

Acton public garden ploughed under

By **FRANCES NIBLOCK**
The New Tanner

A public garden planted to raise community pride four years ago in Acton has been ploughed under because no one is able or willing to care for it.

Town recreation and parks crews stripped the garden, on Ministry of Transportation land located on Main Street North between Highway 7 and the railway tracks, on Friday.

Many of the plants and grasses had already been moved by the Acton Horticultural Society to its other project sites including the Memory Garden by the library and the entrance off Main Street into Rotary Park.

The garden project was spearheaded by the Acton Horticultural Society as a Communities in Bloom project, a national competition designed to encourage beautification.

The Acton BIA and Town also put money into the garden, where initially, local officials hoped to locate Acton's gateway sign, recently installed at the Acton arena. The site did not meet MTO guidelines and the plan was dropped and interest in the garden waned.

Warren Harris, the Town's manager of parks and cemeteries, said when the Horticultural Society said earlier this year that it could no longer look after the site, the decision was made to dig it up and reseed it.

"It (site maintenance) is also really beyond what the Town is able to care for," Harris said when asked if the Town considered taking over weeding the garden.

Acton Horticultural Society (temporarily retired) president Max MacSween said he was "disappointed"



GARDEN GONE: Town recreation and parks staff rips up plants and weeds at a former Communities in Bloom community pride garden on Main Street North at Highway 7. The garden was abandoned and ploughed under when the Acton Horticultural Society determined it could not maintain it this summer. — Frances Niblock photo

the garden was being abandoned. He estimates \$2,500 and "lots" of volunteer hours went into planting and maintaining the site to date.

"No one ever really agreed to care for it (the garden), although the BIA wanted it for the Acton sign location," MacSween said on Friday, adding if he hadn't been ill recently, he would have continued to tend to the garden.

"It was just starting to get mature — it's too bad

because it was filling in nicely," MacSween said, adding there is "no incentive to keep the little corners" of Acton pretty because the Town has dropped out of the Communities in Bloom program that had an annual Town budget of approximately \$50,000.

MacSween said horticultural society members moved a lot of the plants and grasses from the site before the Town ploughed it under, adding some of

the plants had been stolen before volunteers could move them last month.

Wet weather...

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beans and not corn because of the weather.

"Two weeks from now, you can pretty well say what's going to happen — there's still a chance the weather will turn around," he said.

There are 619 working farms in Halton, according to the 2001 census, totalling

98,758 acres of Halton's total 320,000-acres.

Agriculture is big business in Halton with cash receipts of \$87.1-million for the top five commodities in 2002.

The top earners — floriculture, nursery and sod — had sales of \$38.4-million in 2001, while 12,810 cattle and calves were taken to market for sales of \$11.6-million.

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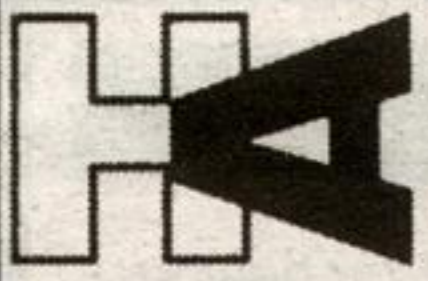
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