



Life Blooms  
in



### Virtual Focus Group #3 – Garden Plots

*It's a lazy day and you are strolling one of the many paths that criss-cross the grounds and woodlots of Meaford Haven. Leading off into a little group of cedars a smaller trail teases your curiosity, and you follow it through the greenery. Around the turn a mini-meadow opens before you and there spreads a crazy-quilt of little garden patches. There are benches about so you take a seat to take it all in. Your gaze falls on a bountiful vegetable garden with tomatoes hanging off the trellis and a neat border of marigolds ringing the pepper plants and carrot tops. Beyond is another plot, all blousey with peonies and glads, and a blazing assortment of flowers growing for the cutting and display. Over here is a shaggy plot planted with sweet corn and sunflowers. And over there is a tiny perfect knot garden filled to the edges with every herb that grows around here. The fragrance of rosemary and box tickle your nose. Bees and butterflies flutter and buzz. The air is alive with birdsong. The ground, still moist from the morning's watering has a faint scent of mushrooms. Across the way a woman in a blue cotton hat sits in the sun with a book in her lap. With a cheery smile you carry on with your walk...*

Meaford Haven, Virtual Focus Group 3 has set our minds at ease about garden plots. “Yes” to garden plots for the approximately 50% of you who want them. But they will be discreet, private little spaces to enjoy if you wish or ignore as you choose.

Our feelings about this are guided by yours. Those who don't care to garden would prefer not to have to look at them, and those who do would like to have a reasonably private and personal experience. There's general agreement on the details: hose spigots, of course; raised beds, not needed. Communal sheds, group purchasing, garden clubs: not here; not for us. But give us land, a tiny bit of land, and feel free to fence us in – with greenery.

Thanks everyone for your feed-back, we think we know what we need to do. And, as in all of these reports, here's a place for you to continue the discussion if you like.

Your Comments

And here's what everyone had to say. Thanks again.

Gardening can be a beautiful thing and also a very messy thing. I would not like to see the gardening plots being part of the

community common landscape, meaning I would want to have to deliberately go to that area to see them. This is something that I am not sure I would be interested in but could appreciate the efforts of others.

While missing my garden, I would not miss the work. There are also many farm stands around to be able to buy fresh produce. Just being able to plant a few tomato plants and small vegs would be sufficient. Nothing backbreaking. Also, it would be nice if it was surrounded by shrubs because gardens do not always look very nice. Distance from unit would also be a consideration.

Space in the bungalows to allow for garden on your own property. Communal plots for the Apt & Seniors building.

Would like to see gardens around houses, also

Offer a choice of plot size – people could lease depending on the size of plot they want. Some may want a large plot initially but as they get older or unable to tend, they could downsize and lease a smaller plot.

Have a mixture of regular beds and mixed beds. Everyone should have their own plot and plot shed within the larger communal plots. Definitely separate lock ups – I also don't want to automatically share tools with everyone else – tools are too expensive to automatically share. More than one communal hose and spigot would be necessary

This could actually be a money maker – set up a roadside stall selling organic fruit, veg and homemade baking.

Could also set up a bee hive – make your own honey.

Communal gardens instead of allotments ie, : herbal beds, floral beds, annual beds, etc.

I hope there will be flower beds in common areas, hopefully run by a committee, not done by the grasscutting company. Will the bungalow properties have a small patio that can be used for potted plants? or can the yards be used as the owner wishes? Will there be balconies for the apt. units which can withstand the weight of large pots?

Are you going to ask about a workshop-crafts room? I as I am sure others have good saws etc and would be willing to contribute them to a shop. I am also qualified to teach carpentry and could give a little safety course to novices before they cut their hands off.

- *We cover this in the Community Center discussion.*

My garden should be accessible, ie raised, need little watering, with zone hardy plants only that give interest in all seasons. I am a fan of ornamental grasses for that reason.

Sites should be individual. Vegetables only.

Flower beds should be permitted at each residence.

There are many master gardeners around to help with the planning.

Personally, am not interested in a garden plot. I love the flowers in front on my home and imagine we could still plant there. If not, I would reconsider having a small garden in front of the homes to add colour. Garden plots to me means veggies and I don't need to plant my own thanks.

There should be some uniformity in garden decor to present as eye pleasing and organized. I believe such amenities as green house/hot house should not be included as they add too much to basic cost

Having been on many Boards and on committees etc. over the years I really am not in favour of a gardening group being officially sanctioned. There seems to always be one person who needs to “show off” their expertise to the detriment of others’ egos. Let people naturally help each other if they choose or just enjoy their garden, as gardening is often a peaceful personal time. If there needs to be any communal gardening I would strongly suggest it be for vegetable gardens and that all in the community could benefit (and, naturally, no extra financial penalty for those who choose to tend these beds). If there is a public library nearby in Meaford, a p & d should be arranged (offered in places like Brampton) so folks can get gardening books (and many others) in all kinds of weather – for seniors this will be a huge bonus if they don’t have i-pads, which many are resisting.

Orientation of the beds East/West axis with full sun and/or shaded areas for some plants.

Rainwater collection for plant watering.

DO LOVE MY GARDEN, BUT I DO NOT EXPECT TO DO ANY GARDENING IN A RETIREMENT COMMUNITY. NATURAL LOOKING LANDSCAPING WILL DO JUST FINE AND I WOULD ADD A FEW POTS OF FLOWERS AT THE FRONT AND BACK OF AN INDIVIDUAL HOME.

I really don’t believe that that gardening plots are a high priority item. If you are going to include them, I suggest an area, that would be designated as gardening plots, with a reasonable number of plots, that can be rented out to the people that want them.

RE Size of garden plots please indicate whether yards or feet. Guidelines needed around care and maintenance. would allotments be rotor-tilled, prior to planting?

currently garden 2 acres of lawn and gardens. By the time I move from my present home I will have gardened enough for 2 lifetimes.

Not at all interested in having a garden.

Rain water collector.

Solar lights.

Personal plots near units for flowers.

Gazebo nearby for shade and relaxation after working in plots.

In looking at the plan for area around the homes if concrete patios were made large area could be at everyone’s back to grow tomatoes and other veggies. I think for the few that would actually use this area I now think it is a waste of money to spend to place a big garden in. And also the look can be bad for development. Just a thought maybe to keep it simple: I will deliver fresh goods to the people.

“All Just Natural”, opening in Nov in place of Willow Naturals.8 Sykes street North Meaford