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Extension



COMMUNITY GARDEN

Toolkit



COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER
& ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

COMMUNITY GARDEN



Toolkit

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WHAT IS A COMMUNITY GARDEN?

A community garden is a tract of private or public land gardened by friends, neighbors or groups of people, utilizing either individual or shared plots. Community gardens can be located in neighborhoods, schools, and in public housing; incorporated with hospitals, nursing homes, and senior centers. It may be on the outskirts of a city or town, incorporated on vacant lots within city limits, or in a homeowner's backyard.

The American Community Gardening Association (ACGA) recognizes that community gardening improves people's quality of life by providing a catalyst for neighborhood and community development, stimulating positive social interaction and recreation, encouraging self-reliance, beautifying neighborhoods, producing nutritious food, reducing family food budgets, conserving resources and creating opportunities for recreation, exercise, therapy and education.

BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY GARDENS*

- IMPROVES...** the quality of life for people in the garden
- PROVIDES...** a catalyst for neighborhood & community development
- STIMULATES...** social interaction
- ENCOURAGES...** self-reliance
- BEAUTIFIES...** neighborhoods
- PRODUCES...** nutritious food
- REDUCES...** family food budgets
- CONSERVES...** resources
- CREATES...** opportunity for recreation, exercise, therapy, & education
- REDUCES...** crime
- PRESERVES...** green space
- CREATES...** income opportunities and economic development
- REDUCES...** city heat from streets and parking lots
- PROVIDES...** opportunities for intergenerational and cross-cultural connections

Community gardens can also teach youth about:

- ◆ Job and life skills
- ◆ Basic business principles
- ◆ Where their food comes from
- ◆ Environmental stewardship and sustainability
- ◆ Practical math skills
- ◆ How to interact with each other in a physically productive and socially meaningful way

*American Community Garden Association, 2009





CHALLENGES OF COMMUNITY GARDENS

- ◆ Finding land that will support the community garden – securing land for use
- ◆ Long-term viability
- ◆ Lack of community interest/involvement – need for volunteers
- ◆ Theft/vandalism
- ◆ Neighborhood/wild animals
- ◆ Finding resources for building/maintenance
- ◆ Water and electricity
- ◆ Organic versus Conventional gardening
- ◆ Disputes and conflicts concerning membership fees (if any), regulations, gardening practices, or layout of the garden site.

TYPES OF COMMUNITY GARDENS

Youth/School Gardens

Gardens developed in a formal or informal environment; incorporates hands-on gardening with classroom instructions.

Therapy Gardens

Horticultural therapy gardens aimed at nursing homes, hospitals, senior centers, prisons, etc.

Community/G.I.F.T. Gardens

Can also be “Youth Led, Adult Supervised”

Gardens created by community members who help develop and share in the work/harvest. Food harvested is for all members in the community garden, or donated to local food pantries

Food Pantry Gardens

Food grown is donated to local food banks

LOCAL COMMUNITY GARDENS

Bond County



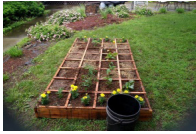
THE SIMPLE ROOM
G.I.F.T./Educational
Garden
405 Franklin Avenue
Greenville, IL 62246

Clinton County



TRENTON GARDEN
G.I.F.T. Garden
Trenton, IL

Jefferson County



ANGEL'S COVE
Baptist Children's Home & Family Services
4243 Lincolnshire Drive
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864



LIFEBOAT GARDEN
G.I.F.T. Garden
Lifeboat Alliance
1717 Jefferson
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864



MT. VERNON COMMUNITY GARDEN
G.I.F.T. Garden
Veterans Memorial Park
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864



SPERO FAMILY SERVICES GARDEN
2023 E. Richview Rd.
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864

Marion County



CENTRALIA COMMUNITY GARDEN
G.I.F.T. Garden
Centralia, IL 62801



MARION COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY STRAW BALE GARDEN
Lincoln Court
Centralia, IL 62801



MARION COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY STRAW BALE GARDEN
Odin Senior Living
Odin, IL 62870



SALEM CENTRAL COMMUNITY GARDEN
U of I G.I.F.T. Garden
Elm and Pearl Streets
Salem, IL 62881



MARION COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY STRAW BALE GARDEN
Glenview 1
Salem, IL 62881

Washington County



HOYLETON CHILDREN'S GARDEN
Trinity Lutheran Church
680 W. Walnut St
Nashville, IL 62263

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH GARDEN
15538 State Route 127
New Minden, IL 62263



ROLE OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS

Community organizers work with people to improve the conditions of a community and try to enhance their quality of life. Creating a community garden requires the organizer to define goals of the garden, help people identify strengths, assets, opportunities and challenges, organize resources, and to keep track of and evaluate the work.

A committed organizer is crucial to the success of a community garden. This person should:

Establish leadership roles

Development of **PLANNING COMMITTEE** consisting of 6-8 individuals that are committed to developing the garden, such as designing, developing an operational plan, obtaining resources, preparation of garden budget, management of volunteers, etc. Designation of one person as a general garden coordinator can serve as the contact person between the planning committees and the community organizations.

Develop rules and regulations (by-laws) for the community garden

- ◆ Develop organizational plan (designation of garden manager/assistant manager, fees, hours of operation, volunteer work schedule, etc.)
- ◆ Who will use the garden? What criteria will be used to choose?
- ◆ Who will maintain the garden? Will it have employees or member volunteers?
- ◆ Legal ramifications on private/public property
- ◆ Handling disputes between gardeners
- ◆ Insurance coverage

Planning Committee responsibilities

RESEARCH/LOCATE land. Maps of publicly owned lands can be obtained from local city government. Other land options can be on church land, privately owned vacant land, or under-used lots throughout your county. Items to keep in mind when researching land:

- ◆ What was the land used for in the past? Is there a possibility of soil contamination?
- ◆ Will the land be leased or donated? Will there be fees associated with this?
- ◆ If the land will be leased, check with an attorney to determine a need for rights of access to the use/access of the land, as well as liability issues and insurance.
- ◆ Will the garden be on public land or private land? Will there be fees associated with this?
- ◆ Public land not always best option. If contract(s) are not renewed, then the garden has no choice but to move. If on private land, try to obtain a contract that is at least three years.

FORM subcommittees to address specific topics

- ◆ Funding acquisitions and partners
- ◆ Garden construction
- ◆ Communication and media publicity
- ◆ Educational subcommittee
- ◆ Policy/rules/regulations for the garden

INITIATE a garden budget for site clearing, purchasing materials, soil testing and improvement, buildings, etc.

NAME the garden.

PLANNING THE GARDEN

What is the purpose and goal of the community garden?

Many of today's social issues, such as poor nutrition, declining levels of physical and psychological health, or unsafe/polluted environments can give reasons to develop a community garden. Many gardens help to beautify the area, promote neighborhood cooperation by working together for the greater good, or assist the community with donations of fresh fruits and vegetables to the local food pantry.

Is there a demand?

Organizers will need to assess whether there is sufficient interest for a community garden. Interest should come from families and individuals who are committed to using a neighborhood garden, not just well-meaning supporters. Draw up a list of at least ten families within the area to determine an interest.

Does the community garden fit into the neighborhood, and will neighbors be agreeable to have a community garden within their neighborhood?

Schedule community meetings and create a neighborhood survey to obtain comments and concerns from the public. Address issues before committing resources to the project.

List ideas from the survey's and public meetings, then sort out priorities and alternatives.





CHOOSING AND EVALUATING THE SITE

- ◆ Is it accessible?
- ◆ What are the hours of sunlight – most fruit and vegetables require at least 6 hours of full sunlight. Trees overhanging or along the side of a garden can reduce the amount of sunlight into the growing area.
- ◆ Soil quality – getting a soil test should be a priority once the site is determined. Testing for contaminants and heavy metals in city or urban areas may be required, based on the history of the land.
- ◆ Water accessibility – is it available either through city access or surface/ground water. Testing of surface and ground water should be a priority once the site is determined.
- ◆ Electricity – this can be optional
- ◆ Zoning concerns – check with local city, county, and township regulations to see whether there are issues with developing a community garden at the chosen site.

DEVELOPING THE GARDEN

- ◆ Will the garden be organic/non-organic? If both, how will the garden be divided, and what pesticides will be used?
- ◆ Will the garden plots be tilled or no-tilled?
- ◆ Will plots for local food banks be established? Who will manage these plots?
- ◆ Will the garden incorporate handicapped facilities?
- ◆ Will there be an area designated for children?
- ◆ Will the garden have year-round gardening or only during summer months?
- ◆ Will the garden plots be individually managed or will there be common growing areas?
- ◆ Planting responsibilities/pesticide spraying
- ◆ Harvesting responsibilities

SUPPORT AND FUNDING FOR THE GARDEN

- ◆ Where will funding come from for the initiation and sustainability of the garden (plant sales, grants, local businesses, etc.)
- ◆ How will the garden acquire materials for buildings, fencing, raised beds, bulletin board, tools, soil/seeds, etc.
- ◆ How will it be built and who will build

CONTINUING EDUCATION OF COMMUNITY AND GARDEN MEMBERS

- ◆ Incorporate hands-on educational programs for gardeners or local community
- ◆ Newsletters for community gardeners to know what needs to be done monthly in the garden area

ROLE OF EXTENSION

University of Illinois Extension has the knowledge and resources to assist your group or organization in the development of a community garden. Extension volunteers are available to make site visits through the planning, development, and implementation stages, as well as follow-up visits during the growing seasons. Training workshops can be developed on a wide range of horticultural and marketing topics, based on the needs of each individual community garden. University of Illinois Extension has numerous Horticulture and Small Farm/Local Food publications that are available at all Extension Offices as well as on the internet (refer to “Resources” section of this publication). It will be the responsibility of community garden organizers to perform their own fundraising, site preparation, purchasing of hardscape material, planting, maintenance, and harvesting. Please stop in at your local Extension Office to see what we can do for you!



GRANT RESOURCES

<http://scottmiraclegro.com/corporate-responsibility/gro1000/>

\$1500 to local communities to help bring edible gardens, flower gardens and public green spaces to neighborhoods across the United States

<https://kidsgardening.org/grants-and-programs/>

The National Gardening Association Kids Gardening Resources – A number of grant opportunities to schools and other educational programs that help build youth gardens and sponsor conservation efforts

<http://www.hhs.gov/partnerships/grants/index.html>

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Grant Information – provides resources to connect faith-based and community organizations to grant information

<http://www.greeneducationfoundation.org/greenthumbchallengesub/green-thumb-challenge-winners.html>

Green Education Foundation and Gardeners Supply Company – Green Thumb Challenge Grant – schools and youth groups; \$250.00 prize for submitting chronicles of their garden projects

<http://foundation.walmart.com/apply-for-grants/>

Awarded to organizations of all sizes in communities around the globe. Awards grants of \$250.00 and up, depending on type of program being funded

<http://www.nrpa.org/garden/>

National Recreation and Park Association Grow Your Garden Grants; developed to benefit low-income families through the donation of locally grown fruits and vegetables.

<http://kgi.org/grants>

Sow it Forward Garden Grants. – the grant is for nonprofit causes or organizations (schools, 501(c)(3), food banks, community gardens, colleges, libraries, prisons, etc); up to \$500 (cash, seeds + more)

<http://www2.fiskars.com/Community/Project-Orange-Thumb>

Fiskars Grant and Garden Makeover; for cash and tools – up to \$3,500

<http://www.bcbsil.com/company-info/community-involvement/grant-sponsorship>

Blue Cross Blue Shield Illinois Grant and Sponsorship Programs: Supporting Community Efforts; Healthy Kids, Healthy Families and Community Partners Grant

<http://clifbarfamilyfoundation.org/Grants-Programs>

Clif Bar Family Foundation Grant Programs; made to nonprofit organizations

GRANT RESOURCES (cont.)

<http://gardenclub.homedepot.com/the-good-seed-grow-a-youth-garden-with-a-grant-from-home-depot/>

Home Depot Garden Club Youth Gardening Grant; must have at least 15 kids between the ages of 3 and 18 years of age

<http://www.captainplanetfoundation.org/apply-for-grants/>

Captain Planet Foundation – issued to nonprofit organizations (includes most schools and nonprofit organizations); grants between \$500.00 - \$2,500.00

<http://web.eenorthcarolina.org/core/item/topic.aspx?tid=85010>

Large listing of grants available, by application due date or ongoing

<http://www.expandedschools.org/funding-opportunities/operation-green-plant-%E2%80%93-free-seed-grants#sthash.5i9Yah2I.dpbs>

Operation Green Plant – Free Seed Grants – Funder = America the Beautiful Fund

<https://www.plt.org/apply-for-greenworks-environmental-education-grant>

Project Learning Tree – grants for service-learning projects that improve schools or restore natural habitats; up to \$1000.00

<http://www.toolboxforeducation.com/>

Lowe's Toolbox for Education grants: up to \$5,000 per school

<http://www.eatrightfoundation.org/foundation/championgrants/>

General Mills Champions for Healthy Kids Grants - \$20,000 limit for grassroots programs promoting healthful eating and active lifestyles for kids and families

<http://homedepotfoundation.org/page/applying-for-a-grant>

Home Depot grants – up to \$5000 – are available to IRS-registered 501(c) designated organizations and tax-exempt public service agencies in the U.S.; planting trees or community gardens and/or landscaping community facilities that serve veterans

<https://corporate.bestbuy.com/community-grants-page/>

Best Buy Community Grants – will donate up to \$2 million to local and regional nonprofit organizations to develop technology skills

<http://www.wildones.org/seeds-for-education/sfe/>

Wild Ones – native plants, natural landscapes; enhancement of schoolyards; cash grants under \$500 available for plants and seeds



GRANT RESOURCE\$ (cont.)

<http://www2.epa.gov/education/environmental-education-ee-grants>

EPA Environmental Education (EE) Grants – supports environmental education projects that promote environmental awareness and stewardship

<http://www2.epa.gov/home/grants-and-other-funding-opportunities>

EPA grants and other funding opportunities

<https://www.statefarm.com/about-us/community/education-programs/grants-scholarships>

Good Neighbor Citizenship Company Grants – focus on safety, education, and community development intended to advance access, equity, and inclusiveness while discouraging harmful discrimination; available to educational institutions, municipal/government programs, nonprofits, volunteer fire, and chambers of commerce

<https://corporate.kohls.com/corporate-responsibility/associates-in-action>

Kohl's Volunteer Program – associates donate personal time to volunteer with eligible nonprofit organizations, includes \$500 grant for qualifying events

<http://www.annies.com/giving-back/grants-for-gardens>

Annie's Grants for Gardens – For schools and educational programs that help build school gardens

<http://www.katieskrops.com/start-a-garden.html>

Katie's Krops – garden supply store gift cards, other tools/materials for child or group of youth where harvests are donated to the community

<https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/community-food-projects-cfp-competitive-grants-program>

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition – Community Food Projects, for nonprofits and food program service providers, one-time grants that require dollar-for-dollar match

<https://seedmoney.org/apply/>

Crowdfunding for gardens – offers \$400 Challenge grants for successful crowdfunding projects and \$200 Merit grants

<https://www.ameren.com/illinois/community/how-to-apply-grant>

Ameren Illinois Charitable Grant Program – monetary grants for tax-exempt organizations within Ameren Illinois service area to support environment, youth and education, civic/community, health and human services, and arts/culture programs

COMMUNITY GARDEN



REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

Date Submitted: _____ County: _____

Contact Name: _____

Contact Address: _____

City/State: _____ Zip Code: _____ Phone Number: _____

E-mail address: _____

Garden name and location: _____

Is this: an existing garden a garden being developed?

Are you or your organization the land owner? Yes No

If no, do you or your organization have a contract with the land owner? Yes No

Is there insurance on the garden property? Yes No

Is there an established planning committee in place for the garden? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Does your group have basic gardening experience? Yes No

Who will the garden serve? _____

Does your garden have a particular philosophy or mission statement?

Are there established rules/regulations for the garden? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

What are the best and worst features of your existing or proposed garden site?

Have you talked with the neighbors about your gardening project? Yes No

If yes, what were their reactions? _____

Is there funding/materials available to create/maintain the garden? (please explain)

If the garden is not built yet, who will build it?

What particular questions do you have?

I/we would like U of I Extension to: Schedule a site visit

Assist in the design/development/implementation of the garden

Provide educational information

Please send completed form to:

University of Illinois Extension
ATTN: ANR Extension Educator
Jefferson County Extension Office
4618 Broadway
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864

Or answer the questions in an e-mail and send to ljgeorge@illinois.edu.



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please contact your local Extension office.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

University of Illinois Extension - Bond, Clinton, Jefferson, Marion & Washington Counties

<https://extension.illinois.edu/bcjmw>

Local Food Systems & Small Farms website

<https://extension.illinois.edu/global/local-foods-small-farms>

University of Illinois Extension Horticulture website

<https://extension.illinois.edu/global/horticulture>

University of Missouri Extension Community Gardening Toolkit

<http://extension.missouri.edu/explorepdf/miscpubs/mp0906.pdf>

American Community Gardening Association

<https://communitygarden.org/>

University of Illinois “Watch Your Garden Grow”

<http://extension.illinois.edu/veggies/>

Food Market Maker

<http://foodmarketmaker.com/>



extension.illinois.edu/bcjmw/



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Updated January 2019