



Oakdene Park Community Garden Group (OPCGG) Strategic Report and 1-Year Plan (2025)



A program of the
Town of Kentville

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Introduction

This strategic report outlines OPCGG's priorities, goals, and action plans for 2025, based on the outcomes of the Strategic Planning Day held on January 11, 2025. It integrates updated mission and vision statements, SWOT analysis, and key objectives to address challenges and seize opportunities for growth and impact in the Kentville community.

Mission Statement

OPCGG comprises a dedicated team of volunteers, known as growing partners, united in cultivating a healthy and thriving community in Kentville. The group embraces sustainable practices and commits to inclusivity, equity, accessibility, and environmental stewardship.

Vision Statement

Through fostering sustainability, inclusivity, and community engagement, OPCGG aspires to create a welcoming environment where individuals grow connections, resilience, and shared prosperity while cultivating healthy food systems.

Values:



Support Local Food Causes



Cultivating Fresh Fruit, Vegetables, and Herbs



Investing in Community Growth

Strategic Goals for 2025

1. Growing Food and Sustainability

- Expand the variety of fruits, vegetables, and herbs grown in the garden, with a focus on seasonal and climate-appropriate crops
- Incorporate innovative gardening methods, such as vertical gardening and companion planting, to maximize space and yield.
- Leverage the OPCGG Planting Map 2025 to ensure a diverse and efficient allocation of planting zones, optimizing resources for food production.
- Integrate knowledge of traditional planting techniques and native species to honor cultural heritage and improve ecological balance.
- Implement sustainable gardening practices, including crop rotation, composting, and efficient water usage, to ensure long-term environmental and operational health.

2. Recruitment and Community Engagement

- Build volunteer capacity and strengthen recruitment efforts by actively engaging with the local community, hosting outreach events, and offering meaningful opportunities for involvement.
- Focus on creating fun, inclusive experiences, such as workshops, social gatherings, and family-friendly activities, to attract a diverse range of community

3. Resource Mapping and Partnerships

- Strengthen partnerships with local schools (e.g., KCA) and organizations (e.g., NSCC) to share resources, expertise, and opportunities for collaboration.
- Secure grants and in-kind donations to support garden operations, focusing on obtaining tools, materials, and financial backing for projects.

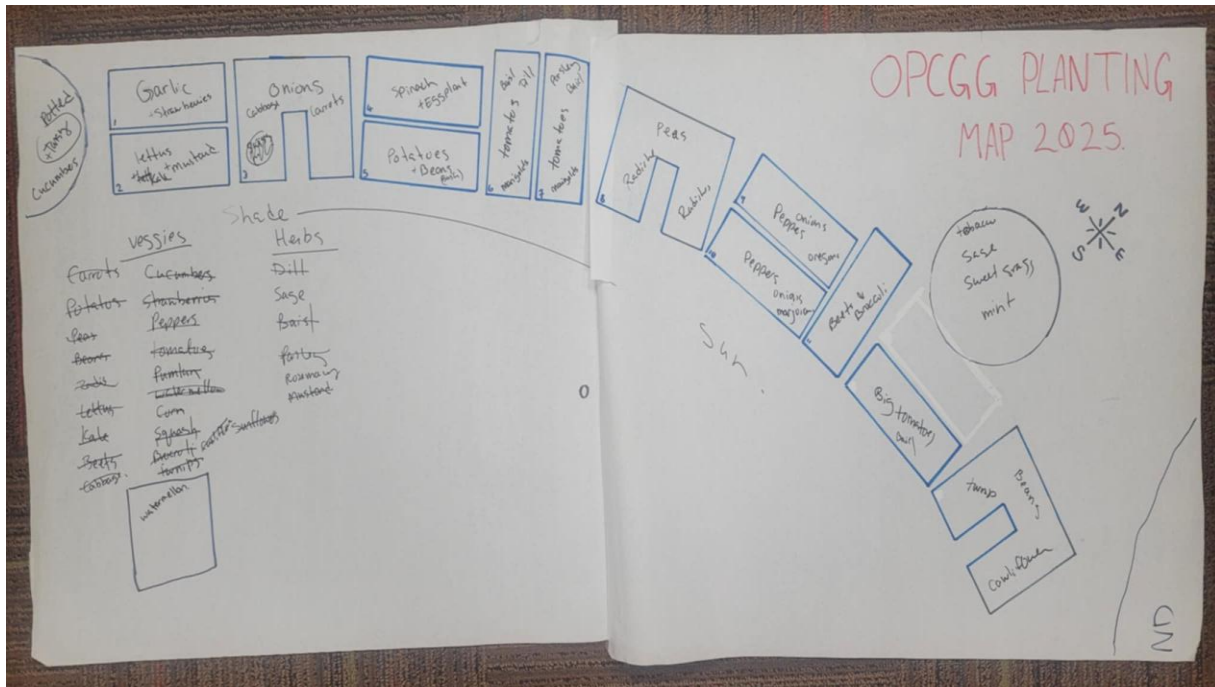
4. Garden Management and Organization

- Establish sub-committees for focused operations, ensuring specific areas like greenhouse management, events, and workshops are handled efficiently and effectively.
- Enhance internal communication and create detailed scheduling systems to improve coordination and prevent volunteer burnout.

5. Visibility and Outreach

- Increase public awareness of OPCGG by improving physical signage, launching targeted online campaigns, and engaging with local media.
- Develop a visibility campaign incorporating creative initiatives like marigold programs, seed bombing, and partnerships with local businesses to enhance community connection and recognition.

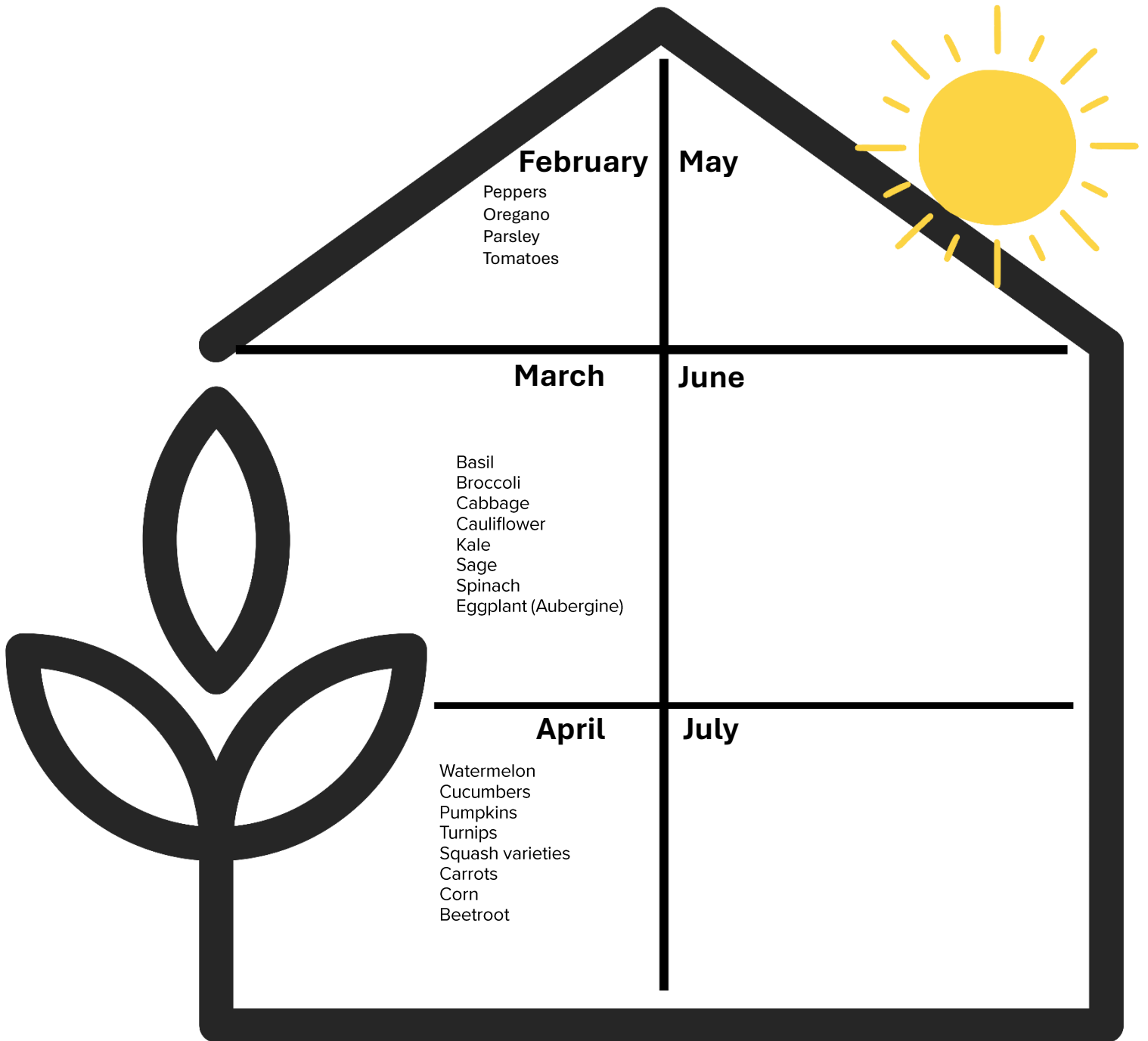
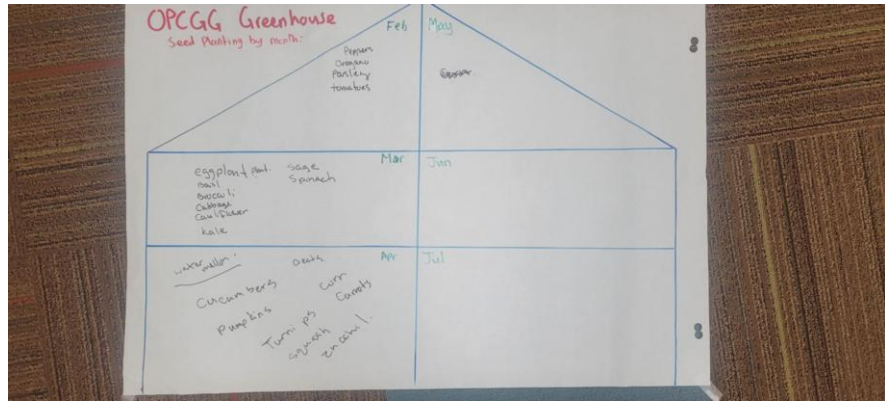
6. Planting



Planting specification for 2025

| Location | Plants |
|-----------------|---|
| Bed 1 | Garlic, Strawberries |
| Bed 2 | Lettuce, Mustard |
| Bed 3 | Onions, Cabbage, Carrots |
| Bed 4 | Spinach, Egg Plant (Aubergine) |
| Bed 5 | Potatoes, Bush Beans |
| Bed 6 | Tomatoes, Basil, Dill, Marigolds |
| Bed 7 | Tomatoes, Parsley, Basil, Marigolds |
| Bed 8 | Radish, Peas |
| Bed 9 | Onions, Peppers, Oregano |
| Bed 10 | Onions, Peppers, Majo |
| Bed 11 | Beetroot, Broccoli |
| Bed 12 | Big Tomato variety, Basil |
| Bed 13 | Runner Beans. Turnip, Cauliflower |
| Greenhouse | Watermelon |
| Bridge Patch 1 | Corn, Runner Beans, Squash varieties - Zucchini, Acorn, Butternut |
| Bridge Patch 2 | Pumpkin |
| Bridge | Clematis and Beans (potted) |
| Medicine Garden | Sage, Sweet Grass, Cedar, |

Greenhouse Seed planting by month



Key Priorities for 2025

In 2025, the OPCGG aims to address a range of priorities critical to enhancing the impact and sustainability of its community initiatives.

Recruitment and retention remain a top focus, as the group will actively engage with Kentville's summer outreach teams and local organizations to attract a diverse volunteer base. By hosting regular community workdays and promoting inclusive activities, OPCGG will create opportunities for hands-on involvement and foster stronger community ties.

Education and workshops will be vital in preserving and sharing gardening knowledge. The group plans to conduct workshops on sustainable gardening and traditional planting techniques, collaborating with elders and cultural leaders to facilitate intergenerational learning. These educational initiatives will strengthen the community's connection to gardening and food security practices.

Infrastructure improvements will be prioritized to enhance accessibility and operational efficiency. The group has developed a detailed greenhouse planting schedule and will retire old raised beds and replace with new accessible raised beds. Clearer signage will be explored to ensure the garden is welcoming to all community members. Partnerships with local businesses and organizations will also be explored to secure essential resources.

Community events will be a cornerstone of OPCGG's engagement strategy. Events such as spring planting days, garden open houses, and seasonal celebrations will raise awareness and build excitement around the group's activities. Local businesses will be encouraged to sponsor or contribute to these events, fostering stronger community partnerships.

Environmental stewardship will guide OPCGG's efforts to protect local biodiversity and address challenges such as pest control. By implementing eco-friendly pest management solutions and creating pollinator-friendly spaces, the group will promote sustainability and educate the community about the importance of wildlife conservation.

Together, these priorities form a comprehensive approach to achieving OPCGG's mission of fostering a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable community garden ecosystem.

- Implement pest control solutions, such as using neem oil and companion planting techniques, to address challenges like Japanese beetles.
- Protect and enhance biodiversity by creating pollinator-friendly spaces and educating the community about the importance of wildlife conservation.

SWOT Analysis Integration

Strengths:

- Strong teamwork, communication, and online presence, which enhance visibility and engagement.
- Determined, adaptable, and diverse group of volunteers with extensive knowledge and experience.
- Established friendships, intergenerational learning, and a commitment to creating meaningful community connections.
- Empathy toward the community and a focus on creating memorable experiences.

Weaknesses:

- Lack of resources and the need for more volunteers to support growing initiatives.
- Limited visibility in some areas despite online presence, requiring additional signage and outreach efforts.
- Strained relationships and occasional clashes of vision within the group, leading to communication challenges.
- Volunteer fatigue due to resource constraints and unclear communication methods.
- Limited diversity in recruitment and challenges in obtaining financial and material capital.

Opportunities:

- Recruitment drives targeting diverse volunteers and partnerships with local schools and NSCC for expanded collaboration.
- Guerrilla gardening initiatives, including seed bombing, to create vibrant, food-focused public spaces.
- Expanded community events, such as seasonal celebrations, to build stronger ties and raise awareness.
- Developing traditional and sustainable gardening workshops in collaboration with elders and local educators.
- Accessing grant funding and securing in-kind donations from local businesses to improve resources and infrastructure.
- Enhancing biodiversity through pollinator-friendly spaces and planting programs such as marigolds.

Threats:

- Volunteer burnout and potential vandalism or theft, affecting group morale and operations.
- Pest control challenges, particularly with Japanese beetles, which could impact crop health.
- Loss of certain wildlife species, including bats, bees, and birds, which are critical to the ecosystem.
- Lack of accessibility and potential miscommunication, hindering the group's ability to reach broader audiences and ensure inclusivity.

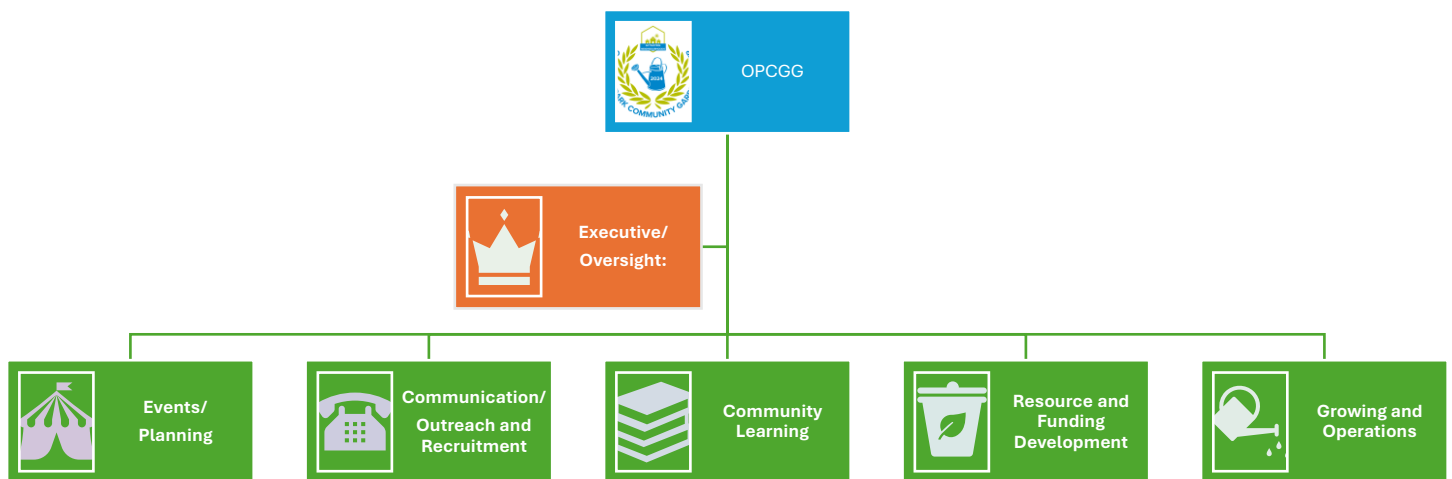


Sub-Committee Structure

The OPCGG will establish sub-committees to streamline operations and encourage participation. These include:

- **Executive/Oversight:** Responsible for providing strategic guidance, governance, and oversight to ensure the effective operation of the organization or project.
- **Events/Planning:** Responsible for organizing community events, including workshops, seasonal celebrations, and social gatherings. This sub-committee will also oversee the planning and execution of special projects, such as seed bombing or spring planting parties.
- **Communication/Outreach and Recruitment:** Focused on enhancing OPCGG's visibility, this sub-committee will manage online presence, create communication boards, and lead recruitment efforts to expand the volunteer base.
- **Community Learning:** Dedicated to fostering educational opportunities, this group will organize workshops, collaborate with local schools, and engage elders to preserve and teach traditional and sustainable gardening techniques.
- **Resource and Funding Development:** Tasked with securing funding and resources through grant applications, partnerships, and sponsorships. This team will also coordinate the acquisition of essential materials for the garden's operations.
- **Growing and Operations:** Overseeing day-to-day garden maintenance, including greenhouse management, pest control, crop rotation, and biodiversity initiatives. This sub-committee ensures that the garden functions efficiently year-round.

Each sub-committee will report to the OPCGG Executive and focus on specific areas of responsibility.



Action Plan for 2025

| Goal | Action Steps | Timeline | Responsibility |
|------------------------------|--|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| Recruitment | Host tours, Social media campaign, engage various groups, collaborate with schools, partner with local organizations, distribute flyers, work with other sub0committees. | January–December | Recruitment Sub-Committee |
| Education and Workshops | Organize quarterly workshops on gardening and sustainability. | January - December | Education Sub-Committee |
| Infrastructure and Resources | Install new signage and improve greenhouse resources. | April–November | Resource Development Sub-Committee |
| Community Events | Plan and execute seed bombing and spring garden parties. | January–December | Events Sub-Committee |
| Environmental Stewardship | Develop a pest control plan and promote biodiversity efforts. | Ongoing | Garden Operations Team |

Metrics for Success

- Volunteer base grows by 10%.
- Host at least five community engagement events.
- Implement three new sustainable practices in the garden.
- Increase social media and online presence by 10%.
- Secure two new funding sources or partnerships.



Conclusion

The Oakdene Park Community Garden Group (OPCGG) Strategic Report and 1-Year Plan for 2025 provides a clear and comprehensive framework for fostering growth, sustainability, and inclusivity within the community. By focusing on strategic goals such as recruitment, education, infrastructure, community events, and environmental stewardship, OPCGG is positioned to achieve tangible results that benefit both the group and the broader Kentville community.

This report underscores the importance of collaboration, innovation, and a shared commitment to environmental and social well-being. Through the dedicated efforts of volunteers, strengthened partnerships with local organizations, and the implementation of well-thought-out initiatives, OPCGG can continue to thrive as a vital hub of community engagement and resilience.

The plan also reflects the collective vision and aspirations of OPCGG members, emphasizing a proactive approach to addressing challenges and leveraging opportunities. It establishes clear priorities and actionable steps that will guide the group throughout the year and beyond.

Ultimately, the success of this plan will be measured not only by the goals achieved but by the connections, learning experiences, and sense of belonging cultivated within the community. OPCGG remains steadfast in its mission to create a welcoming and sustainable environment where individuals and families can come together to grow, learn, and prosper. This report will be re-evaluated and updated in January 2026, ensuring that OPCGG continues to adapt to the evolving needs of its members and the Kentville community.

