

Johnson County Master Gardener Project Leader Annual Report - 2021

Name of Project: Downtown City Gardens

Name(s) of Project Leader(s): Linda Schreiber

Provide a brief statement of the involvement/impact for the project:

Located along one of Iowa City's highest vehicular and pedestrian traffic areas, Downtown City Gardens provides Iowa City and the UNESCO City of Literature an inviting, beautiful environment for all to enjoy. Two DCG are located at the city's heaviest use parking garages and provide visitors and residents a visual welcome to downtown.

Number and names of Master Gardeners Involved: Multiple MG assisted DCG with projects and maintenance during this growing season: Laura Bonifazi, Sadia Embree, Doug Gertaets, Connie Goeb, Kristin Ho, Jean Holzhammer, Melissa Serenda, Barb Schlinter and Joel Wells. By mid-November total of 363 volunteer hours were reported for DCG.

Please identify the date the project started and include a description of the project impact:

Launched in 2008 and approved as a JCMG approved the project in 2016, following a three-year waiting period, Downtown City Gardens involves improving and maintaining Iowa City-owned properties located primarily in the downtown area and range to the City's Northside Neighborhood as far as City Park, Ashton House and other city locations.

Provide a summary of project activities conducted throughout the calendar year and the results of the project (include data of the success(es) of the project and or partner(s)).

1. Continued maintenance of the Northside gardens Market Street was filled in with donated annual begonias and coleus, bee balm, catmint, rudbeckia and hyssop.
2. Updated Dottie Ray Garden on Melrose Avenue by the Emerald Street Fire Station. The garden was filled in with donated annuals: Penta, Russian statice and allysm.
3. Supported South District Neighborhood Broadway Street Gardens. The gardens were planted with Mexican sunflowers, cannas, zinnia and cosmos seeds during an Earth Day activity. Gardens were weeded and maintained throughout the summer and South District was urged to participate.
4. Planted and provide ongoing care and maintenance throughout the gardening season to numerous DCG. Annual flowers donated to DCG were added to most major gardens.
5. Although not a project-specific to Downtown City Gardens, Seed Share celebrated its **fifth** year of service with a second virtual program in 2021 due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Nearly **1,600** packets of **six** proprietary seed companies were shared with **nearly 100** Johnson County residents requesting seeds. Requests were distributed by taping orders to the JC Extension Office door. The remaining seeds were donated to the Iowa City, Coralville and North Liberty Community Pantries. **Results of food donations will be added to this report when it has been made available.**
6. Provided Mercy Iowa City assistance and needed maintenance for its Memorial Rose Garden and the rose gardens along Market Street.
7. DCG volunteers gathered numerous flower seeds to share with the public for 2022 JCMG Seed Share and other activities.

8. Thirty-five MGs assisted Iowa City Park crews to plant 39 deciduous trees in Wetherby Park. Grant funds provided trees and supplies to replace those destroyed by the derecho. The project launched JCMG's 40th year of service to Johnson County that will be celebrated in 2022.
9. Assisted JCMG fundraising activities including selling dahlias (\$150) and the Flower Fundraiser (\$550) and \$100 in private donations.

Statement of what you consider the greatest success of this project:

Downtown City Gardens continues to connect JCMG to area partnering opportunities to expand JCMG outreach and promote our organization, as well as provide area visitors a pleasing visual environment in the downtown. Many of the DCG are located on some of the highest traffic areas in the city.

What are the needs to help this project continue? What changes would you consider making for the future? 2022 Funds will be used to purchase perennial torch lilies that will be planted along Burlington Street and necessary supplies. Cannas were first planted in the Old Capitol Parking Garage in 2013 and have been successfully and consecutively used since. New funding helps connect JCMG to the public and other groups, and assists with planning, planting and revitalizing gardening opportunities in other/more areas.

Project Leader: Linda Schreiber

Date: November 15, 2021