

2016 Chicago Community Gardeners Association Resources Committee Annual Report

Hello Community Gardeners! Here is the report of the CCGA Resources Committee on its activities in 2016.

In January and February, we received a donation from a commercial greenhouse (that was going out of business) of tools, pots, and other materials useful to gardeners. We passed all these materials along to community gardeners as raffle prizes at the Annual Conference, and at distributions events.

For the March Fourth Annual CCGA Conference, we contributed 25 centerpieces comprising plant material we had grown and potted. We also distributed almost 100 raffle prizes (including some mint condition tools donated by Habitat ReStore), held a silent auction, and assisted LaVerne Morris with logistics details.

We grew and distributed 2000 annual early spring flowers, kale, geraniums and rosemary in April. We also distributed 5 crates of seed potatoes. 90 community gardens participated.

In May, we held two vegetable and herb seedling distributions (of plant material we had grown) and distributed 5000 vegetable seedlings to 135 community gardens. We also sold iron work, such as shepherd's hooks, that we had obtained at a nominal cost from the commercial greenhouse mentioned above. Robert Hart made, and we sold (at the cost of the materials) tomato cages built to support the biggest tomato plants.

We held two Mini-Distributions in June of additional vegetable and herb seedlings, serving 50 community gardens.

A special note: none of the above plant distributions would have been possible without the generous donations of seeds and plant material that we received from Westover Farms. In dozens of instances, Nick Michaud, the Head Gardener of Westover, started trays of seedlings and then donated them to us to grow on.

July brought the first Summer Perennial Distribution with 3000 perennials contributed by Elite Growers and additional plant material from Westover Farms. 85 community gardens participated.

In August, Rush University Medical Center allowed us to dig up 500 large, drought tolerant perennials. We potted these up and added them to the second Summer Perennial Distribution, which drew 84 community gardens. Elite Growers contributed 2600 perennials to this event. Later in August, we held a Mini-Distribution to share 200 more perennials we obtained from the Rush site.

September included the Annual Great Perennial Divide, attended by 70 community gardens. Scott Byron Landscape Company gathered plant material contributed by many growers and landscapers and delivered it to our distribution site. Chicago Plant Rescue added ornamental plant material donated to it, and an anonymous donor contributed 100 native perennials purchased from Intrinsic Perennials.

Our October Bulb Distribution provided 60 community gardens with 4800 bulbs. Angela O'Rourke of Mozart Garden gave a talk about the experiences of her garden group, and Mattie Wilson of Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance spoke about, and demonstrated, bulb planting.

In November we distributed several dozen compost bins donated by GreenCorps.

We held a December Holiday Plant Sale at which we sold holiday center pieces we had made, as well as tropical plant material suitable as house plants that had been donated by The Contained Garden.

At each distribution (except the Mini Distributions), the Resources Committee charged a \$5 registration fee per garden. We also sold most of the iron work and all the plant material at the Holiday Sale. We began 2016 with a surplus of \$700, and we received \$4100 from the above efforts. We spent \$3500 on bulbs, seeds, soil, iron work, seedling cups, and the materials for the tomato cages. Thus, we ended 2016 with a surplus of almost \$1400. This enabled us to add a new event, the Seed Starting Workshop and Starter Kit Distribution, in early 2017—at no cost to the community gardeners.

The Resources Committee wants to thank all the volunteers who helped at the events described above, as well as all the community gardeners who participated. As always, our committee's mission is to obtain and distribute useful materials to community gardeners, and to ensure that every dollar we receive from the gardeners is returned to them in the form of materials. Thank you for your support!

Patricia Jackson Hart

Chair

Chicago Community Gardeners Association Resources Committee