

# Broadview Heights community garden grows to near capacity

by Wendy Turrell

Broadview Heights' Greene Acres Community Garden began in the spring of 2013 and is already near plot capacity.

The successful experiment in communal organic gardening is a joint effort of the Chippewa Garden Club, the city of Broadview Heights and Air Products Control. Air Products Control rents the garden land to Greene Acres for \$1 a year.

Greene Acres Community Garden is a nonprofit. Although the garden club, the city and Air Products Control were instrumental in getting it off the ground, they are only partners. They play no role in maintaining the garden, explained Greene Acres President John Hernandis.

"A representative of each is on the board of trustees, so they play a governing role," said Hernandis. "The city also provides services to the garden in the form of occasional deliveries and some equipment. In our two years of existence, we have enjoyed tremendous support from the community."

Greene Acres doubled the number of plots it offered in 2014, and added a dozen more plots this year. That brings the total to a near capacity of 100 plots. As of the middle of March, five of the 12 new plots had already been reserved. Satisfied gardeners have renewed the remaining 88.

Hernandis believes the garden's popularity is due to the increased desire many people have to feed their families healthy organic food, frustration over deer eating backyard gardens and homeowners' associations that restrict vegetable gardening.

Gardening expertise is not necessary as, "we have gardeners with all levels of experience from newbies to longtime gardeners," he said. "One of our members is a Master Gardener with the Ohio State Extension Service. She gives talks and demonstrations throughout the year."

There are two simple rules that govern plot leasing. Only organic material may be used in the beds. That includes fertilizers, compost and pest control products. The other is a prohibition on planting tall plants, like corn or sunflowers, as they block the sun.

Excited about a new educational garden Hernandis said, "This will be a section of the garden to be used exclusively to plant new and different vegetables; a place for children to plant their own flower or

vegetable and watch it grow; and a teaching environment for demonstrations and talks."

Although the garden opened for the season in mid-March, it is up to each gardener to determine when they want to begin planting. Hernandis emphasized there were many steps that come before planting, like digging and turning over the soil and adding organic amendments such as humus, compost or peat moss.

"We kind of follow the last frost date predictions, around April 30 in our area, to guide our planting schedule. First crops planted are cold, hardy types, like lettuce, spinach, chard, beans, etc. Tomatoes and peppers are not planted until the end of May," he said.

Any Broadview Heights citizen, em-



*Greene Acres is the place for community vegetable gardens.*

ployee of a Broadview Heights business or Chippewa Garden Club member can rent a plot. Each plot is a raised bed of 4 feet by 10 feet and is \$30 for the season. Early renters can obtain two plots for \$50 for the season.

More information visit [greeneacres.org](http://greeneacres.org). A link is also available on the city website. ∞



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