



NC STATE EXTENSION

Master Gardener | Henderson County

**Bountiful Harvest Community Garden
North Carolina Extension-Henderson County Office
2020 Community Foundation Grant Report
February, 2020**

Project Funding

On 11/17/19, a \$7500.00 Community Foundation Grant was awarded to the Bountiful Harvest Community Garden to reduce and help secure the garden from future flooding.

Master Gardener Project Contribution

In 2020, Extension Master Gardeners volunteered 990 BHCG hours at a value of 27.70 per hour, a **\$27,423.00** contribution. The bulk of these hours were dedicated to the Flood Prevention Project funded by the Community Foundation. In addition, BHCG gardeners worked an estimated 200 hours April through July helping build beds and move soil.

Project Plan

Given the size of this renovation, the project was divided into 5 parts. Items one and two were targeted for completion as soon as possible for the start of the growing season.

1. Prep old beds to double stack, prep area and build new beds. Fill all beds with soil.
2. Install metal panels to secure outer beds from flooding, level soil and prep area for new beds in front area of garden. Prep and paint cinder blocks for front wall.
3. Build cinder block wall (dry stack method) at front, paint with design and fill with succulents and perennials to divert water from entering front of garden.
4. Build up soil level in back area with fill dirt and wood chips, removing bushes making room for additional growing beds and compost bin. Install metal panels along back fence.
5. Build additional 5 beds-2 in front and 3 in back in newly cleared and prepped areas. Brings total number of beds to 40.

Project Challenges

After much planning and preparation, the major work started on the BHCG project in April, one month later than originally planned due to the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic. This was a critical month given the closeness to the start of growing season. Some prep work was done the first week of March prior to the start of the Covid-19 restrictions.

Scheduling work days while following CDC and NC State Covid-19 guidelines reduced the numbers of volunteers and gardeners able to work on the project at any one time. This meant we had to coordinate many moving parts, work harder and more efficiently to get the garden up and running in time for the growing season while keeping everyone working on the project safe.

Sourcing decent soil became challenging due to the high increase in demand from home gardeners who found themselves at home during the pandemic restrictions. The soil required many more amendments than normal due to the poor quality of soil available. Prices for wood increased 3-fold in late Spring also due to increased pandemic demand preventing the purchase of the wood for the five new beds until the end of the grant period when prices returned to close to their pre-pandemic level.

Project Progress by Month

Jan-Feb

Planned, researched, measured project and supply needs. Decided on design of new beds using concrete corner blocks. This would differ from the current beds that use metal brackets that were showing signs of deterioration after 4 years. Where metal brackets were used in the re-used frames, they would be replaced as needed. Each bed will be lined with plastic to increase life years for wood reducing soil to wood contact and potential rot.



Five existing beds measured and double decked with new wood, using brackets and screws to secure the corners. The double frame to be lined with plastic, and secured with staples. The second frame will be secured to the bottom frame with 30" 2x2's pounded in to the ground along the side, attached to the frames with screws. A similar process was followed with the remaining 30 beds, with 15 of those beds using blocks instead of metal brackets.

March

Evaluated usability of current frames. Moved and double decked 9 usable bed frames, deconstructed 4 rotted beds to recycle hardware/screws for future use, and repurpose usable parts of wood to build smaller beds for herbs and pollinator plants to place along the edge of the garden fence to provide another layer to help divert incoming flood water.



April

Ordered additional building materials, coordinated deliveries and pick-up. Moved first delivery of corner blocks to individual beds. Measured each board and 2x2 and cut to size, new bed area re-aligned, cleared and leveled, corner clocks placed and leveled. Rebar cut to size and inserted in corner blocks to secure. Wood inserted into blocks and re-aligned if necessary. Cut plastic liner, lined and secured current beds and newly built beds with plastic sheeting securing with staples. Four 2x 2's per bed pounded 14" into ground and secured with screws above ground.



April cont.



May

Lined remaining beds, moved and continued to fill all beds with soil. Between loose and bagged soil, over 50 cubic yards of soil was manually moved into the garden beds and surrounding area. Reconfigured the large donation bed dividing it into two beds for easier planting and maintenance.



June

Finished up on missed items in beds-securing liner and screwing in supports. Continued filling beds with soil and leveling area around the new beds. Cleared upper back corner, secured with metal sheeting, cleared and leveled surrounding area with cardboard and soil raising soil level 7-8 inches. Covered with 6" layer of wood chips.



Painted 100 cement blocks for front wall, cleared and leveled ground, laid weed barrier, gravel, built and leveled block wall using dry stack method.



July

Finished painting 20 front blocks black and building out front 4 beds along the front wall, painted stencil design by EMGV on front of blocks, moved 20 yards of wood chips in aisles, attached metal panels to outside of fence by newly built compost bins.

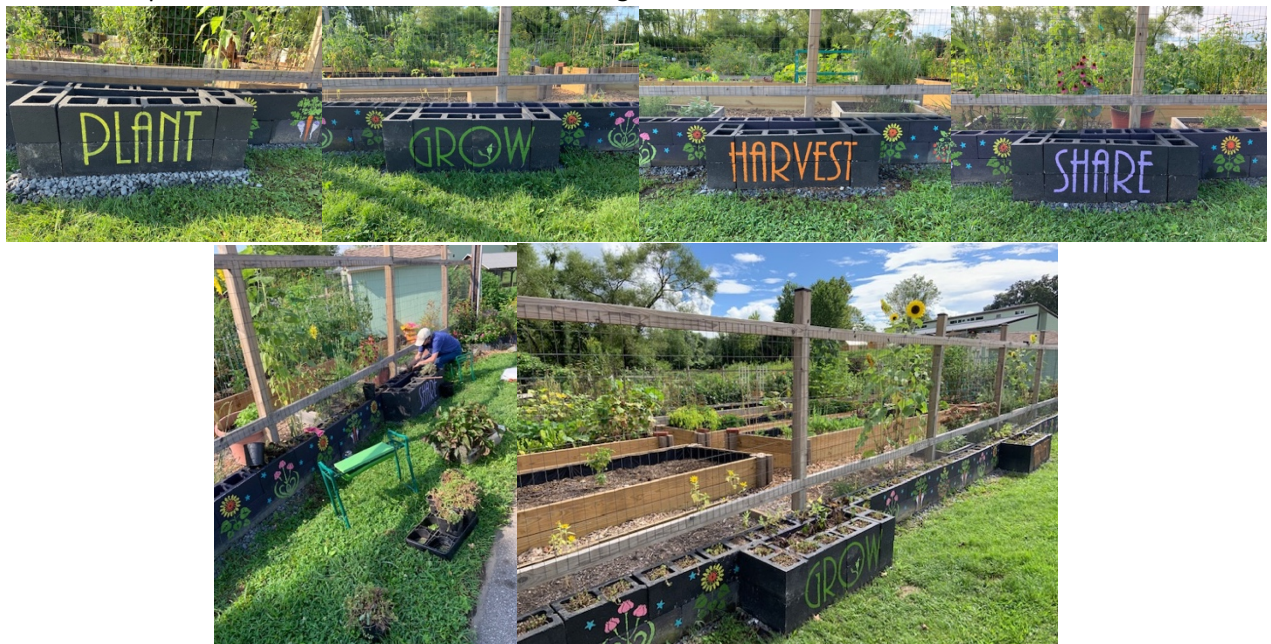


July cont.



August

Finished stenciling front wall with key words and plants designed by EMGV. Filled blocks with special soil mix, planted blocks with succulents and perennials harvested from the Extension garden.



September/October

Removed plantings to make room for additional growing beds in back end of garden. Leveled out the area and built up with 8 yards of fill dirt. Laid cardboard and moved 10 yards of wood chips to fill in the area.



November

Planned to build 5 new beds- due to inflated price of building wood due to Covid-19 purchase of wood was delayed to November. Supplies came in but due to a hand injury of one garden manager, the other one breaking her wrist, and weather issues, these beds are scheduled to be built in March. If we are able to build earlier, we will. Gardeners will be planting in them this spring.

Project Results

- Double decked 35 beds and filled with 45 yards of soil. Spread an additional 10 yards of soil around garden to level and build-up the ground.
- Painted, stacked and filled 120+ concrete blocks to establish a front wall to divert flood water.
- Installed metal sheeting around side and back fence to help divert flood waters away from the garden.
- Cleared and leveled front and back areas, leveled with 15 yards of soil, covered with layers of cardboard and 6's of wood chips.
- Laid 30 plus yards of wood chips which prevents weeds from growing and acts as a sponge during heavy rains.
- Garden proved more secure from flooding during the fall tropical storms after project renovation.



A few of our 2020 gardeners



2020 Garden Photos

