

# Whitehorse Community Garden

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Started: 1997. First growing season was in 1998.

Contact: Spence Hill

21 gardening beds, on Ray Street, have been built on City land. Three are communal beds that volunteers grow the produce for social service organizations in the community. The other 18 are gardened by families, individuals or organizations (all of whom contribute volunteer time, a membership fee and a refundable deposit in exchange for use of the garden plot).



**Community benefits:** Strengthening food security and building a sense of community has been a definite outcome of the first year of the project as well as an increase in knowledge of gardening techniques. Free food has also been provided to social service organizations (e.g. Salvation Army, Mary House, Kaushee's Place). A few specially designed beds provide access to people with disabilities. The reclamation of the land around the gardens provides a park-like setting for its users and other area residents.

**Lessons learned:** Everything took longer than expected which created a rush at the beginning of the growing season. Planning for delays and starting some things earlier in the year (e.g. construction of the beds) would have alleviated the need for intensive work in a short time period.

**Future of the project:** The gardens are now self-sustaining as membership fees cover low maintenance costs. However, the society will be applying for funding to expand the number of beds, do more landscaping and hopefully deliver some educational programs.