

The Community Garden at the Center of the City Commons in 2022

**November 6, 2018, Ann Arbor
Citizens voted 53.11% to 46.89%
to pass Proposal A:**

**“The City-owned public land bounded
by Fifth Ave, William, Division,
and Liberty Streets be retained in
public ownership, in perpetuity,
and developed as an
*urban park and civic center
commons.*”**

Overhead view: Civic Center Commons >



Credits: Jeff Crockett, Robert Black and the Center of the City Commons Green Team

The Community Garden Timeline

2010: The **Community Commons Organizing Committee** (A2C2) was formed.

2011: The **Library Green Conservancy** was formed to promote a park on the Library Lot.

2012: An “**Imagine a Park**” open program was held with exhibits and citizen engagement.

2018: **Proposition A** was passed calling for an Urban Park and Civic Center.

2019: The City Council appointed a **Center of the City Task Force**.

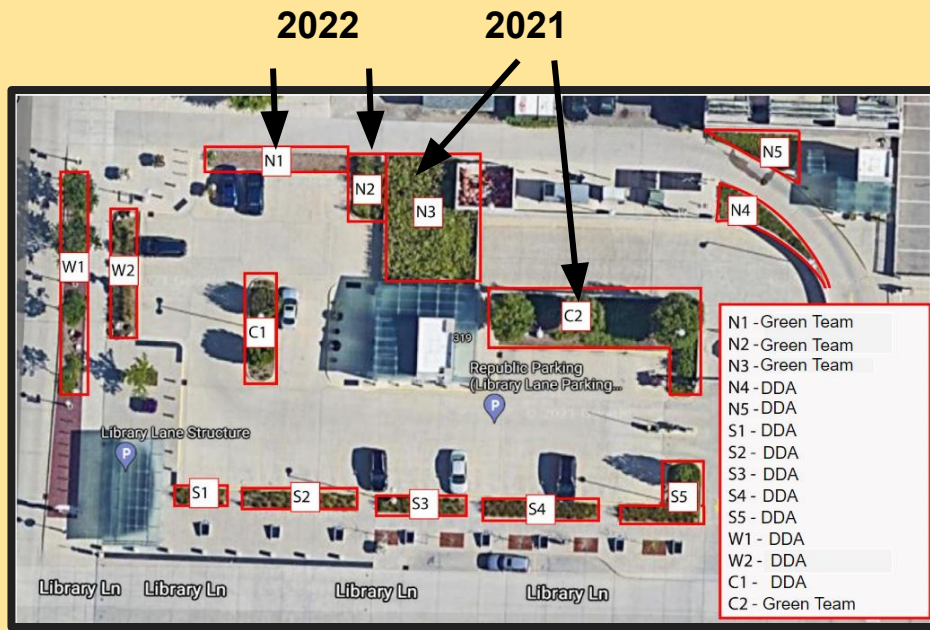
2020: In February, the City Task Force made its recommendations and the **Community Commons Initiating Committee** was formed. In October, 2020, the **Council of the Commons** was formed whose membership was determined by City Council.

2021: **The Garden Committee** now known as **The Center of the City Green Team** was formed as a group within the Initiating Committee.

2022: **The Green Team** added two plots for a total of four community gardens, shifted its focus to adding native plants to attract pollinators, and welcomed new volunteers.

The Community Garden Project and **The Green Team**

On March 12, 2021, **The Green Team** started to plan for a community garden on plots of land designated as N3 and C2. **Alan and Odile Hugonot Haber, Chad Manfreda, Bonnie Pearce, Rita Mitchell, & Joet Reoma** were pivotal in the early stages. Later last year, **Jeff & Christine Crockett, Shari Thompson, Ilene Tyler, and Marsha Benz** joined the team. This year we are pleased to add new members **Elizabeth Smith, Richard Corson and Brooks Curtis**. In addition, **Robert Black, Amy Roe and Robert Grese** serve in strategic roles. We are committed to creating a community garden at the Center of the City for sustainability, civic engagement, recreation, and education.



The Center of the City Green Team of 2022

Garden Committee Leadership: Elizabeth Smith (N1 and N2), Odile Hugonot Haber (N3), Rita Mitchell (C2), Jeff Crockett (Coordinator), Joet Reoma (Project Grow)

Volunteers: Joet Reoma, Shari Thompson, Ilene Tyler, Christine Crockett, Anne Bannister, Marsha Benz, Chad Monfreda, Alan Haber, Brooks Curtis, Richard Corson, Francoise Damres

Credits: Amy Roe (Web site), Robert Black (Consultation), Grafaktri: W.A.P John & Julie Ritter (Signage), Geoffrey Henny (Zoom Management), Jeff Watson (DDA), Ali Ramlawi (Jerusalem Garden), Scott Spooner (Parks & Rec), Robert Grese (Wild Ones)

Community Partnerships



The Green Team at Project Grow's 50 Year Anniversary L to R: Rita Mitchell, Christine Crockett, Elizabeth Smith and Joet Reoma (Project Grow Board Member). Joet has provided valuable guidance in plant selection and composting.



Wild Ones member Marta Minaldi (center) with Shari Thompson (left) and Rita Mitchell (right) planting native plants in area C2. Robert Grese, President of Wild Ones, helped design C2 and has provided valuable information about signage.

Signage



Left and Center, the signs are from the organizations, Wild Flower Association of Michigan and Wild Ones. These signs show that native plants are the garden's focus.

Top, made and donated by W.A.P John and Julie Ritter, owners of Grafaktril

March 2022- Preparation



Jeff Crockett sprouted these sunflower seedlings from seeds taken from last years sunflowers. They were harvested last fall and dried. Over 20 sunflowers grew to full height from seedlings and from seeds left in the ground over the winter. The gardens have become a demonstration site for sustainability.

2022 Spring Planning Meeting



Left to Right, Matt Altruda, Frank Wilhelme, Rita Mitchell, Christine Crockett, Elizabeth Smith, Caitlin Olmsted Phillips, Odile Hugonot Haber and Alan Haber. Taking the picture - Jeff Crockett

Irrigation

Over the winter, the existing sprinkler system broke down and, due to the expense, was not repaired. In its place, we relied on access to the spigot at Jerusalem Garden through the good graces of proprietor Ali Ramlawi. But, that proved to be time consuming as we considered expanding the number of volunteer garden areas from 2 to 4. The solution came with the DDA installation of spigot in a central convenient location. Thank you DDA!



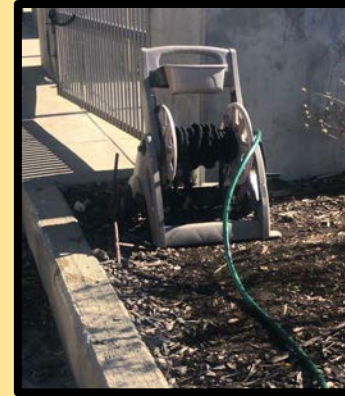
L to R, Ali Ramlawi, Alan Haber, Odile Hugonot Haber



The hose from the Jerusalem garden spigot to our hose reel.



The hose attached to the DDA spigot.



A hose reel significantly reduced irrigation time.



A second hose reel was added for area C2.

Banner

Designed by Robert Black and Amy Roe

Help Our Community Garden Grow!
Join The Green Team or Donate at
annarborcommunitycommons.org



April 19 Earth Day at the Center of the City City



L to R, Joet Reoma, State Rep Youseff Rahbi, and 2nd Ward Council Member Kathy Griswold



Joet Reoma and Jeff Crockett at the Green Team booth.



Lisa Disch, 1st Ward Council Member and Council of the Commons Committee Member, speaking at Earth Day.

May 2022 - Planting Native Species



Rita Mitchell and Christine Crockett weeding to prepare for planting.



Chad Monfreda inspecting area D3 with his dog

Left, Elizabeth Smith and Marsha Benz working in area D2.



L to R, Joet Reoma, Brooks Curtis, Rita Mitchell, Odile Hugonot Haber and Ilene Tyler planting in area D2.



June 2022- Adding More Native Plants to C2

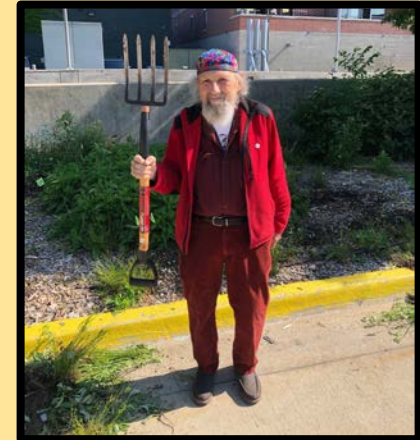


L to R, Shari Thompson, Rita Mitchell, Jeff Crockett, Ilene Tyler and Brooks Curtis

Connecting a series of hoses from the DDA spigot was critical in providing water for the native plants in C2.



To the right, Alan Haber standing ready to turn any invasive species into compost. :-)



Mayor's Green Fair June 10



Joet Reoma with visitors at Green Team booth.

June 2022- Spreading Woodchips



Rita Mitchell helping Joet Reoma unloading woodchips obtained by Joet at the Ann Arbor Compost Center.



L to R, Shari Thompson, Rita Mitchell, Richard Corson and Joet Reoma moving mulch to area D3.

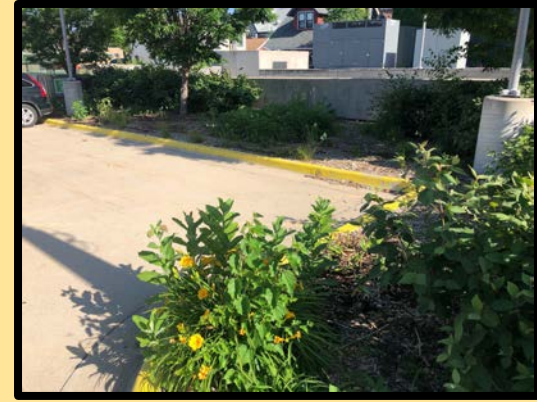


Area N3 in the background teems with colorful new growth. A welcome surprise was the spread of Cosmos from last year's seed. Newly planted native species in the foreground are thriving.

Late June 2022



Richard Corson spreading woodchips in N1.



Native flowers are beginning to bloom in C2

July 2022



Elizabeth Smith, Brooks Curtis, Marsha Benz and Richard Corson help weed.



The result was spectacular!

Poster/Handout

Designed by
Robert Black and Amy Roe
for our booth at the 50th
Anniversary of Project Grow
on August 20, 2022



Ann Arbor Community Commons

CENTER OF THE CITY
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN
BELONGS TO YOU & ME!

Central Park & Civic Center Commons

Liberty Plaza
Commons Green Space
AADL

Be a part of growing the Center of the City!

Join the Green Team
Help our community garden grow!
Learn about local food and indigenous plants!
Visit the website below to participate.

Attend monthly Council of the Commons Meetings
Voice your opinion and ideas.
First Thursdays at 7:00 PM on Zoom.
Visit a2gov.org to find the next meeting.

Host events on the Commons
Schedule your group's events
to engage everyone to participate
in growing the Center of the City.



For more information about the A2C2 Initiating Committee you can visit our website, where you can sign up for updates, donate, and volunteer with the A2C2!

AnnArborCommunityCommons.org

August 2022



The key to the success of the community gardens in 2022 was the daily watering during the hot part of the summer. The irrigation team included Rita Mitchell, Richard Corson, Shari Thompson and Jeff Crockett. Watering all four areas took about 45 minutes thanks to our efficient system.

Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Plots



These areas managed by the DDA near Fifth Avenue include a juniper, a mulberry, a china rose and feather reed grass. This species of grass is planted in all the DDA managed plots.

A list of Plants in N3

Avatar Blue Spruce Holiday tree

Serviceberry

Elderberry tree

New England Aster

Lanced Leaved Coreopsis

(mostly orange and yellow)

Poked Milkweed

Feverfews

White Daisies

Cosmos self seeding

Zinnias

Echinacea Purpura

Gloriosa Daisies

Becky Shasta Daisies

Yellow cornflowers

Black Eye Susan

Blue Vervain

Aster

Salvia Splendens

Catmint Nepheta Racemosa

Lilies

Common Sunflowers

Helianthos Annuus

A Spectacular Color Palette in N3



Spider Flower



Black Eyed Susans



Indian Blanket



New England Aster



Sunflowers



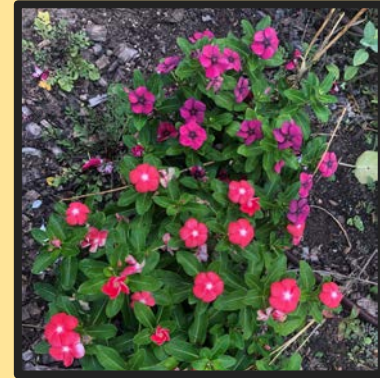
Bee Balm



Zinnias



Cosmos



Madagascar Periwinkle

More Plants in N3!



More Zinnias



Pollinators in Action



A Christmas Tree



Serviceberry



**Wildflower
Mixes**



Moonflowers

List of Plants in Areas N1



Woolly Thyme



**Bluegrass Bella
(American Meadows)**



Dutch White Clover



**Low Work and Water Dwarf Fescue
Grass (American Meadows)**



Chocolate Chip Ajuga



Creeping Thyme

List of Plants in Areas N2

Purple Love Grass

Black Eyed Susan

Lance Leaf Coreopsis

Sky Blue Aster

Side Oats Gama

Wild Petunia

Hairy Beardtongue

Shorts Aster

Little Bluestem

Butterfly Weed

Nodding Wild Onion

Liatris Blazing Star

Prairie Dropseed

Wild Lupine

Ohio Spiderwort



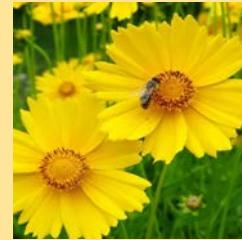
Black Eyed Susan



Purple Lovegrass



Little Bluestem



Coreopsis



Hairy Beardtongue



Spiderwort



Blazing Star



Side Oats Gama



Prairie Dropseed



Wild Petunia

List of Native Plants in Area C2

Wild Geranium

Prairie Dropseed

Black eyed Susan

Spiderwort

Wild Petunia

Alumroot

Nodding Wild Onion

Golden Alexanders

Blue-eyed grass

Purple Coneflower

Butterfly Milkweed

Smooth Penstemon

Bicknell's Sedge

Blue False Indigo

Wild Strawberry

Stiff Goldenrod

Sky Blue Aster

Dense Blazing Star

Blue Vervain

Culver's Root

Lanceleaf Coreopsis

Orange Coneflower

Early Goldenrod

Lavender Hyssop

Sweet Black Eyed Susan

Purple Lovegrass

Flowering Spurge

Ohio Goldenrod

New England Aster

Common Milkweed

Smooth Aster

Calico Aster

Yellow Coneflower

Showy Goldenrod

Rattlesnake Master

Wild Senna

Bee Balm

Ironweed

Prairie Dock

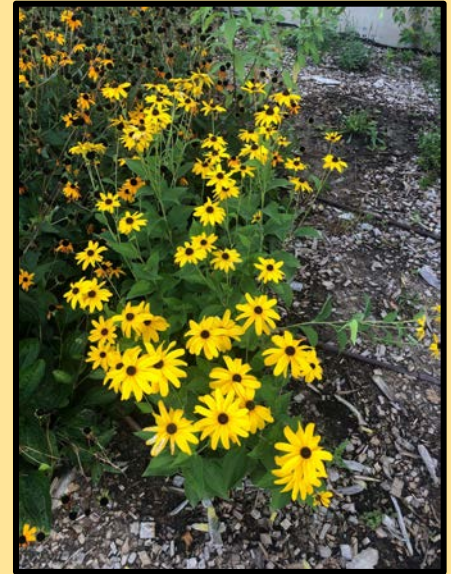
Photos of C2



New England Aster



Amidst the native plants are three Japanese elms, all doing well on top of the parking structure beneath.



Black Eyed Susans

More Photos of C2



Yellow Coneflower



Ironweed



Purple Coneflower

Winterization- October 2 and 9



To the left, a sunflower head next to sunflower stalks that were cut into one foot segments that will be mulched into the garden. To the right, a mulch pile that contains the remains of annuals that were cut back as part of winterization.



Left to Right: Françoise Tamres, Jeff Crockett, Odile Hugonot Haber, Rita Mitchell, Chad Monfreda, Richard Corson and Alan Haber

To 2022 Community Garden Plant Donors, Thank You!

Individuals

Elizabeth Smith
Rita Mitchell
Odile Hugonot Haber
Greg Pratt
Mark Lee
Susan Beecher
Loris Damerow

Marta Manildi
Janet Osborn,
Ginny Weingate
Brooks Curtis
Shari Thompson
Deb Yeary
Cathy Susan

Dorothy Hastings
Sarah Haynes
Carol Gagliardi
Nancy Whitelaw
Bob Hauser
Rachel Shaw
Valerie Malaney

Organization: Tuong Khuu Foundation

Local Nurseries: Margolis Nursery, Abbott Nursery, English
Gardens. Side Oats Farm

**Planning
for 2023!**



We Propose Signage to Educate!



Join the Green Team to help **YOUR** community garden grow!

NATURE IN THE HEART OF THE CITY

"Community volunteers have been working to plant these garden plots with native and near-native plants to provide important food and habitat resources for pollinators and birds. In addition to their habitat value, these plants provide beneficial functions in filtering stormwater runoff and keeping our city cooler. These plants also remind us of the prairies, oak openings and woodlands that are part of our natural heritage here in Ann Arbor and what makes our place on the planet unique."

Robert Grese, UofM Professor Emeritus of Environment and Sustainability



Build Collaborative Community Networks



Create Beautiful Educational Displays

The Ann Arbor Community Commons *Green Team*, in partnership with *Wild Ones* and the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is working to grow and maintain the planter plots that are currently located on the "Library Lot" (see map). We are creating community and learning together about how sustainable practices affect the quality of life in our beautiful Center of the City.



Showcase alternatives to standard turf grass

Be a part of growing the Center of the City!
Volunteer TODAY!



Designed by Robert Black and Amy Roe

And We Think This Site Would Be Perfect for a Mural!



We think this wall would make the perfect spot for a mural.



An example of what public art in this spot could look is this mural done by TreeTown Murals at the Rolling Hills Park in Washtenaw County.

We Also Advocate for Expanding Volunteer Gardens on the Commons



Above, is a garden plot in Kellogg Park in Plymouth managed by a civic organization. Other garden plots are managed by local businesses, non-profits and a variety of organizations. We believe that adopting garden plots on the Commons by local businesses and organizations will only demonstrate community engagement but will also promote the contributors.

We Expect To Reach Out to Other Gardening Organizations



The Michigan Master Gardener Association is an excellent way to network with other gardeners and advance gardening skills. Their website is: <https://www.michiganmastergardener.org/>

Finally, We Will Promote Eco Friendly Events On The Commons





Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful,
committed citizens can change the world;
indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

(Margaret Mead)



**To volunteer and help activate the Commons, sign up at:
<https://annarborcommunitycommons.org/volunteer-today/>**