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Conservation Connection:  
Weston Community Gardens

*By George Bates, Conservation Commission Member*

The Community Gardens are a very special place in Weston. With plenty of sunshine and bluebirds flying around it is a natural environment for organic gardening. Besides growing the traditional summer vegetables (tomatoes, zucchini, beans, lettuce, onions, potatoes, kale, beets, etc.), gardeners plant herbs, flowers and even hops plants.

The gardeners range from the very young to Merriam Village residents in their 80s. There are easy-going, spontaneous social interactions that nurture both fun and learning, forming a social network with a sense of camaraderie. Group activities include use of the picnic tables in the center of the Gardens, a cleanup day at the end of April, and a potluck picnic at harvest time.



In 1974 the Community Gardens were created by the Youth Commission under the direction of William H. McElwain. They were an outgrowth of the Green Power Farm project which produced fresh vegetables with the help of Weston youth for distribution in Roxbury and to Weston residents at very reasonable prices. Originally the vegetables were grown on land owned by Weston College. Later this land was acquired by the Town of Weston and placed under the custody of the Conservation Commission. This area is known today as the Green Power Farm and is located on the east side of Merriam Street.

In 1974 a portion of this site, consisting of about two acres, was set aside by Bill McElwain for Weston families who wanted to grow their own vegetables. Fourteen families took advantage of this opportunity. The following year 50 families were involved and approximately the same number of families has gardened there until the present time. Responsibility for the Community Gardens was transferred to the Conservation Commission in 1984.

At present there are 60 plots ranging from 15 x 30 feet to 30 x 30 feet. It came to the attention of the Conservation Commission in 2014 that there was a waiting list of families desiring to have a plot. Consequently, the Conservation Commission expanded the Community Gardens by adding 11 small plots and 2 large ones. Trees have been cut down and removed. Stumps have been grubbed. The new section has been plowed and harrowed. The irrigation system has been expanded and fences will soon be erected. In addition, the access roads have been improved and many trees have been removed around the perimeter of the Gardens to provide more sunlight.

Anyone interested in obtaining a garden plot should contact Freddie Wiss, Community Garden Volunteer Coordinator at [weston.community.gardens@gmail.com](mailto:weston.community.gardens@gmail.com).