

GARDEN NEWSLETTER

November 2021

Hello Green & Gold Community Garden Supporters

Thank you for helping to make our 13th year such a success – despite the second summer of pandemic restrictions!

This was our first season of gardening without our dear friend and garden manager, Shirley Ross. Those of us who knew Shirley will always feel her presence at the Garden. She would have been so pleased with what the amazing volunteers accomplished this year and touched by the tremendous support of our Garden customers.



Shirley in the greenhouse (photo by Richard Siemens)

Funds raised

From April 1 to November 1, 2021 we raised an incredible \$30,694.45 from produce sales, and \$2,199 from craft sales.

All of these funds are sent to the Tubahumize Association in quarterly installments through the University of Alberta's accounting system.

Tubahumize provides us with detailed financial reports on how the funds were spent, for example, on the salaries for the social workers, counsellors,



and sewing teacher, as well as building costs, sewing supplies, and daily lunches for the students.

The Garden

What a year - without Shirley Ross and her kind steady hand to guide us through the rapidly changing seasonal tasks required for a successful market garden. We did it though – not without a few bumps and bruises, but we did it. The 2021 growing season was a great success, and we're certain Shirley would be proud of us!

We planted a lot of vegetables this year, more than we have in recent years, perhaps hoping the number of attempts would make up for our lack of experience, kind of a shotgun approach. Well, thanks to the hard-working volunteers, an abundance of warm sunny weather, and access to a massive irrigation system, nearly every one of our optimistically planted seeds thrived, giving us an incredible abundance of produce. The sorting crew will have traces of tomatoes passing through their dreams for a while to come!

A few numbers for perspective: We grew 2,420 linear feet of potatoes, 1,320 linear feet of beets, 1,540 linear feet of carrots, 500 linear feet of pumpkins and winter squash, 440 linear feet of peas, 385 linear feet of beans, 450 tomato plants, and so much more.

With the on-call help of Mojo Jojo Pickles, who processed our excess produce, we composted very

few of our precious vegetables. Thanks to our dedicated sales team and loyal customers, we sold every bit of produce we grew and every jar of the preserves Mojo processed for us, making 2021 a successful season in terms of production as well as funds raised for Tubahumurize.

The last few years have presented some pretty challenging growing conditions - 2019 and 2020 were very wet and cold. While our nutrient rich clay/silt soil is great for growing vegetables, it doesn't drain well and those wet years created a lot of problems in the garden. The 2021 season was the opposite, hot, hot with very little rain, necessitating an inordinate amount of irrigation, an amount of water that may not be available during prolonged droughts. These sort of static growing conditions, where it's wet, wet, or dry, dry have encouraged us to experiment with different ways of doing things.

In an attempt to adapt to the aforementioned conditions as well as reduce our labor inputs, and minimize our reliance on tillage, we trialed a new-to-us cropping system. This new system is built around the concept of permanent planting areas and permanent walking areas. We divided a 55' X 55' plot into 12 permanent 30" planting areas with 24" walking paths between them. The theory being that because the beds are permanent one can amend them very accurately, allowing for more densely planted crops. With more area covered in crop, the leaves of most plants will touch and shade the soil, conserving moisture, suppressing weeds and reducing erosion. The size of the beds allows people to work in the garden without walking on future or present planting areas, reducing compaction, reducing the need to till, and enhancing complex soil life. The test plot was a great success, encouraging us to transition more of the garden to this system for 2022.

With one season under our belt without Shirley, we're now confident we can do it. It's wonderful to know that Shirley's legacy will live on.



Orchard

Overall, it was a good year for the orchard. Although the heat dome affected our grafts (all fried except one - which went dormant in the heat). We had a great crop of haskaps, Saskatoons and even apricots! Our apples were tasty but smaller than previous years. Our elderberries produced over 50 lbs of valuable berries, some of which Mojo Jojo converted to popular elderberry syrup. Unfortunately, we had no Evans cherries this year due to weather and disease issues.

Additions and Subtractions: We have added five new fruit trees in the past three years including a Goodland Apple tree donated by Edith. We added new haskaps from the later producing large-berried Boreal group: Boreal Beast and Blizzard. Dave donated the raspberry variety "Mammoth". We discovered a delicious "new" red raspberry in the back of the orchard which may be a wild seeded variety. We plan to move it to a sunnier area and increase its progeny. The terminally diseased or unproductive apple and cherry trees were removed to allow space and light for the others. We lost most of our original everbearing strawberry plants due to freezing but were able to replace them

thanks to the kind donation of a volunteer. The strawberry patch was moved to a better location and will have three 50 ft rows of plants. Elderberry plantings will increase next year to provide low hedgerow shelter in the vegetable patch.

Problem organisms: Voles continue to be a problem in the orchard and are capable of killing an entire fruit tree or bush as they nest and strip the roots. Fortunately our intrepid volunteer pest control team of Ron and hunting cat Rogue continue to come to the rescue. The official count for three years: 752 (80% voles and 20% mice)!

We look forward to a Bright Future in the orchard!

Flowers

In the past few years, Green and Gold Garden customers have shown a growing interest in purchasing locally grown, freshly picked flowers. During the pandemic, more than ever, we have come to appreciate the power of a beautiful bouquet to provide joy, hope and comfort. This summer we produced hundreds of mixed bouquets, posies and dried arrangements. We were touched and inspired by the many stories behind the purchases of flowers.

This year, drawing on the experience and advice of commercial flower growers, we decided to experiment with a high intensity planting approach. Rows were replaced with 4 by 10 feet beds separated by narrow pathways. Each bed was then planted with a single variety in a densely spaced grid pattern. We noticed many benefits to using this method, and despite challenging drought conditions, it was thrilling to see an abundant production of blooms over the entire growing season. It is a work in progress and there is lots to learn!

Most long-stemmed annual varieties suitable for cutting are not available at local nurseries, so nearly all were either sown directly, or started indoors in early spring to get a jump on the season. We aimed to select flowers known to be reliable prolific bloomers, pest resistant and drought tolerant. In addition, a few “experimental” varieties were grown for fun. Some of this year’s favourites included Cosmos “Dazzler” and “Seashell”, False Queen Anne’s Lace (loved by pollinators), Calendula “Zeolights”, Zinnia “Raspberry Sorbet” and “Envy”, and the awesome “Teddy Bear” Sunflower.



Volunteers

Our volunteers put in more hours than ever this year – over 3,200 hours in total. As last year, we had two Tuesday shifts (morning and evening), a Thursday morning shift, and the busy Saturday shift. Most shifts had from 12 to 18 volunteers, with about 25 volunteers on Saturdays.

Thank you to all our volunteers – we could not have made the Garden what it is without you!!

Mojo Jojo Pickles

We are so grateful to Johwanna, at [Mojo Jojo Pickles](#) for her continuing support for the Garden. For many years now Johwanna has used Garden fruits and vegetables in many of her products. This year she also prepared pickled beans, tomato paste, and elderberry syrup for us to sell at the Garden. Processing at the peak harvest time ensures great products and avoids waste of our more plentiful vegetables.

News from Tubahumurize

All of the funds raised through sales of the Green & Gold Community Garden produce are sent via the University of Alberta's financial system to the Tubahumurize Association for women in Rwanda. Tubahumurize provides trauma counselling for women victims of violence, vocational training through their Sewing and Embroidery School, a sewing co-operative that provides employment for 25 women, and interest-free micro-credit loans for women starting small businesses.



2021 graduating class of Tubahumurize sewing students

In addition, due to COVID-related job losses and associated hardships this year, Tubahumurize provided food and financial support to 148 families.

Despite the pandemic, 18 young women were able to complete the sewing training program in 2021. A new class of students will start the program in January 2022.

Charitable donations to Tubahumurize

If would you like to donate to further the work of Tubahumurize cheques (payable to the University of Alberta) can be mailed to:

D. Topinka, Financial Administrator
ALES, University of Alberta
F83 Agri-Food Discovery Place
6020 - 118 St NW
Edmonton AB T6G 2E1

Please note that, unfortunately, we cannot give tax receipts for these donations.

Safe Haven women's shelter in Rwanda

For many years, Jeanne Mwiliriza, the founder and coordinator of Tubahumurize, has been working to establish Rwanda's first shelter for women and children who have been victims of domestic violence. Funds provided by the Green & Gold Community Garden, a Tubahumurize fundraising campaign, and support from the German Embassy in Rwanda, have finally made the shelter possible and it will open in 2022.



Garden Seeds Fundraiser

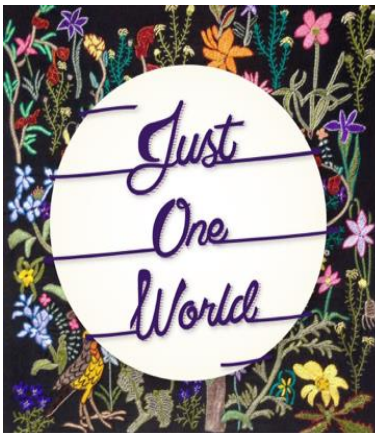
In spring of 2021 we participated in West Coast Seeds' seed sale fundraiser. It was wildly successful and gave us much needed funds for garden supplies and equipment. Thank you to everyone who supported the Garden by ordering seeds and to

West Coast Seeds for their ongoing support to the Garden.

We'll email out an announcement in early 2022 if we are selected to participate in the fundraiser this spring.

Just One World craft sale

Tubahumurize handicrafts will be available at the **Just One World craft sale, in Edmonton, on Saturday, November 27.**



SAT, NOV 27, 2021
9:30am-5:30pm

   justoneworldmarket.com

Old Strathcona
Performing Arts Centre
8426 Gateway Boulevard

Face mask and proof of vaccination
are required upon entry

Special thanks to our 2021 donors

Many thanks to the donors who gave us seeds, gardening supplies, grant funding, and other support this year - and to our generous customers who often top up their produce purchases with further donations to Tubahumurize.

- Anonymous donors (who generously covered the purchase of silage tarp & garden supplies this summer), & garden volunteers Bill, Dave, Edith & Pat who kindly donated further plants & supplies
- Arbor Man Tree Care
- Edmonton Organic Growers Guild
- Edmonton Potato Growers
- Gov't of Canada. New Horizons for Seniors
- Mojo Jojo Pickles
- Mr. Fothergill's Seeds
- Salisbury/Enjoy Centre
- TD Friends of the Environment Foundation
- 20/20 Seed Labs Inc.
- U. of Alberta Botanic Garden Greenhouse
- West Coast Seeds.

Want to volunteer with us?

We always need more help at the Garden and with non-gardening tasks (such as handicraft sales). No gardening experience is needed. If you would like to volunteer next year please e-mail us.

Garden email: gggarden@ualberta.ca

Website: www.greengoldgarden.com