girls Club and the youth group from a local church also came to help with both filling boxes and dumping mulch.

The garden has been incredibly positive for the community. We observe people walking through the garden, just looking at things and enjoying the surroundings. People are harvesting from the community “sharing” spaces we have set up. We have also made several donations of food within our community, to Wings of Providence Women’s Shelter, the nearby Hope City Church and to the food bank.

We have been able to hold several events at the garden. A 12 workshop series that began in the spring included several in person sessions at the garden itself. The Community Garden Bike Tour in July was a success. We have hosted two shows in August by the Little Birds, a local youth educational jazz program associated with the Yardbird Suite. In addition, we had an evening of mandala rock painting that was attended by 35 people. A “Stone Soup” event was held in September, and 11 large bags of soup were donated to Wings of Providence shelter. Additionally, Community League Fun Day was held at the site on September 18th (it is usually in another neighbourhood within our community). The garden has become quite a hub of activity for Sakaw.

Plot Dimension Information (to date)

10’x15’ beds (15)

10’x10’ beds (9)

4’x8’ beds (9)

15’x25’ Food bank (1)

25’x25’ School Garden (1)

5’x30’ Sharing Gardens (2)

50’x100’ Orchard and Activity Area

Number of Gardeners: 35

Number of Community Events: 9

Use of ANPC Funds

The grant from ANPC was used directly for the purchase of native plants and shrubs that were installed at the garden site in the activity area in July 2021. Please see attached receipts for a breakdown of the plants that were purchased with these funds.

Native Plant List

Saskatoons (8)

Currants (14)

Raspberry (10)

Strawberry (15)

Gooseberry (4)

Perennials

- Alexanders

- Goldenrod

- Blazingstar

- Avens

- Aster

- Bergamot

- Meadow Arnica

- Smooth Fleabane

- Blanketflower

