

Gardening Design



Located at the entrance to our community, the Wastewater Treatment Facility is one of the first visual impressions of Algonquin from those coming north on Illinois Route 31. A design consideration for this facility included landscaping a concrete wall (an approximately 200 foot section) with a vertical garden, utilizing perennial vines for color and textural interest, while maintaining low maintenance costs. To achieve the vertical garden, a support structure was constructed. Utilizing volunteers and staff support, a metal fence was erected the full length of the wall to a height equal to the top of the wall with grid work, allowing plant vines to attach themselves and cover the wall.

While determining the type and species of perennial vines to be used, a suggestion was made to grow vegetables, which could benefit those in need in the area. The Village worked with the Algonquin-Lake in the Hills Interfaith Food Pantry, and, within three weeks of the initial meeting, the original dedicated garden area was doubled. Vegetables were quickly planted, with the guidance and oversight of Laurie Selpien, the lead gardener for the project, using the assistance of volunteers from the food pantry to plant, fertilize, and harvest. A cooperative effort between the Village of Algonquin and the Algonquin-Lake in the Hills Interfaith Food Pantry was born. The garden featured vegetable plants, including a variety of tomatoes, basil, green peppers, cucumbers, pole beans, pumpkins, zucchini, and several types of squash.

The inaugural year of the garden was challenging with a summer of drought conditions, which was also experienced by those with home gardens. Despite the challenges, a total of 906.5 pounds of food was produced for the food pantry and its recipients, with a dollar value of approximately \$1,500.