

COMMUNITY GARDENING 102

PHILOSOPHY: DEFINING YOUR GARDEN'S PURPOSE



Once membership expands beyond the core group, sit down together. Ask some serious and often inspiring questions. Get some serious and guiding answers. Take notes.

1. Why should we start a community garden?

Connections to others and the environment! Community gardens bring people together, offer places to garden for those who do not have space, create green spaces for public enjoyment, develop a sense of pride for neighborhoods, and clean the air of urban pollutants. It is a way for the whole community to participate in sustainable living.

2. What will it take to start a community garden?

A garden is a place for creativity, relaxation, joy, exercise, and health. It gathers people of various generations, backgrounds, ethnicities, and economic standing. It takes plenty of hands, good planning, great leadership, some plant knowledge, familiarity with your climate, an available site, and a lot of hard work.

3. How will we define and develop our community garden?

Share the vision. Gather with others who have similar goals and interests. Discuss the purpose of your garden. Identify all the elements that fulfill the purpose. Develop a plan of action. Delegate tasks to and secure commitments from numerous members, working in small groups or independently.

4. Who will benefit from our garden?

Everyone in your community can benefit!

Grow food for friends and family, for sale at a local market, or for provisions at the food pantry.

Host celebrations, public demonstrations, or casual gatherings.

Provide a quiet place to enjoy nature and contemplation.

Offer accessible beds for your handicapped and elder gardeners.

Create a safe area for children to play and learn and get outdoors.

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5. What will our garden grow?

It's up to the group to choose.

Pick from vegetables, flowers, herbs, fruit trees, shade trees, native plants, plants for fragrance, plants for medicinal purposes, tall plants to shape private outdoor space, short plants to keep the sightline clear, sturdy plants to endure pets and playful youngsters, and/or soothing plants to welcome meditation.

6. What style will our garden be?

An edible landscape full of edible flowers, vegetables, herbs, and native plants

One big plot for heavy production or multiple small plots for casual production

A meditation garden for a place to relax and enjoy nature

A natural space for neighborhood meetings, gatherings, barbeques, etc.

One large integrated garden or a garden divided into individual plots

A demonstration garden that will educate others about different growing methods

An environment-friendly garden that demonstrates organic methods and energy and water efficiency

A garden designed to attract butterflies and birds

A medicinal garden full of helping herbs, high vitamin produce, fresh air, and rejuvenating space

7. What do we want or need in our garden?

Community space: Open area, demonstration tent, pavilion, tool shed, work tables

Waste collection: Composting area, recycling bins, waste cans

Soil: Native soil, fertilizer, mulch, compost, manure, soil amendments

Plants: Flowers, vegetables, trees, herbs, shrubs, vines, groundcover

Tools: Wheelbarrows, hoses, hand tools, yard tools, potting supplies

Water: Access, collection of rainwater, collection of A/C condensate, supply lines

Security: Lighting, fences, gates, emergency phone access

Paths: Decorative stone, crushed granite, brick, pavement, mulch

Art: Sculptures, integrated artistic features, signage

Rest: Benches, picnic tables, arbor, pavilion, gazebo, shade, bathrooms for volunteers

Play: Swings, playground equipment, ground labyrinths, paved area for chalk art or hopscotch

ADA accessibility: Elevated beds, 42-inch wide paths

Delivery space: Open area, near curbs or driveway

Cautionary considerations: Don't allow trucks to drive over irrigation lines. Be aware of invasive plant species and avoid including them intentionally or by accident in your garden space.