

City begins removal of five-month-old Occupy Toronto vegetable garden

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The Globe and Mail

Published Friday, Sep. 28 2012, 10:56 PM EDT

Last updated Friday, Sep. 28 2012, 11:59 PM EDT

The City of Toronto began dismantling a vegetable garden at Queen's Park on Friday that was planted illegally nearly five months ago as part of the Occupy movement.

The small plot contained peas and cherry tomato plants and had been dubbed the People's Peas Garden.

Jacob Moreland, a garden representative, said about 200 people had tended to the garden over the summer, planting, weeding and harvesting. Mr. Moreland contends the city should have advised the group before removing the plants.

"The garden was planted as an act of civil disobedience in the name of food security," Mr. Moreland said. "We're experiencing a global food crisis and here in this city ... increasingly more and more people are depending on food banks."

Garden supporters plan to gather at Queen's Park on Saturday for a harvest party. They're also planning to protest the garden's removal at City Hall on Monday by holding a rally and planting another vegetable garden.

Toronto parks director Richard Ubbens said the garden was removed because it was planted illegally.

"It was planted without notice or contact with our community garden program folks or our operations folks," said Mr. Ubbens, adding Queen's Park is not considered an appropriate space for a community vegetable garden.

He said the garden was targeted now because city staff begin cleaning up parks at this time of year. The city did not touch base with the organizers of the People's Peas Garden because it had no contact information for the group, Mr. Ubbens said.