ALGER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

Third Edition

Fun For All Fall!

Fall is the time of harvest for many crops grown in the UP. And Alger County's Community Gardens are no exception.

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T-shirts from the student art contest are still available.



Shop for t-shirts and more here.

Manager's Note

Welcome to the third issue of our print newsletter. We've had a busy few months out in the field with you all, adding updates to the Chatham Community Garden and more. The community food system survey is still open if you'd like to complete it now!

Thanks for reading,
Eryn Grupido, District Manager



What's New With The Chatham Community Garden?

Written by Jacklyn Whitcomb - Seasonal Field Tech

Did you know? Alger Conservation District has been working to get the Chatham Community Garden up and running for community use! First planted in 2022 to establish a pollinator garden, the Chatham Community Garden has been transformed into an outdoor classroom, as well as a growing space for different fruits and vegetables to ultimately impact the local food system. Education at the garden has included Master Gardener Workshops with Olivia Kingery of Pileated Farms with lessons such as garlic planting and weed & pest management. It's also hosted local 4H groups as a gardening location.

This summer season we have been hard at work creating a community focused space at the Chatham Community Garden! we have focused on improvements to allow for more growth, such as creating more beds for future use improving water access by relocating our water towers, and using the current beds to plant fruits, vegetables, edible flowers, and cut flowers. In this season's Hügelkultur bed, we planted varieties of tomatoes, basil, squash, pumpkins, nasturtiums, strawberries, asparagus, cosmos, snapdragons, and zinnias.

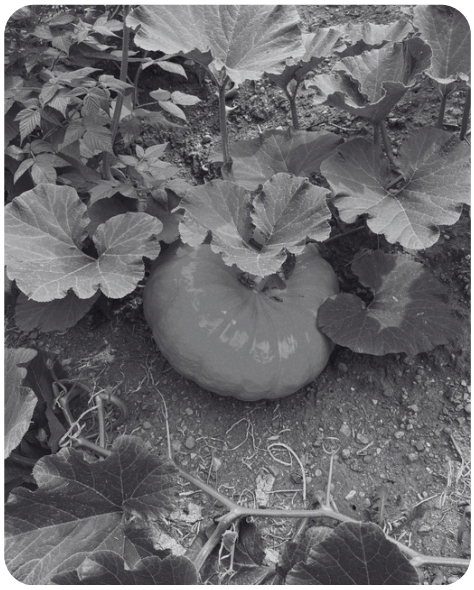
Once our current beds were planted, we decided to create more beds for use by people in the Chatham community. We created a 2nd Hügelkultur bed for next year, with a tree that had fallen into the garden this spring, then we prepped 6 new in-ground garden beds. These cozy 4'x8' beds are tarped and (hopefully) rock-free for next year's use!

Our final spring planting included, blackberry and raspberry trenches lining the edge of the garden property! We also surrounded the pollinator garden walkway with grapes to create a grape path, Later in summer we created walkways to the fruit trees in the native wildflower pollinator bed to provide easy access for when they start fruiting.

Get involved and stay up to date on when workshops are by joining the group 'Friends of Chatham Community Gardens' on Facebook

We lined their pathways and around the wildflower pollinator garden with cedar mulch from Holmquist Feed Mill. Rhe mulching should allow the current plants to continue growing and maintain moisture below the surface to produce in the years to come.

We're still planning for the best ways the Chatham Community Garden can allow space for residents to grow and harvest their own produce and maximize the benefits of a homegrown garden for their family. We would love for the new garden beds to be used as a part of the local food system for vegetable growth! If you have feedback on them or want to be more involved, you can provide it or your contact information in the survey on the last page here.



Munising's Own Community Garden

Written by Lani Moleski - District Coordinator

We have shared with you information about the Chatham Community Garden, which is owned and operated by the Alger Conservation District. But did you know that there is another community garden located in Munising? Located in the alleyway behind Denman's Hardware, this garden is ready for any community member to harvest from. I had the opportunity to speak with one of the head gardeners, Rosellyn Kidd.

Rosellyn hasn't always been a gardener, not until she moved to Munising and met Katie Schneider. The two of them put their heads together and realized that there is a lack of healthy and fresh food in Munising. Two years ago, they approached the city commission with the goal of starting a community garden space and were given the green light.

Not much later, they found some old and overgrown garden beds in the alleyway behind Denman's Hardware. After some serious deep cleaning and weeding, done mostly by Brian Spencer and Killian McInerney, they had their garden space.

Today, the garden is fully operational and open to the public. Anyone can stop by anytime to harvest some fresh food completely free of charge.

Rosellyn said that they were inspired by the book Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer when deciding the "rules" of the garden.

1. Don't take more than you need,
2. Never take it all.

This way, there will always be some more left for the next person. And don't feel as though you need to pay for what you harvest. This garden is for any and everyone. Instead, consider volunteering a bit of your time to weed out the garden space.

This project is supported by the:

MICHIGAN HEALTH ENDOWMENT FUND

The Michigan Health Endowment Fund works to improve the health and wellness of Michigan residents and reduce the cost of healthcare, with a special focus on children and older adults. You can find more information about the Health Fund at mihealthfund.org.

We have an e-newsletter too. To subscribe to it, please visit www.algercd.com/monthly-newsletter

Photo below of volunteers, including Katie and Rosellyn clearing the the overgrown beds in 2025



volunteering to weed is totally optional and not necessary. But it would help keep the garden healthy.

Although we were reaching the end of the harvest season you may still be able to grab a few goodies. At the time of our meeting there was plenty of kale, dill, nasturtium, lettuce, parsley, basil, thyme, potatoes, and the last few tomatoes of the season.

Rosellyn's hopes for the future of the garden are that they can expand to create more bed space and host educational workshops / cooking demonstrations. Keep an eye out in our monthly digital newsletter for upcoming events taking place in the Munising Community Garden.

Check out their public group on Facebook! @MunisingCommunityGarden

ALGER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEM SURVEY

Hello and thank you for taking your time to read our newsletter! The following information will give you more background on what information the community food system survey will be gathering and what to expect. Please take your time to read it all before you decide whether to follow the QR code or visit our website and complete this survey. You can also stop by our office and complete it in person if desired.

The survey will take approximately 10 -15 minutes. Your participation is entirely voluntary and appreciated! You may skip any question you do not feel comfortable answering, except for which township you are in. Since we are planning for the uniqueness of each township, that is the only question we have required to be answered. All answers are anonymous, however if you would like to be contacted about anything in this survey or if you state you would like to volunteer etc., please fill out the contact information section and a district staff member will reach out to you.

The survey is divided into 4 sections. **Section 1** is to help us understand your role in our food system and what knowledge you already have about it. **Section 2** will further help us understand your relationship to gardening, growing or finding your food through alternative means than shopping, and what interest you have in learning more about these topics. It will also inform us on your use of community gardens or desire for changes to your local garden, if there is one. **Section 3** is meant to understand the usage and knowledge of assistance programs related to food access and your interest in such programs or other food system activities. Finally, **Section 4** is all about you! This is where you can share your contact information if you want to. Your contact information will not be shared with anyone outside our staff without your permission and you may request us to remove your contact information at any time.

Your responses will help inform us about your experience and strengthen our decision making process as we pursue new programs and long-term planning across Alger County, specific to your townships. We will also be hosting in-person feedback events at various locations in the county from this spring and on through summer of 2027.

You're invited to join these events to provide your feedback in person, ask any questions you have, or take the survey in person. Events will be announced here, in our e-newsletter, and on local bulletin boards.

TAKE THE SURVEY HERE!

Or visit our office in the courthouse. You can also learn more on our website at www.algercd.com/food-systems

THANK YOU!

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email us at algerfoodsystem@macd.org or cal (906) 387-2222