

Giving Back to the Community



Perrin Smith sorts Sunday donations

One of the core values of Lewes Community Garden is to give back to the local community.

Gardeners are encouraged to donate their excess produce during the growing season. Volunteers collect the donations, sort the produce into “grab and go” vegetables (such as cherry tomatoes) and those vegetables needing more preparation. Then we deliver our produce to [Teach a Person to Fish](#), a



Linn Regulski transports Sunday donations

local home grown non-profit whose volunteers and chefs prepare delicious, nutritious, ready-to-eat meals. These meals along with the “grab & go” produce are delivered to the [Rehoboth Community Resource Center](#) and other local food banks. In 2023 Lewes Community Garden donated over 415 pounds of produce over 18 weeks.

Each year, the garden sponsors a Thanksgiving food drive for local food banks. In 2022 through the generosity of gardeners and volunteers, we donated whole turkeys, canned hams, canned vegetables, boxes of mashed potatoes and macaroni and cheese, along with many oranges and tangelos. In addition, over \$300 in gift cards to local grocery stores were donated. We look forward to continuing this tradition next month.



Judy Eger delivers donations to Brenda Millbourne, Co-founder and Executive Director of West Side New Beginnings

For the second year, the garden conducted a donation drive of snacks, breakfast items and drinks to benefit the [Westside New Beginnings](#) Children’s Summer Enrichment Program in Rehoboth Beach. This program promotes literacy, learning and health by providing wholesome after-school and summer enrichment activities for at-risk, low-income children. The goal of the program is to provide a safe summer place, to widen horizons and to empower the children.

Our Story

In 2016, a few organic gardening enthusiasts began discussing the idea of a community organic vegetable garden in Lewes. After several years of investigating and planning, this visionary group convinced the city of Lewes to lease them a one-acre parcel of land in the Great Marsh Park.

The group recruited volunteers, and after much hard work, the first twenty raised beds were built in June 2019. The garden persevered through the Covid pandemic, built a deer fence around the garden perimeter in 2022 and continued adding garden beds. Last year a 3-year strategic plan was developed to provide the garden with a roadmap into the future.

This year eight additional raised beds were built, and 22 new gardeners were welcomed, bringing our total to 46 gardeners. Each year there is more and more interest in the garden. Currently there is a wait list for prospective gardeners. The strategic plan calls for adding more beds in the future as our organization develops.



Thanks to WRDE for this aerial photo

Ongoing work includes creating a new pollinator garden and managing native species in the area outside the garden fence. Future plans include developing a higher bed for gardeners who have difficulty working at ground level. We are happy to be a part of the [Great Marsh Park Master Plan](#) recently approved by the city of Lewes.

Pollinator Garden 2.0

In 2021, Lewes Community Garden created a small pollinator garden in a temporary fenced area near the front of the property to provide food and habitat for native pollinators. The plants grew very well but it became apparent the area would soon be shaded by the growing sassafras trees. We implemented a plan to expand and move the pollinator garden to a sunnier area while also making it more accessible to gardeners and visitors who want to learn more about pollinators.



The pollinator garden team

Brendan McCabe, Perrin Smith, Kevin Sheeran, Cindy Porter, Patrick Gaffney

and roots have time to get established, so they are ready to “grow” when the weather warms in the spring. The cardboard that was put down in April has now largely disintegrated, making planting easy. During the first year the plants will need consistent moisture to develop roots. In the second year, plants will only need watering through long, hot, and dry periods. Once established, most of the plants will thrive with minimal attention providing a haven for pollinators.

Our Pollinator Garden 2.0 is almost complete. We selected a new, sunnier spot. We placed cardboard in the garden space to get rid of weeds and grass. We added compost and topsoil, planted a cover crop, and built a permanent fence.

In the fall, volunteers will move many of the pollinator plants from the original location and add new native plants. Fall is a good time of year to divide and transplant perennials. There is usually ample rain



Cindy Porter, Master Gardener

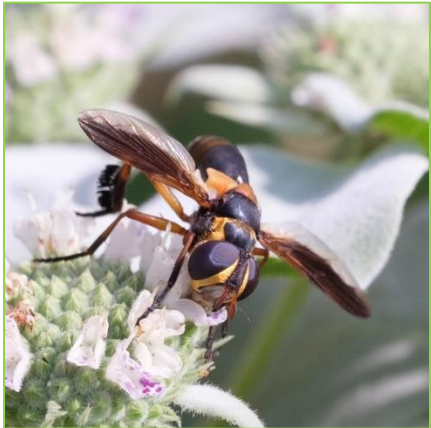
Pollinator Garden 2.0 Cont.



Swallowtail

Increasing areas for pollinator habitat is important. Pollinators have declined significantly largely due to development and the use of pesticides and herbicides. Pollinators are needed for the reproduction of 90% of flowering plants and one third of human food crops. For more information on the importance of pollinators and how to create a pollinator garden see [Pollinator Partnership](#).

According to Porter, the plan is to have plants blooming from spring until fall. In addition to the plants transplanted from the original pollinator garden, perennials such as Purple Coneflower, Butterfly Milkweed, Coreopsis, Moss Phlox, False Indigo, Giant Hyssop and Smooth Oxeye Sunflower will be added. There will also be an area for annuals such as zinnia, marigold, and dill.



Trichopoda Feather Legged Fly

A walking path and signage about the importance of native plants and pollinators will be added. Educational sessions for the public, with guidance from the UDE Master Gardeners, are planned. The new pollinator garden is being built and will be maintained by LCG gardeners and volunteers.



Ammophila Pictipennis

Thanks to a grant from First State Resource Conservation and Development Council obtained by Master Gardener Cindy Porter, the new pollinator garden will be an integral part of the Lewes Community Garden for years to come.



Skipper

Thanks to Patrick Gaffney for the pollinator photos

How Does the Garden Run

Lewes Community Garden was created and built upon the concepts of volunteerism and education. Each month, from March through December, we hold garden meetings to update gardeners and volunteers about upcoming events, share organic practices, identify garden bugs (good and bad) and cover an educational topic of value to gardeners.

These monthly meetings are important as they also provide an opportunity for social interaction and camaraderie. Ideas are exchanged, seeds and plants exchanged, and new friendships forged.

The educational topic at each meeting has been very valuable to and popular with gardeners. Topics have included garden structures, soil testing, using herbs, composting methods, preserving food (drying and canning), fall/winter planting, as well as identifying and managing garden pests.

In addition to the monthly garden meetings, we schedule workdays throughout the year. Gardeners and community volunteers do the mowing, weeding, and trimming around the garden. Tending the compost pile and spreading wood chips are regular tasks.



Amanda Kathryn Pappas - What to do with Herbs



Planting milkweed



Infamous wood chip pile

The spirit of volunteerism is strongly evident in the garden during every garden meeting and workday. It is a core value which has sustained the growth of Lewes Community Garden.

Funding

Since the beginning, Lewes Community Garden has relied on fund-raising efforts and donations to sustain and grow the garden. We have no regular funding source other than a modest bed rental fee paid annually by gardeners. We are completely volunteer run. The costs of maintenance and expansion over the past five years have been paid for thanks to the support of our community from businesses such as Grizzly's Landscape & Supply Services, Dogfish Head, Lee Ann Wilkinson Group, Beebe Healthcare, Sussex County Council and many others.

The largest expenditure for the garden has been \$14,000 for a heavy-duty, eight-foot-high deer fence installed in 2022. Additional beds were added for the 2023 growing season along with the construction of a bulletin board kiosk and a new garden sign.

Individual donations have also been a significant help to the garden. Any donation, large or small, is welcomed by the garden and will be used to pay for materials, tools and equipment in an effort to enable the garden to expand and keep up with the increasing demand for organic gardening.

If you are interested in providing a donation to the garden, please visit the garden website at lewescommunitygarden.org/about/donate.



Thank you for your donations and support!

Lewes Community Gardeners Fund

PO Box 436

Lewes, Delaware 19958 or

[Greater Lewes Foundation LCG Fund](http://GreaterLewesFoundation.org)



Email - LewesCommunityGarden@gmail.com

Website - [Lewes Community Garden – Building a Stronger & Greener Community](http://LewesCommunityGarden.org)