

2022 Crow Wing Master Gardeners

Community Giving Projects at the Northland Arboretum



Crow Wing Master Gardeners started early in anticipation of the upgraded 2022 Community Giving Program comprised of five separate projects at the Northland Arboretum G101 Gardens.

Phase one of the program began in February when several Master Gardeners volunteered for “Seed Starting” and started 450 bedding plants. The plants were nurtured until the end of May when they were delivered to the Northland Arboretum for use in the subsequent program components: Patio Container Garden, G101 Gardening – Youth and Adult, and the Giving Garden.

In May the second phase started with the planting of 25 lettuce bowls (lettuce seeds planted in landscape fabric bowls) as part of the Patio Container Garden Project. On May 31st the team of Master Gardeners took delivery of a portion of the bedding plants from the Seed Starting team. Amid strong winds and rain tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants were transplanted into 147 container gardens by these Master Gardeners. In early June these Patio Gardens and educational materials were provided to a variety of Crow Wing County organizations for distribution to their clients. The organizations included: CWC Veteran Services; Garrison Lions Club; CRMC – Senior Living/Crosby; Sharing Bread Kitchen; Home Instead; Cuyuna Social Services; CWC WIC; CWC Social & Community Services; Pequot Lakes Food Shelf. An additional 40 bedding plants were donated to Mid

Minnesota Women’s Center and Port Home for use at their locations.

Activity continued in June with the reintroduction of Gardening 101 (G101), for both youth and adult participants. Last held in 2019 both programs were welcomed back with energetic and motivated gardeners and Master Gardener educators. Participant ages range from 8-15 in the youth program and 16-80+ for the adults. Skills range from novice to experienced, and motivation was high regardless of skill level. Nothing is more thrilling than watching a student claim their first vegetable. Of course, leaving the garden with a bag of fresh produce is always a wonderful reward.

In the same garden area, the Master Gardeners also continued the Giving Garden Project for the third season. The project was started in 2020 as a way for Master Gardeners to help Crow Wing County organizations combat food insecurity. As with the G101 programs, Seed Starting plants were planted in the gardens and supplemented with summer squash, zucchini, peas, beans, cucumbers, eggplants and more. Excitement abounds on harvest days when Master Gardeners guess the approximate weight of the harvest pick. Once weighed, the fresh produce is delivered to organizations including: Salvation Army, Sharing Bread Soup Kitchen, CWC WIC, CWC Social Services and Mid Minnesota Women’s Shelter.

