Community Garden

An East Haddam municipal project located at 218 Mt. Parnassus Road.

The East Haddam Community Garden is located in a 4 Acre plot surrounded by a deer fence. It is part of the Harris lot, a municipal property that used to be farmland, adjoining it is the Harris Reserve, one of the many Reserves owned by the town.

The Community Garden has been operating since 2014. Anyone can rent a plot on a first come first serve basis and enjoy the quiet and beauty on top of Mount Parnassus. We are not a town that lacks gardening opportunities. Most people have a garden in their yard even if they rent. So, the community garden is an extension into the community. For example, I am one of the users of the garden. When I moved to East Haddam we moved to a wooded lot where I could not garden, When I understood that East Haddam had a community garden with generous plots I was simply delighted. It is a place of meeting for the gardeners. For instance one of the gardeners is from Eastern Europe and works at the post office and enjoys the open space and calm and conversation. Political conversations between gardeners who are curious about other opinions can happen in this neutral space. Some people donate much of their produce to the food bank or cultivates milk weed for Monarchs. Others enjoy the amazing flora and fauna, the hawks, the Flicker that made a nest among the beds, The water tank with long hoses that was donated and was painted by a resident volunteer. The many people who walk on the perimeter with their dogs and children on the way to the Harris Reserve and enjoy the garden and the conversations. It is one of the most peaceful and vibrant places in town.

This year, 2022, 28 plots were leased, including 2 by the high school and 2 by the town Conservation Commission for growing native plants for our Pollinator Garden. There are quite a few people who have been gardening there for years, usually starting with one plot and extending to two or three, while others stay for a year as the conditions are rugged. The number of people renting plots is growing

The community garden's history and availability of plots is published on the town site

https://www.easthaddam.org/center-for-community-agriculture

Plots are handed out on a first come basis. There are enough plots for everyone.

The garden is surrounded by a deer fence that was payed by a grant.

It is also advertised by signage on the fence letting people know of its purpose and who to call in order to rent a plot. There is a FB page East Haddam Community Garden that informs the community of the going on in the garden. And the First Selectwoman also mentioned availability of plots on her facebook page

The garden is sustainable for the town through the $50 fee per plot which covers the hiring of someone to rototill the plots at the beginning of the season for any who wish it ($600 this year), A portopotty ($85 a month) the administrative costs of the first selectman's office, the mowing of the paths throughout the season by the public works crew and the. water for the tanker that is filled by the fire department with water from the reservoir. Mulch is available from trees that had to be cut down in the town and some years the town brings in top soil.

All gardening is strictly organic which is stipulated in the contract each gardener signs with the town. There is an educational aspect to the garden as one can observe the many different ways organic gardening can be done.

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