

TOWN OF HUNTINGTON

ROBERT M. KUBECKA MEMORIAL ORGANIC GARDEN

BACKGROUND

The Town Board authorized the purchase of fifteen acres of land from the Hazeltine Corporation on January 12, 1971. In May of the same year a deed was signed and the land was conveyed to the Town.



Although no records can be found officially mandating the use of the site by the summer of 1972 the Community Garden Program was initiated with approximately 120 families actively gardening at the site. In 1987 a local law was adopted officially establishing the Community Organic Garden Program. Membership has grown over the years and today over 350 families garden at the site.

In 1972 the Town charged \$3.00 for residents and senior citizens were given a plot free of charge. Fees have increased over time and the current annual fee is \$25.00 for residents and \$15.00 for residents over the age of sixty-two.

In 1975 Readers Digest stated that Huntington had one of the first successful town gardening programs in the country.

The philosophy of the Community Organic Garden Program is that all gardeners use their assigned 20' X 30' garden plots to grow vegetables, flowers, shrubs, or ornamental grasses without the use of pesticides, herbicides, fungicides and chemical fertilizers. To further this philosophy the Town provides composted horse manure and wood chips to the gardeners to use as natural, organic soil amendments and weed barriers.

A landscaped entranceway on Dunlop Road provides the only access to this secluded, environmental haven. A gravel access road runs through the property, dividing the 15-acre site into three areas for gardening. In addition to these three gardening locations the site contains several vernal ponds, densely covered with oak and maple trees. These areas provide natural habitats for a wide variety of wildlife.

GARDEN MANAGEMENT

The garden is managed by two different Departments in the Town of Huntington. The Department of Environmental Waste Management handles the assignment of garden plots and the annual renewals of current gardeners. The Department of General Services handles all maintenance issues with Garden.

PROFILE OF GARDEN MEMBERS

The general makeup of gardeners participating in the Community Organic Garden Program is a cross section of the entire Town's residents. Senior Citizens can be seen from sun up till mid-morning, avoiding the mid-day sun, working and then relaxing under the trees sharing coffee and tea and their many years of gardening and life experience. On weekends and during the week in the evenings, younger gardeners appear, bring the same enthusiasm to the garden as the seniors. Members view the garden as a community asset, providing attractive open space, as well as educational, recreational and nutritional benefits.

