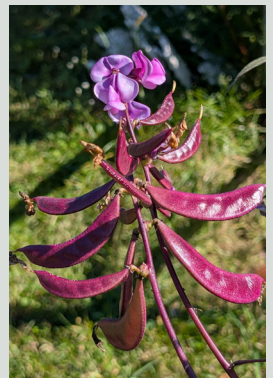
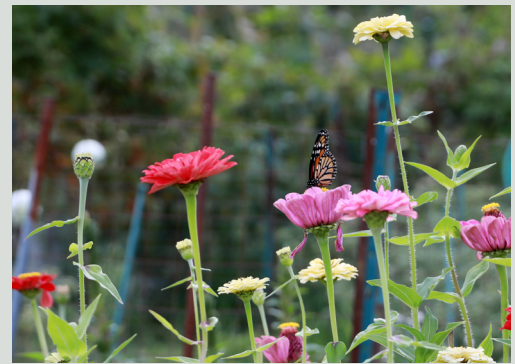


GREEN ROWS OF WALTHAM

2025 Annual Report



Dear Friends,

As we reflect on another year of growth and harvest at Green Rows of Waltham, Inc. I am filled with gratitude for the collective effort that makes our green space so vibrant and meaningful. This past year has been a testament to the power of our community, proving that when we work together, we can cultivate more than just fresh produce—we can grow connection and a shared sense of purpose. In 2025 we saw our garden plots flourish, providing members with hundreds of pounds of fresh, organic food. When the harvest is larger than our families can immediately consume, gardeners preserve the food, share it with neighbors, co-workers, and friends, and a few donate it.

This year marked many milestones, the most significant of which were:

1. Welcoming four talented, creative, and enthusiastic board members to replace members who retired
2. Developing and prioritizing a multi-year strategic plan
3. Offering four new garden plots created from an area that was previously a community compost pile
4. Establishing a practice of collecting food at each garden community gathering to donate to local pantries
5. Applying for and receiving our first grant from the Waltham Community Foundation with which we will build two accessible garden beds.

None of this would have been possible without the dedication of our volunteers. GROW, Inc. is run entirely by volunteers. I want to extend my deepest thanks to:

- Our gardeners, who, in addition to caring for their plots, mowed the grounds, repaired leaks in the irrigation system, upgraded and tended the community raspberry plot, built a pollinator garden, helped write this report, and worked to keep our garden beautiful and productive
- Our board members, who, in addition to providing the strategic vision and unwavering commitment to guide us forward, paid the bills, filed the financial forms, inspected plots, resolved gardener conflicts, led projects, applied for a grant, and enforced the rules

As we look ahead, we are excited to build on this momentum. Thank you for your interest and support. Please enjoy the details and pictures from Green Rows of Waltham, Inc. 2025 in the pages to follow!

Sincerely,

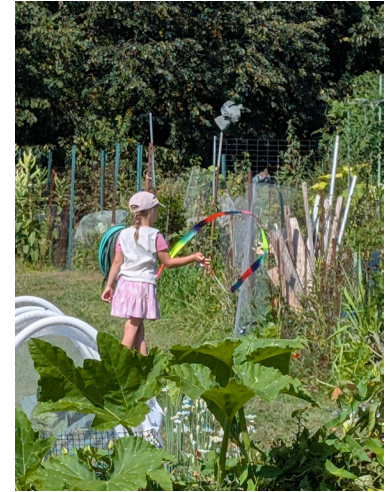
Katharine L. Randel
President, Board of Directors
Green Rows of Waltham, Inc.

About Green Rows of Waltham, Inc.

Community gardens offer many benefits to gardeners and the broader community by:

- Creating opportunities for outdoor exercise, social interaction, gardening therapy, and hands-on learning
- Strengthening grassroots leadership, shared decision making, and teamwork
- Establishing shared community space that brings people together encouraging cooperation, friendship, and understanding among diverse groups
- Serving as a catalyst for environmental stewardship through organic gardening, natural pest control, and native plantings to provide food and shelter for pollinators
- Producing healthy organic food to improve nutrition and reduce family food costs.¹

Green Rows Of Waltham is a volunteer-run community garden founded in 1993 to offer residents from Waltham and nearby communities an opportunity to grow organic produce on self-maintained plots. The plots are located at the 240 Beaver Street Field Station in Waltham, prime farmland that has been in continuous agricultural use for 96 years. In 2024 we became Green Rows of Waltham, Inc., a non-profit corporation. Through



“I love the time I can spend there with my family by showing to my kid and others how and what you can grow.”

GROW gardener

The GROW Board of Directors

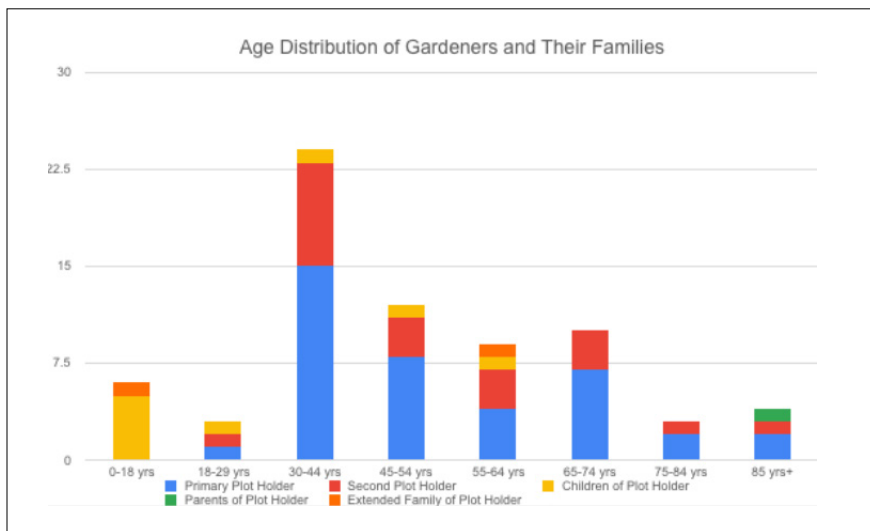
 <p>Carrie Fraga* CMC Lead, Takeda</p>	 <p>Alessandro Magli* Principal Scientist, Sanofi</p>	 <p>Russell Pandres* Treasurer Sr. Project Manager, Urban Edge</p>
 <p>Nick Polizzi* Sr. Admin. Lab Mgr., Whitehead Institute</p>	 <p>Kathy Randel President Retired Higher Education Administrator</p>	 <p>Judy Rottenberg Vice President Retired Higher Education Fundraising Administrator</p>
 <p>Scott Shurr Secretary Retired Technical Support Engineer</p>		

*New to the board in 2025.

¹ “Community Gardening Benefits,” American Community Gardening Association website, (<https://www.communitygarden.org/about> accessed January 20, 2026).

gardening here participants build a direct and deep connection with food, the land, and each other. Group work days, special events, and casual interactions in this beautiful setting help create a special sense of community among GROW’s multicultural and intergenerational members.

Green Rows of Waltham, Inc. (GROW) offers 156 plots, 100% of which are actively tilled at the start of every season. Forty four gardeners participated in our annual survey. From them we learned that their plots are gardened by one to five people ranging in age from under 18 to over 85. As illustrated in the following chart, gardeners work their plots with spouses, children (including adult children), grandchildren, and friends. What is not shown in the chart is the gardener who brings his disabled mother to the plots, and another older couple who has recently been joined at the plots by their adult son. GROW plots truly give families an opportunity to spend quality time outside together. Extrapolating the findings of our survey to the garden as a whole, we project that approximately 230 people may be enjoying gardening at the GROW plots every season.



“I think the best part of renting the plot and growing is becoming part of a community of people who are committed to growing healthy organic food for our families and friends. The community shares information, stories, food and cares for each other.”

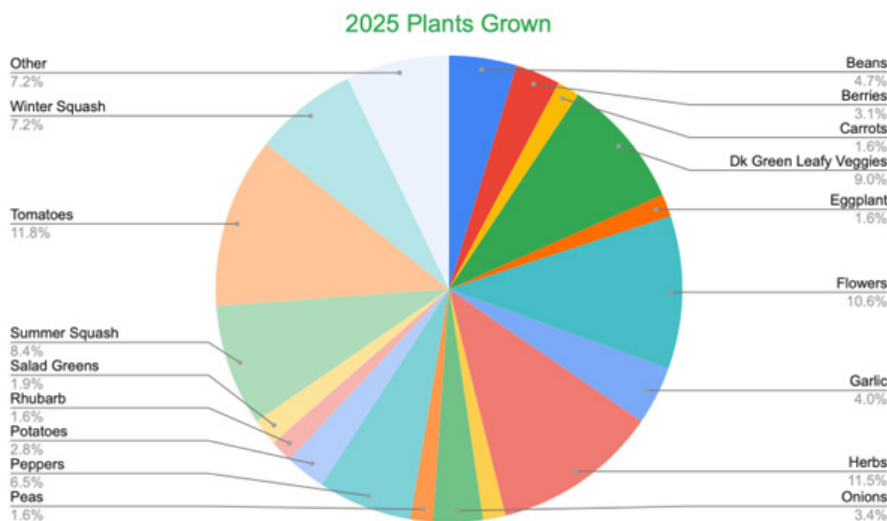
GROW gardener

Growing Healthy, Organic Food

Growing organic fruits and vegetables at GROW reduces the cost of fresh, healthy produce for gardeners, their families, and friends. Several gardeners grow crops familiar to their cultures which are not easily found in traditional grocery stores: winter melon, bitter melon, long beans, and celtuce are just a few. While gardeners do not quantify their harvests, some reported impressive harvests from their 15x15' plots:

- One 630 gram tomato
- 40 cucumbers
- 100 asparagus spears
- 50 winter squash
- 12 quarts of cherry tomatoes
- 100 chayote squash
- 30 pounds of tomatoes

While impressive, this chart does not reflect the full variety of crops grown. Each category may contain several varieties of a class of vegetables. For example, dark green leafy vegetables include: green cabbage, napa cabbage, lacinato kale, russian kale, sweet potato leaves, spinach, bok choy, swiss chard, tat soi, amaranth, purslane, sorrel, collards, nasturtium leaves, escarole, arugula, and lettuce.



“We have a freezer full of cooked-down tomatoes, ratatouille, rhubarb compote, salsa verde, garlic paste, pesto and other great sauces we made from our garden produce.”

GROW gardener



Affordable Plots: GROW strives to keep gardening affordable. At \$40 for a 15X15' plot for the season, GROW's plot fees are among the lowest for community gardens in the region. The board closely monitors expenses and makes plot fee decisions based on forecasts for the upcoming season.



Food Donation Program: At the November 2024 annual meeting gardeners expressed a keen desire to assist in the alleviation of food insecurity in the City of Waltham. A pilot program to donate fresh produce revealed that at this time we do not have the distribution infrastructure to make this a reasonable endeavor, so we instituted a practice of collecting and donating non-perishable food at every GROW event. In 2025 we collected 200 pounds of food and donated it to the Salvation Army and Healthy Waltham. We look forward to continuing this practice in years to come.



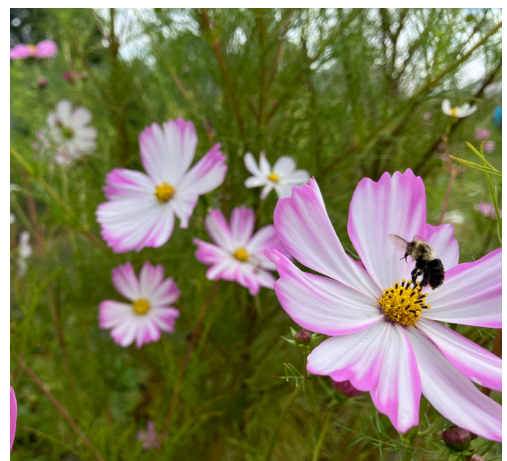
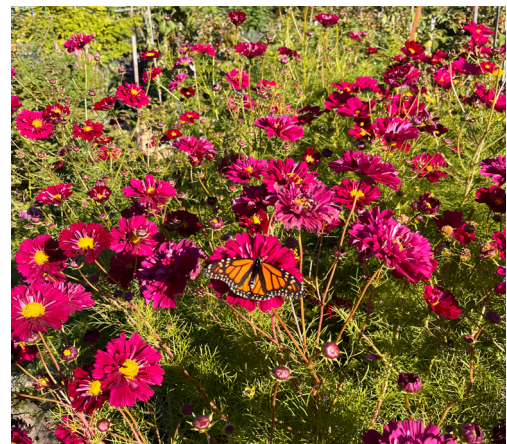
Added four new garden plots: In 2024, at the request of the City of Waltham, we removed our open compost pile. We held 2 additional work days where gardeners joined in chopping, digging, and hauling out organic matter in various stages of decomposition from our 30-year-old compost pile. We then covered the patch with plastic to kill any remaining weed seeds. In 2025, we created four new plots and assigned them to people on the waiting list.

Welcomed new gardeners from the wait list: In addition to the gardeners who used the newly-created plots mentioned above, in 2025 GROW welcomed 12 new gardeners from the waitlist. These new gardeners took over plots that had been vacated by individuals and families who left the garden.

Received grant to build accessible beds: Over the years there have been several long-term gardeners who have left the GROW gardening community because they were no longer able to maintain their plots due to physical challenges. As part of our strategic planning, the GROW board determined that the installation of raised beds could provide a new option for such gardeners and for potential new gardeners with mobility issues. We are thrilled to have received a generous donation for this effort from the Waltham Community Foundation in the fall of 2025, and look forward to building and installing two beds in 2026.

Environmental Stewardship

In 1921 philanthropist and dairy farmer Cornelia Warren left a portion of her land to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to be used by the Massachusetts Agricultural College. For the next six decades the UMass Waltham Field Station at 240 Beaver Street became a thriving source of agricultural service and scientific inquiry. However, as farming in the area declined and the University of Massachusetts moved its agricultural programs to Amherst the question of what to do with the site became an ongoing dilemma for the institution...It was during this fallow period that an idea for repurposing the underutilized fields germinated. Waltham resident Eugene Burkart contacted the University of Massachusetts to explore renting a dormant field to found a community garden. In 1993 a small group of aspiring gardeners established Waltham's first community garden, Green Rows of Waltham (GROW) on the rented fields.²



² Kricker, Dee. "Waltham Field Station at the Turn of the Century." Waltham Land Trust Journal, Fall 2011, <https://walthamlandtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/WLT-2011-Fall.pdf>.

In 2025 we continued this history of environmental stewardship:

Gardened to encourage pollinators: Without pollinators, we don't eat...During the past 30-plus years, our nation's pollinator populations have suffered serious losses due to invasive pests and diseases, exposure to pesticides and other chemicals, loss of habitat, loss of species and genetic diversity, and changing climate. Numerous species of butterflies, moths, and native bees are either extremely rare or are extinct.³ Gardening organically, as GROW gardeners do, is one of the best ways to protect pollinators.

Throughout GROW's history, several gardeners have grown flowers to attract pollinators. Birds, bees, butterflies, and other pollinators are regular visitors to the gardens.

In the interest of heightening GROW's contribution to this growing environmental concern, gardeners indicated a high interest in establishing a pollinator garden at the 2024 annual meeting.



In the spring of 2025 a raised bed and soil to fill it were donated. One of our board members volunteered to lead a team to choose and sow plants and to maintain the bed. Seven volunteers enthusiastically joined in the efforts. Sunflowers were grown in 2025, and seeds of Rudbeckia (black-eyed Susans), New England asters, butterfly and swamp milkweed, blue iris, and scarlet bee balm were sown to grace the garden in future years.

Conserved water: Two of our gardeners have the expertise needed to maintain and repair the garden's irrigation system. Gardeners are conscientious about reporting

³ Sonny Ramaswamy, "Reversing Pollinator Decline is Key to Feeding the Future," USDA Blog, June 24, 2016, <https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/blog/reversing-pollinator-decline-key-feeding-future>.

leaks and our two volunteers are responsive to those reports. This summer one of them took the initiative to check for and repair seepage and more subtle leaks on the 75 spigots in the system. Voluntary projects such as this are one demonstration of GROW's commitment to using resources sustainability.



GROW also encourages gardeners to reduce evaporation by watering early in the morning or in the evening, and by using mulch. Additional water conservation practices by individual gardeners include: rain barrels, ollas (unglazed terracotta pots buried in the soil) and carrot-shaped watering spikes to slowly deliver water directly to plant roots.



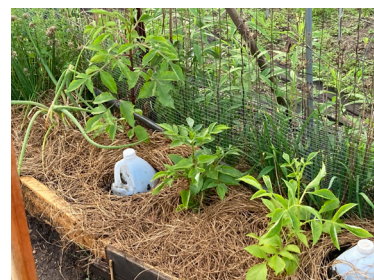
Mowed regularly: The long-time leader of the mowing team had to unexpectedly step down early in the season; but, with the dedicated team he had built and the expertise of one of our board members, the group of 12 gardeners continued their impressive efforts to keep the aisles and land around the plots functional and beautiful. Clear pathways discourage rodents and stinging insects from becoming pests.



Upgraded the community raspberry plot: Gene Burkart, one of the original founders of GROW, grew only raspberries in his plot. In his memory, the garden has maintained the plot as a resource to be harvested by all GROW members. Over the years the raspberry canes had become overcrowded, causing disease and insect infestation. In 2025, one gardener spearheaded the effort to thin, transplant, support, and weed the overgrown plot. Ten volunteers helped with the project and took turns watering and weeding the area throughout the summer. As a result the canes bore more delicious fruit with less evidence of disease.



Employed environmentally safe rodent control: The rodent team continued their efforts to monitor battery-operated electronic rodent traps and to research future strategies to reduce the population. We saw several hawks in the area and would like to encourage more natural predators to control the rodents. The team reached out to Mass Audubon and received guidance about steps we might take to achieve this which we plan to put into action over the next few years.



Partnerships

We are proud to work collaboratively with Waltham Fields Community Farm to share the parking lot and city water. We are incredibly grateful for their work to repair their underground irrigation system which led to a much more stable supply of water to the garden plots.

In late August we were excited to accept an offer from the WFCF staff of extra seedlings that they were not going to plant. Gardeners enthusiastically planted bok choy, scallions, swiss chard, celeriac, and other cool weather crops. We welcome the opportunity to continue this practice, should seedlings again become available.

Future Goals and Outlook

2025 has been an exciting and productive year for GROW. Building on this momentum, some of our priorities for 2026 include:

- Building accessible beds with the grant from the Waltham Community Foundation
- Maintaining the sheds and grape arbor
- Expanding our native pollinator bed
- Organizing peer-led skill-sharing sessions and other opportunities for gardeners to build relationships and exchange information
- Continuing to develop a multi-year strategic plan that prioritizes essential ongoing operational activities of a volunteer run community garden, and also builds in special projects in a way that thoughtfully reflects our bandwidth and resources
- Developing volunteer leadership opportunities and engaging more gardeners in these endeavors

Recognition

GROW, Inc. flourishes on the energy, passion, and efforts of dozens of individuals and organizations. The board is grateful to:

- Mayor Jeannette McCarthy and the City of Waltham for their holding of the fertile land on which the garden plots reside
- Stacey Daley and Waltham Fields Community Farm for sharing usage of the property in such a collaborative and helpful manner
- Waltham Community Foundation for the award of the grant to build accessible beds
- Our pro-bono lawyer for unparalleled assistance navigating the intricacies of the IRS
- Last, but by no means least are the dozens of gardeners and the GROW board who mow, repair, dig, prune, discuss, prioritize, research, and implement the myriad of operations that it takes to successfully run a large community garden.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!!