

Orange County Community Gardeners Guide



Our Mission:

To help groups of people plant and grow fresh vegetables in a community garden; teach adults and youth cooperation, environmental and ecological awareness; and provide a learning resource for sustainable gardening.



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Acknowledgments

- Wasatch Community Gardens Community Garden Handbook was used with permission as the guide for producing this handbook guide. Wasatch Community Gardens is a community-based, non-profit organization that has served Salt Lake City, Utah's low-income neighborhoods since 1989. (<http://www.wasatchgardens.org/Library/CommunityGardenStart-upHandbook.PDF>)
- American Community Gardening Association (ACGA) whose Starting a Community Garden publication was used to help structure the guide. The ACGA is a nonprofit membership organization of professionals, volunteers and supporters of community greening in urban and rural communities. For more information see: (<http://communitygarden.org>)
- University of Missouri, Community Gardening Toolkit, Publication MP906, Bill McKelvey, MU Extension Associate, (<http://extension.missouri.edu>)



Contents

Introduction.....	3
Starting a Community Garden	4
Forming an Organization & Appointing a Garden Caretaker	4
Types of Community Gardens:	6
Choosing a Site.....	6
Planning the Garden	16
Funding the Garden.....	17
Insurance	19
Prepare and Develop the Site	20
Organize the Garden.....	22
Setting Up a New Gardening Organization.....	27
Troubleshooting	28
Resource Material for Starting a Community Garden	31
Books/Publications/Articles/Websites on Community Gardening	31
Seed Catalogs:	35
To obtain additional copies of this Community Gardeners Guide contact:	39
WARM SEASON CROPS.....	40
COOL SEASON CROPS.....	41
Appendix.....	42
A-1 Time Line for Planning a Community Garden	42
A-2 Orientation Outline	43
M A-3 Month-to-Month Gardener’s Checklist th-to-Month Gardener’s Check List	44
A-4 Management of the Garden.....	47
Responsibilities.....	47
Job Descriptions	51
Sample Forms	55
F-1 Budgets	55
F-2 Community Garden Information & Policies.....	57
F-3 Community Garden Rules and Gardener’s Responsibilities	59
F-4 Community Gardener’s Agreement.....	60
F-5 Flyer	61
F-6 Lease Agreement	62
F-7 Letter to Property Owner	63
F-8 Waiver of Liability	64

Preface

There is a growing disconnect between consumers and their food sources--between a consumer's choices and their larger social and environmental impacts. Most grocery outlets carry produce that is not as fresh as consumers desire. As a result, there is an absence of locally grown products on the average American dinner table. In addition, there is a growing inability of the public to make connections between their health and the health of the environment, between their ecological life support system and environmental stress. As urban areas continue to experience growth, communities are losing much needed green space for recreation, relaxation and neighborhood gatherings.

What does this have to do with community gardens? Creating community gardens is a tangible way to affect positive change. Imagine how much food could be grown on the vacant land in our cities using sustainable gardening techniques that improve our health and the health of the environment. With the creation of community gardens, vacant parcels in our cities can be converted into flourishing green spaces. They create places where people grow delicious and nutritious food for themselves and for the hungry, beautify their cityscape, reconnect with the environment and their social communities and reduce the distance between their actions and their better food choices.

Community gardens can make significant contributions to the health of the earth and to the enrichment of our communities. The process of starting community gardens is an empowering and fulfilling way to build community. The benefits of the finished garden are numerous, both for the general public, and especially for the community of, by, and for which the garden was created. The purpose of this guide is to guide community groups through the process of starting a community garden.

There is no "cookie cutter" process to follow because Community Gardens are as unique as the communities they represent. The information that follows is not meant to be exhaustive. However, the hope is that the following sections will prove helpful to the planning and development of your own community's garden.

Happy Gardening!!!

A Brief History of Community Gardening

1890. Community gardens “Potato Patches” first appeared in Detroit. During this early evolution of community gardening, a variety of groups were responsible for promoting community gardening. Community garden began as a way to provide land and technical assistance to unemployed workers in large cities and to teach civics and good work habit to youth.

1918. The government promoted War or Liberty Gardens during World War I to supplement and expand the domestic food supply. The federal government incorporated agricultural education and food production into the public school curriculum through a Bureau of Education program called the US School Garden Army. Millions of children enlisted in the program with thousands of teachers receiving materials and volunteers helped lead or assist garden projects.

1930. Community garden “relief gardening” provided a means for the unemployed to grow their own food during the Great Depression. Private, State and local agencies provided individuals with garden plots and employment in cooperative gardening.

1940. The government promoted Victory Gardens during World War II to encourage people to grow food for personal consumption recreation and to improve morale. After the war, only a few gardening program remained.

1970. In response to urban abandonment, rising inflation, environmental concerns and a desire to build neighborly connections, community gardens were reborn. City-wide organization assisted people with acquiring land, construction gardens and developing

educational programming. Community gardens were used to rebuild neighborhoods and expand green spaces. A new focus was placed on rebuilding social networks and infrastructure of blighted urban communities.

TODAY. “Recession Gardens” is a term used to place emphasis on the need to return to community gardens for many of the reasons already mentioned; in response to severe economic downturn, a need to revitalize blighted neighborhoods, recreation, and rebuilding social networks. Many advocates claim community gardens have permanent, long-term functions that provide a number of benefits to individuals, families and communities. Such as:

Community. Community gardens foster a sense of community identity, ownership and stewardship. They provide a place for people of diverse background to interact and share cultural traditions.

Education. Intergenerational gardeners acquire and share knowledge related to gardening, cooking, nutrition, health, business management, leadership development and market gardening.

Food production and access. There are many who can not provide the requirements for good plant growth in their environment such as apartment dwellers, mobile home park residents, and generally poor soil or deep shading on existing home sites.

Nutrition. Community gardeners eat more vegetables.

Recreation. Gardening requires physical activity and helps improve overall physical health.

Youth. Gardens in schools provide a safe place for youth to explore gardening, nature and community through formal programming or informal participation. Youth connect with their food sources and learn biology, mathematics, English, and science while in the garden.

Introduction

What is a Community Garden?

The University of Florida (UF) defines a community garden as “a collaborative green space in which the participants share in both the maintenance and the rewards” (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/EP124>). For purposes of this document a community garden is defined as a piece of land shared by friends and neighbors for growing vegetables, and providing opportunities for positive social interactions and recreation. Community gardens can take on diverse forms. Designated land can be divided up among neighbors for personal use or developed into school gardens where subjects including biology, environmental science, and mathematics can be taught and explored in the garden environment. Other community gardens have been used for growing food for food pantries, (examples are “Food for the Needy” and “Grow a “Row for the Hungry”) educational and training workshops, youth gardening programs, and integrated into senior centers. A garden’s theme and program possibilities are virtually endless and should be the focus of the envisioning stage.

What are the Benefits of Community Gardening?

- Community building tool—create opportunities for neighbors to work together
 - Grow fresh, nutritious produce in urban areas for community members or food banks
 - Clean up and use vacant and unsightly lots
 - Provide safe learning space for children and adults
 - Preserve urban green space
 - Economic empowerment—provide income opportunities
- Enable positive human-earth connections and the cultivation of environmental stewardship
 - Reduce stress and improve mental health of community members
 - Beautify and enrich neighborhoods and enhance their sense of identity
 - Provide opportunities for intergenerational and cross-cultural connections

How does a Community Garden Operate?

Just as the settings for community gardens vary, so do the ways for making them work. The key to success is to create a system for decision-making and responsibility-sharing that works for you and your garden. A governance system that involves all members of the garden and interested community members in maintaining and organizing garden operations will support long-term success. Typically a garden organization will be established and a Garden Caretaker will be appointed. The garden organization will address administrative issues such as: selecting the garden location, soliciting support for the garden, establishing and operating a budget, general maintenance, garden celebrations, community relations, garden fees and fund raising, rules for the garden, and the initial and long-term planning for the garden. The Garden Caretaker will manage the day-to-day operation of the garden. The Community Garden Organization and Garden Caretaker are supported by the Orange County Extension Service through the Community Garden Advisor (Florida Certified Master Gardener (MG) Volunteer). (See Appendix A-4 Management of the Garden for more details.)

Starting a Community Garden

Forming an Organization & Appointing a Garden Caretaker

Community gardens start with community. Forming a manageable group of committed individuals ensures that one person will not be doing all the work. Involving many people at the beginning of the process increases the shared sense of ownership and responsibility for the garden's success. If you want to start a garden in August, be sure to start planning no later than January (about 8 months before starting the garden) of the year you want to start the garden. Gather at least 10 people who are committed to maintaining an individual plot of their own and the garden as a whole for at least one season (First Warm Season: August – November, Cool Season October - February, or Second Warm Season February - June).

A Community Garden Organization should consist of at least three members in addition to a President. The organization is responsible for administering the garden and supporting the Garden Caretaker. The President must be a well organized person who is willing to organize and coordinate organization functions. Other common organization positions may include a Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Fund raising Chair, and other possible organization members may also include: representatives of the land owners, representatives of grantees to the garden, representatives from local schools, neighborhood council members, church leaders, local politicians, representatives from nonprofits, lawyers, and perhaps most importantly, neighbors who live near the garden, and neighbors who grow vegetables in the community garden.

The organization should have both people who are interested in being gardeners and people who have good community contacts

with the local government (city and county) and local businesses.

During the initial planning stage is a good time to start identifying local sponsors who would be willing to help finance the garden or provide necessary tools or seeds or plants. One of the organization's first jobs will be to identify local, regional, and national resources for community gardening. If a particular contact person, such as a business owner, is interested in the community garden, but is too busy to be actively involved with its development, ask if she/he will support the garden in other ways. Announcing the garden project at neighborhood council meetings, putting ads in local newsletters, recording Public Service Announcements on local radio stations, circulating flyers, and contacting representatives of local institutions will help you recruit organization members.

When the organization is first formed the primary tasks of the organization will be:

- Determining if there really is a need and desire for a garden.
- Identifying garden sponsors.
- Keeping the group or neighborhood for which the garden is intended involved in all phases of the garden planning and operation.
- Organizing a meeting or social gathering of interested people.
- Choosing a well-organized leadership team.
- Make a list of what needs to be done and then form sub-committees to work on accomplishing tasks that need to be done.
- Deciding on a mailing address and central telephone number(s).
Forming a telephone tree or e-mail list to keep interested parties current on garden activities.
- Finding a garden site.

- Obtaining a lease from the property owner of the garden site.
- Determining a source of water for the garden.
- Finally, develop a website to promote the Community Garden.

A Garden Caretaker also needs to be appointed as soon as possible. The Garden Caretaker is in charge of operating the garden (making basic repairs, making sure the garden is well-maintained, and that gardeners are following rules established by the organization), mentors the other gardeners in the community garden, and requests support from the organization as needed. (See Appendix A-4 Management of the Garden for more details.)

The community garden should also have an expert gardener on board, such as a Community Gardener Advisor (Florida Certified Master Gardener {MG} Volunteer) from the County Extension Office to act as a resource person and advisor to the organization and the Garden Caretaker. The Community Gardener Advisor will not be a member of the Organization.

Once you have a group of interested organization members, it is time to call the first meeting. This meeting will allow members to become acquainted with each other. The agenda will include envisioning what the garden could look like, what land is available, and what focus it could take (such as a youth education or food bank garden).

In addition to an envisioning session during the first meeting, the organization will begin to discuss the organizational structure of the community garden, including: how will decisions be made (Ex. Consensus style voting where gardeners govern themselves), who will take what role during and after the planning stage, and considering who would

make a good Organization President, Organization Member (other than the President), and Garden Caretaker.

During the planning process it is advisable to create a Planning Committee to set goals, establish the garden rules and regulations, decide whether to incorporate or not, investigate land options, negotiate the lease with the landowner, raise funds, determine the garden layout, create a budget, determine how problems (such as vandalism) will be dealt with if they occur, obtain an insurance plan if needed, and make any other decisions that may arise. (See Sample Forms F-2 Community garden Information and Policies and Sample Forms F-3 Community Garden Rules and Gardener’s Responsibilities for more details.)

Dividing-up into sub-committees to accomplish each task is an efficient and helpful way to manage what to some may be a daunting list of tasks. Focusing on one stage at a time will help you avoid becoming overwhelmed. Possible committees include: a fund raising committee, outreach or public relations committee and a steering committee to oversee the community garden in its entirety. (See Appendix A-1 Time Line for Planning a Community Garden for an agenda for the first meeting.) Remember, the more diverse the members of the committees and “coalition” of sponsors, the more resources will be available and the more successful the community garden project will be.

Envisioning Stage

During the envisioning stage, the Planning Committee churns out its visions, goals and objectives for the community garden project in a veritable brainstorm of ideas. This is the most exciting stage when community garden members are most enthusiastic and eager to start digging in the earth. The questions that should be explored include: What type of

garden do we want (a youth garden, a neighborhood garden, a food bank garden, etc.)? Who is the garden for? What sort of programs could we run out of the garden? Where could the garden be located? Within what area should we search for land? What is the goal for the garden completion date? How will the garden be laid out? What benefit will the garden bring to our community? What community events could be held there? Where can education and training in planting and growing vegetables in the community garden be obtained?

Before the end of the first meeting, it is important to discuss briefly all the different stages of starting a community garden and the general timeline so the committee can stay organized and up-to-date. (See Appendix A-1 Time Line for Planning a Community Garden for an agenda for more information.) Other decisions that should be at least tentatively made by the end of the first meeting include: the general type of garden it will be, what sort of programs will be run out of it, and what neighborhood(s) will be the focus of the search for land.

Types of Community Gardens:

Neighborhood Gardens: Garden plots are rented to community members who do not have their own gardening space. The garden serves as a gathering space for neighbors.

Youth/School Gardens: youth garden programs where youth groups participate in hands-on learning of subjects such as environmental sciences, biology, and mathematics in the garden setting.

Food Pantry Gardens: Food grown in garden is donated to local food banks often lacking fresh, nutritious fruit and vegetables.

Entrepreneurial Training Gardens:
Commercial garden/economic

diversification programs—in conjunction with local farmers’ markets. Job-training, leadership training, and sustainable urban agriculture/small farm business internship programs.

Mental Health/Rehabilitation Therapy Gardens: Horticultural therapy/healing gardens often created on hospital grounds.

Others

Prison garden programs.

Native/Drought-tolerant Gardens

Demonstration Gardens

Flower Gardens

Senior Center Gardens

Public Housing Gardens

Generating and Assessing the Interest of the Community

In addition to the suggestions included in the “Forming an Organization & Appointing a Garden Caretaker” section above, it is helpful to create and disseminate flyers to residents living in the neighborhood surrounding a possible site for the community garden. Such a flyer can invite community participation and feedback among residents and the garden planners. If the feedback is positive, then starting a garden in their neighborhood will be that much easier. If the feedback is negative and unresponsive, then it may be a good idea to search elsewhere. See Sample Forms F-5 Flyer that might be used to inform residents in a particular neighborhood of the community garden planning organization’s project and encourage their input and participation.

Choosing a Site

Investigating Land Options and Choosing a Site

Once an organization has been established and the ‘envisioning’ meeting has kindled the interest of the group, it is time to

investigate land options for the garden. There are a few key points to consider that will help direct the search for land.

First, it is important to consider a number of parcels as potential garden sites. This point is essential because not all of the sites that look promising will work out.

There are a number of issues that can make an otherwise ideal piece of land inappropriate. The soil could be contaminated. The surrounding neighbors may not want a garden on that site. Or there may be no water access and the cost of installing a meter too high an investment. Therefore, it is a good idea to consider several sites from the beginning so as to avoid frustration and disappointment. Several sites will increase the chance of obtaining land while the Planning Committee is still enthusiastic about the project.

When searching for land, the question ‘Who is the garden for?’ should be kept in the back of everyone’s mind. The location of the garden should be near the population it is being created for.

If the garden is being created for a particular neighborhood then, if possible, it should be located centrally and within walking distance of most of its residents. Public transportation and proximity to bus routes should also be taken into consideration. The closer the garden is to its gardeners, the more attention it will receive and the stronger the sense of pride and ownership will be among community members. This last point is essential for the sustainability of the garden.

The investigation for land can begin once the Planning Committee has considered the points above and defined the area within

which they will conduct their search. Every open space that typically goes unnoticed, every vacant parcel, every park and patch of grass will become the focus of the investigative eyes of the garden planners.

This is when the envisioning stage begins to mingle with the tangible reality of unused land . We all become planners in this stage, assessing each piece of land for its latent potential as a community garden. Using the “Site Assessment Criteria and Selection Process” listed below, the viable lots can be selected and inappropriate lots removed from the list.

Site Assessment Criteria and Selection Process

The purpose of a site survey or site analysis is to aid the garden designer in determining where to place the proposed features of the garden. Before deciding where garden components should be placed it is important to have surveyed the area and diagrammed permanent features of the area that already exist. Some of these features are: sunlight, shade (trees & structures), soil, topology (cardinal directions, slope & drainage), water access or sources, visibility, and access (fences, parking, traffic patterns, roads & sidewalks). The initial site survey drawing can serve as a record of how the garden has changed over time.

To create the initial site survey one needs the following items:

1. Graph paper on clipboard for hard writing surface
2. Pencil & Eraser
3. Tape Measure
4. Template for drawing rectangles, circles, etc.
5. Wooden stakes and string (to help with measurements and site layout)

The first step is to make a rough drawing of the garden area. Then, measure the length, width and diagonals of the garden. Use permanent reference points such as existing fences, roads, building, or utility poles to help in marking or surveying the garden boundaries. Note on the rough drawing: permanent features, slopes and slope directions (these may cause drainage or sunlight issues), boundary lengths, trees (to keep & to be removed), water source (existing) and shaded areas.

The next step is to use the notes and rough drawings to create a scale drawing that is oriented with North at the top of the drawing (helps in orienting the site layout for optimum sunlight exposure). Be sure to make photocopies of scale drawing so you can sketch different site layouts without having to redraw the scale drawing of the site.

If the garden has significant slopes or valleys, side elevation drawings of these sloping areas should be produced showing elevation of the slope at various intervals. Also, be sure to mark any wet areas in the garden for possible use as rain gardens, ponds or borders.

The preliminary site assessment is a general evaluation of a parcel of land's potential as a garden. Though there are a lot of things to consider, this initial evaluation only requires a quick visit to the site to determine if the following basic points make the site a candidate for the garden.

Sunlight

Most garden vegetables require full sun (at least 6 hours of direct light). Generally this requires good southern exposure, so if there are tall trees or large buildings along the south end of the site you will want to look elsewhere. If you can, observe the site in the

morning and afternoon to determine whether or not it receives adequate sunlight. Remember, deciduous trees viewed in the winter will create more shade come spring when their leaves emerge.

Shade

On a sweltering August afternoon, thirsty and exhausted gardeners will need somewhere shady to relax and enjoy the garden atmosphere. Look for trees as an excellent source of shade. Placing benches or picnic tables underneath them creates a place where gardeners and community members can rest and enjoy the garden surrounding in comfort.

Soil

Finding land with good soil in an urban setting can be challenging. The good news is that even if the soil is not ideal (generally sand in Florida), there is almost always something that can be done to improve it. When assessing the soil quality there are a number of characteristics to look at. These include: soil pH, soil texture, compaction, drainage, the depth of the topsoil, nutrient levels, and the presence of heavy metals or other toxins from previous land use.

The preliminary soil assessment will not necessarily rule out any piece of land because most soil characteristics such as pH, structure, compaction, topsoil depth, and nutrient levels can all be improved with a little work. The initial soil assessment more than anything will give you an idea of what inputs (labor, resources) you can expect to contribute during the development stage. The ultimate determinant for a soil's viability for gardening is the presence of high levels of heavy metals and other contaminants. After the initial assessment is complete and the landowner has been contacted, a detailed analysis of a soil's nutrient, pH (can be conducted by taking a

soil sample to a county extension office), and *especially* heavy metal/contaminant levels can be conducted by sending a soil sample to a private soil testing company. (See the “Lead in Soil” link in the Resource Material for Starting a Community Garden section of this guide.) For instructions on how to have your soils tested in Orange County call the Orange County Extension Service at 407-254-9200 or visit the web site: <http://ocextension.ifas.ufl.edu/>.

In the meantime the soil’s texture, compaction, drainage, depth of topsoil, and some understanding of the nutrient levels (by observing the site’s flora and amount of organic matter in the soil) can be determined with a quick examination.

Soil Texture is evaluated according to the relative proportions of three main soil particle types: sand, silt and clay. These three classification types correlate with the size of the mineral particle. Sand particles are the largest of the three particles (and the smallest mineral particle viewable by the naked eye), followed by silt and clay. Vegetable gardens should have a relatively even balance of sand, silt and clay, but often you will hear gardeners refer to an ideal composition of 40%, 40%, and 20% respectively).

A soil’s texture will help determine the nutrient and water-holding capacity (drainage) and the soil’s structure (crusty to well-aggregated). However, whether your soil has too much sand or clay, organic matter (such as compost) will improve its water and nutrient holding capacity and add nutrients as decomposers in the soil break it down. If an otherwise good site has poor soil do not be too concerned. You will need to amend the soil by adding compost or potting soil in raised beds.

In addition to optimal texture, plants prefer loose soil to enable their roots to penetrate deeper into the ground where important minerals accumulate. Loose soil is also much easier to work with. Topsoil is the darkest upper layer of soil usually ranging from 4 to 12 inches deep. The deeper the topsoil the better, as this is the layer where plants will obtain many of their nutrients and water. In Florida, the top soil usually consists mostly of sand, and it will need to be amended to grow vegetables.

Researching the land’s previous uses will also give you an idea of the soil’s quality or possible contamination. For example, if the site was once a parking lot or a gas station then you might expect the soil to be compact or possibly contaminated with petrochemicals. If it was once a residence then, depending on its age, lead-based paint may have been used on the home’s exterior and may have flaked off into the soil.

Using raised (above ground level) beds that are filled with proper growing media (potting soil, peat moss, compost, etc.) eliminates concern over the native soil that is below the raised beds.

Topography

While flat land is preferable for a garden site (optimal drainage and minimized erosion), it is also possible to create beautiful gardens on sloped land. Garden plots on sloped land can be terraced and held secure with wooden or stone frames similar to raised beds with switchback pathways.

Water Access

Water is an essential component to any garden. When observing a piece of land look for an on-site water meter, for sprinkler systems, or for an existing faucet. If none of these are present, but the land is otherwise ideal and the property owner has given

permission to use the land, then consider approaching neighbors. It may be possible to negotiate water access from one of their sources. If the neighbors agree, this will save a good deal of money (installing new water meters can easily exceed a thousand dollars).

Offering free garden plots to the acquiescent neighbor is a nice way of showing your appreciation. It is also a good idea to draw-up and sign a contract stating that the community garden organization will be responsible for paying for the water they use. The irrigation system can be designed according to the garden layout and an additional hose hooked-up for supplemental watering of germinating seeds and saplings.

Tool Box or Storage Shed

While some community gardens require that the gardeners bring their own tools to the garden each time they work, most have either a toolbox or a storage shed.

Depending on the garden budget, communal tools can be purchased and stored on-site, or community gardeners can store their own tools there. When assessing land consider where you could locate the toolbox or storage shed.

Visibility

Good visibility will help enhance the safety and publicity of a community garden. The problems of theft, or vandalism may be reduced if a garden is visible to local residents who can keep a watchful eye out for trouble. A centrally located garden will be seen by more of the public who may be interested in becoming involved in the garden. A garden located within walking distance of its gardeners will receive more activity and therefore will be safer and better maintained.

Composting Area

Most community gardens have a designated area for composting. Although it is not necessary, at the end of each season there will be piles of dead plant debris to dispose of in one way or another. Composting this material is a free method of disposal and will save money on fertilizer and other soil amendments. Composting plant material is also an integral component of sustainable gardening. Some community gardens have aspired to become completely sustainable (after some initial inputs) by growing cover crops and creating their own compost instead of buying it from an outside source. When assessing land, consider where the composting area might be designated. For hot and dry climates, locating the compost in a shady spot may help it stay optimally moist to enhance decomposition. Orange County Extension Service recommends having a compost area for each garden.

Number of Plots

It is good to have a rough idea of how many people will be interested in garden plots so a site can be chosen that will accommodate current and future demand. Be careful not to overestimate and acquire land that is unmanageably large or underestimate and exclude interested gardeners who helped in the garden's creation. If a parcel is too large it is alright to start small and garden only what is presently manageable. Using raised beds for plots that are 4' X 16' with a 4' walkway around each bed requires 160 square feet (8' X 20') for each bed. For example: A 10,000 square foot site (100'x100') can hold 56 beds (14 beds in 4 rows).

Restrooms

Although restrooms are convenient they are not necessary since most gardeners will likely live close by and will not be in the garden all day. Restrooms can be costly to install, maintain and impractical if the site is leased. If it is deemed necessary to have one on site then portable outhouses can be rented. This option is practical for garden festivals, but again it is not necessary. If ownership of the land is acquired and the garden made permanent, then installing a restroom would be a welcomed addition to the site.

Power

Electrical power can be useful but is not necessary. About the only essential component of a garden that may sometimes require electricity is a water timer for drip irrigation systems, though, there are many battery-powered systems available on the market. If power is needed for some occasional purpose such as for lighting and music for garden festivals, or for power tools, consider negotiating to use a neighbor's outlet or better yet, if the budget permits, invest in a small solar panel set. This would supply the garden with enough power for the occasional electricity needs and draw interest from the public to see the newest sustainable energy technology in action.

During construction of the garden, a portable gas powered generator should be considered for use with power tools that will help make it easier to construct raised beds, construct picnic tables, build storage sheds, etc.

The Neighborhood

It is a good idea to survey the neighborhood surrounding each site to evaluate the environment's general conduciveness to

community gardening. Assessing the demographics of a community will help you understand the needs of community members. This will help you determine the garden's usefulness for local residents and help you incorporate specific programs and designs into the garden to address their needs. For example, if there are a lot of children in the area surrounding a potential site, building a playground or youth plots within the garden would address a need and increase the garden use.

On a similar line of thinking, if there are many apartment buildings with no garden space or few sunny patches in surrounding residential yards, there will likely be more demand for garden plots than in an area where large sunny yards abound. Observations such as these can help you decide if a garden will thrive or wither away from lack of use.

A more direct method of assessing the general interest level of local community members is to send letters of inquiry about the project and inviting their participation, or simply to go knocking on their doors. If the city or neighborhood council for the area is active, try getting them involved as well. Gaining the support of neighbors and neighborhood groups is an essential step. Starting early will only improve the gardens chance for long-term success.

Lastly, it is wise to assess the level of crime in the area around the site. An excessive amount of violence, theft, and vandalism in a neighborhood may create an environment that isn't conducive to community gardening. However, the process of starting a community garden can be an excellent way to bring the community together, transform crime ridden places into positive public spaces. If the decision is made to use such land then a few considerations will

help minimize unwanted incidents including building and locking a fence around the property at night with a code known only by the gardeners (though this can create a more exclusive environment) and recruiting neighbors to keep a watchful eye on the garden. City police departments keep incident statistics on record that might be helpful as you assess the neighborhood crime levels. Also, often times the police officers assigned to your neighborhood will give area crime reports at community council meetings. Form a good relationship with your local law enforcement officer and ask them to keep an eye on the garden.

Vehicle Access

At some point it will likely be necessary to have a load of compost delivered or rubble removed. Therefore, vehicle access is important

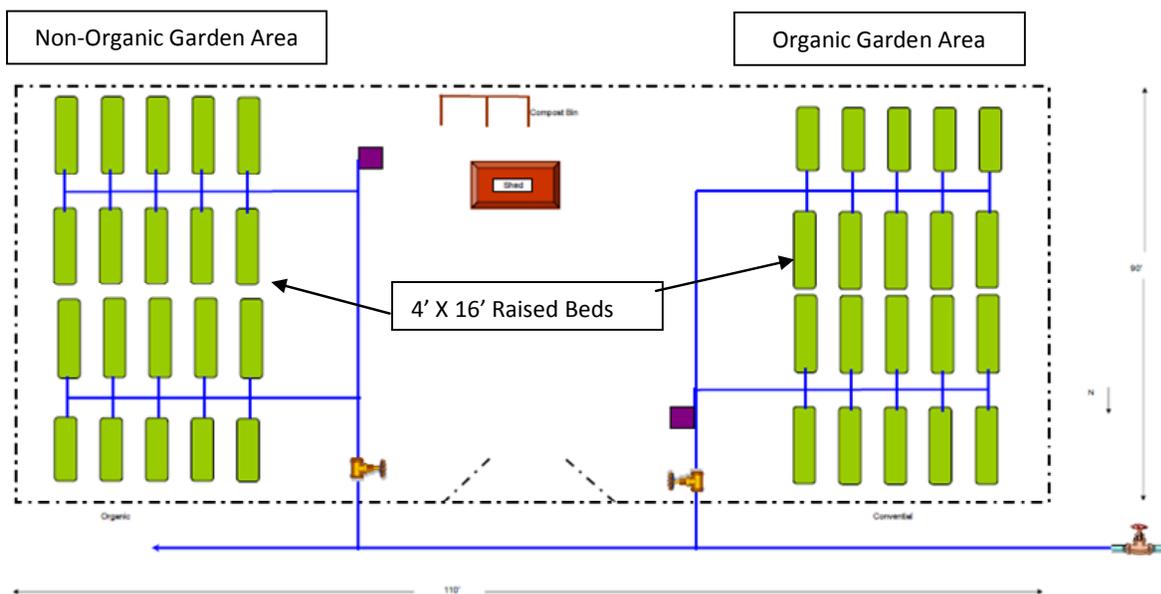
Parking

Unless the garden is exceptionally large (100 plots or more) or frequent crowd drawing events are anticipated, additional parking is probably not necessary. However, in already parking-stressed areas parking could be a contentious issue. Each site's

parking situation should be assessed to avoid upsetting neighbors, local businesses or churches in the area, and to ensure the availability of parking space for gardeners. Ideally, with good planning, most gardeners will be within walking distance of the garden.

Once the preliminary site assessment has been completed, the next step is contacting the owner. If they agree to host the garden on their land then the last step is to have the soil tested for harmful contaminants by a private soil testing laboratory.

The following section will help prepare you for approaching property owners.



Example of a community garden layout

Acquiring Permission to Use Land for Community Gardens

Once several viable parcels of land have been identified in your neighborhood, it is time to contact the owner. Listed below are the steps one must take to find the property owner's contact information and suggestions on how to gain permission to use the property. The steps vary depending on whether the property is privately owned or on public land, and may also vary from entity to entity. However, the process listed below should be relevant for most cities or counties. Once permission has been gained, place a sign on the parcel publicizing it as the future site of a community garden. Include contact information so that interested members of the public can get involved.

Finding Out Who Owns the Property

1. *Getting the property owner's contact information*

In Orange County Florida the owner of property can be found by using the Orange County Property Appraiser's Real Estate Record Search web site. (http://www.ocpafl.org/rec_srch.html#1)

Once you reach this site you may find property by:

- Property Address
- Property Name
Example: Leu Gardens
- Property Use
Vacant Residential, Single Family, Mobile Home, Apartments, Condos, Cooperatives, Retirement/Nursing, Miscellaneous Residential, Multi-Family, Vacant Commercial, Vacant Multi-

Family, Commercial, Industrial, Agricultural, Vacant Industrial, Institutional, Government, & Miscellaneous

- Parcel Identification Number
Example: 26-22-29-0027-00-020 or 262229002700020
where 26 = Section, 22 = Township, 29 = Range, 0027 = Subdivision, 00 = Block, & 020 = Lot
- Plat Book/Page Block and Lot
- Subdivision Name Block and Lot
- Vacant Land
- Condo/Timeshare
Must specify: Section (01-36), Township (20-24), Range (27-34), Subdivision (0000-9999 or Blank), Block (00-99 or Blank), Lot (000-999 or Blank), Unit Number, & Property Name
- Owner Name

The owner of the property may also be found by using Orange County Property Appraiser's Map Record Inquiry System at (<http://paarcgis.ocpafl.org/Webmap3>). Once you reach this site you may find property by:

- Intersection of two streets near the property
- Coordinates (State Plane X & Y Coordinates or latitude-longitude in decimal degrees)
- Section-Township-Range
- Most of the Real Estate Record Search items listed above

For further information call or visit the Orange County Property Appraiser; 200

S. Orange Avenue, Suite 1700; Orlando, FL. 407-836-5044.

2. *How is the property zoned?*

During the process of obtaining land for the garden, it may be necessary to know how the property is zoned to make sure that community gardening is an authorized use (in most cases it will be). The City of Orlando's zoning maps and Future Land Use maps are available in downloadable PDF format through their website:

(<http://www.cityoforlando.net/planning/cityplanning/poc.htm>) Orange County also maintains an interactive mapping program called **InfoMap** that allows the user to search by address for information about properties throughout the county, including within the City of Orlando. This information can be found by contacting the Orange County Zoning Division with the legal description and/or parcel Identification number of the property. The Zoning Division may be reached at: Orange County Administration Building; 201 S. Rosalind Avenue, 1st Floor; P.O. Box 1393; Orlando, FL 32802-1393 Phone: 407-836-5525, Fax: 407-836-5510; E-mail: (Zoning@ocfl.net)

Once you know how the property is zoned, make sure community gardening is a permitted or conditional use for that zoning category by calling the city or county planning department, or reviewing the local zoning code. If community gardening is not a permitted or conditional use, find out why. The zoning code may be outdated and up for challenge. In this case the community garden Planning Committee will have to speak with a planner to see if the ordinance could be successfully challenged, and if so, take the proposed change to the city or county council for approval. (See "Tips for

Proposing Community Gardens to City or County Councils" section below).

Seeking Permission to Use Privately Owned Land

There are a variety of ways to contact the owner once their contact information has been found. They include writing a letter, phoning them directly, or setting up a meeting in person. A courteous and well prepared presentation of the community garden proposal will increase your chances for a positive response. Some of the points that should be discussed when approaching a landowner are listed below. (See Sample Forms F-7 Letter to Land Owner for more information.)

1. Inform them about the many benefits community gardens bring to communities (see "Benefits of Community Gardening" section).
2. Mention the personal incentives a property owner has for hosting a garden on her/his land. For example, they would no longer need to keep the parcel weed free and beautiful once gardeners are responsible for maintaining the site.
3. Let them know that you have a well organized organization of interested neighborhood gardeners who are committed to the creation and continued upkeep of the garden and who have already met for planning meetings. This will help enable the owner to trust that the garden will not be neglected, creating an eyesore worse than when it was vacant. In addition, it will assure them that the garden will not fail due to a lack of community interest.
4. Mention that a lease would be negotiated (and reviewed by a lawyer) if they (the owner) agrees to have the garden on their property. We recommend that a lease be signed for at least 3-to-5 years, as it would be a shame to invest time and money in a garden and then lose the land

the next year (See Sample Forms F-6 Lease Agreement for more information.)

5. Mention that a "hold harmless" waiver clause will be included in the lease stating that, should one of the gardeners be injured as a result of negligence on the part of another gardener, the landowner is "held harmless" and will not be sued. (See Sample Forms F-8 Waiver of Liability for more information.)
6. Mention that your group will purchase Liability Insurance upon the land owner's written request. This is further protection for the landowner.
7. Ask what the past use of the property was (it is good to know if the land was once a dumping ground for toxic chemicals).
8. Be sure to ask about water access. If there isn't any, you may want to look elsewhere, as having water meters installed can be quite costly. However, there have been examples of gardens that have negotiated water access with neighboring buildings. In one example the garden treasurer paid for the community garden's share of the water bill each month, while in exchange for the water access, the organization offered a garden plot to the neighbors with the yearly rental fee waived.
9. Mentioning that you have the support of an experienced community garden organization or gardening expert, such as a Community Garden Advisor (Florida Certified Master Gardener Volunteer), will increase your credibility and give further reassurance to the property owner.
10. If it seems likely that the owner will agree, the next step is taking a soil test for general information and to make sure that it is not contaminated.

Seeking Permission to Use City or County Owned Land

Land within Incorporated City Area:

Groups of 4 or more residents of the City of Orlando who are interested in creating a community garden from park, church or city-owned vacant lot property should contact the City of Orlando Office of Neighborhood and Community Affairs at 407-246-2169. Staff will then guide residents through a process of obtaining permission from their Commissioner and surrounding residents, drafting a budget and applying for any grants that may be available (<http://www.cityoforlando.net/>).

Source: Leu Gardens 407-246-2640.

Land in Unincorporated County Area:

- 1- Call your County Commissioner
To determine who your commissioner is, contact the Orange County Commissioner Board at:
201 S Rosalind Ave
Orlando, FL 32801-3527
407-836-7350
(<http://www.orangecountyfl.net/cms/GOVERN/bcc/default.htm>)
- 2- Obtain approval from County Council (see below for tips).
 - If organization has non-profit status, the next step should be having a lease drawn up and the property should be able to be rented for a nominal fee (such as \$1 a year).
 - If organization does not have official non-profit status the County by law has to rent the property for 'fair market value,' even if the garden is not-for-profit.
 - At any time during the tenure if the County wants to use the land again, the lease can be terminated, but they would have to wait until the harvest is complete for that year.

(Incorporate protocol on what to do in this circumstance into the lease)

- 3- Once approved, the lease should be negotiated.

Seeking Permission to Use Land within Existing County Parks or Community Centers

Using land that is part of an existing County Park or Community Center can be done. In some cases the activity of community gardening might be seen as a limited use that excludes the non-gardening segments of the public—thus privileging a segment of the public at the expense of the rest and undermining the *public* nature of the County Park system. Although community gardens can be designed to be as inclusive as possible (open to the public for viewing during park hours, accessible to wheelchairs) and would be no more exclusive than such uses as tennis courts or other specific use areas, the decision may ultimately rest with the city or county council (or other approving bodies).

If you feel you can make a case for your group, showing that the use will not be exclusive, then by all means try it.

Tips for Proposing Community Gardens to City or County Councils

Forming a well-organized garden Planning Committee before the proposal is made will not only improve the garden's general chance for success, but it will also help in the process of getting the garden approved. The existence of such a committee will assure the approving council that there is a group of citizens committed to the ongoing success and maintenance of the garden.

The garden's chance of approval will be greatly increased by circulating a petition of support among neighbors of the proposed site. In addition, getting endorsements from

local churches, schools, businesses, government staff members, expert gardeners, and community garden organizations will strengthen the proposal.

Once you have been placed on the agenda before the Council, prepare what will be stated. Keep it brief, to the point and emphasize that community gardens are gaining acceptance all across the US and encouraged by most governments as demonstrated by the Kitchen Garden at the White House.

Do some research about the local zoning codes, and make sure that community gardens are a permitted or conditional use in the area of interest for the garden. Be able to demonstrate how the garden fits in with the general character of the neighborhood. To validate the proposal, have a rough garden plan and layout map to show how it will look and operate. Lastly, have some general information about the benefits community gardens bring to communities. Have articles and pictures of successful gardens in other cities.

Planning the Garden

Once a piece of land is secured, it is time to implement the ideas considered during the envisioning stage. Some of the questions discussed in the first Planning Committee meeting probably included: What is our vision for the garden? What type of garden are we trying to create? Will we rent plots to individuals for them to do with as they please? Will certain groups garden in certain areas? Will some space be given for donating produce to the hungry? Should we include some specially designed plots accessible to people in wheelchair? Will we have raised beds plots? etc. Questions such as these, as well as the goals and objectives determined in this first meeting should again be brought to the table to guide the planning

stage. During this stage, the Planning Committee will address both the physical layout of the garden and its operational rules and regulations.

Begin by determining the square footage of gardening space available and map it out on paper. Then divide up and designate the area into sections for individual garden plots and all other basic elements found in community gardens. These can include communal spaces (for herbs or flowers), composting sites, meeting spaces, a sign, a message board, a fence surrounding the garden, tool boxes or sheds, a delivery space, shady areas for gardeners to sit and relax out of the sun, and irrigation systems (centralized sprinkler or drip systems, soaker hoses, or handheld hoses). Other gardens incorporate playgrounds for kids or small amphitheatres for community events. When mapping out the physical garden space, refer to the Site Assessment Criteria and Selection Process section earlier in this document.

Plot sizes vary from garden to garden depending on the preferences of the garden planners and the desires of the community gardeners. One garden plot can take anywhere from 24 to 200 square feet. The most common plot size is 4' x 16' with 2 foot pathways on each side (4' between beds). Beds should run North-South if the garden is designed as a grid system to prevent shading out plots.

Once the physical elements have been designated and mapped out, the Planning Committee should begin drafting garden rules and regulations that determine everything from gardening methods allowed (organic or not), type of irrigation system (drip, sprinkler, or hoses), to establishing the date when individual garden plots must be cleared at the end of each season. Some of the questions that need to be answered

include: Will garden members have to pay a plot rental fee? What rules will be established? Will we offer free seeds/seedlings to the gardeners? Will there be conditions for membership?

See Sample Forms F-3 Community Garden Rules and Gardener's Responsibilities for a better idea of some of the concepts that should be considered.

Funding the Garden

As the physical elements of the garden design are mapped out it is important to determine what needs to be acquired to set up and run the garden. A key element of setting up a budget is to determine expenses and funds needed to cover the planned expenses. (See Sample Forms F-1 Budget for a sample community garden budget.)

Fund Raising: How To

Introduction

There are many fund raising strategies to be considered shortly. However, before these are explored some general fund raising tips will be suggested. Starting a community garden does not have to be a costly endeavor, but it does require at least some minimal fund raising. By soliciting in-kind donations and dedicating some time to urban scavenging, an organization can obtain many of the resources needed to start the community garden. It is helpful to create a Fund raising Committee both to spearhead the initial campaign as well as taking responsibility for raising the ongoing financial needs of the garden. To begin, the Fund raising Committee should be able to answer the questions; "What is the purpose and mission of the community garden?" and "Why is it necessary or desirable to the community?" The community garden's goals and objectives (refined, precise goals) should be outlined by the Planning Committee and then used to help convince

donors to support the project. The Fund raising Committee should present these ideas in brochure form so they can be distributed to potential donors.

Although it is not necessary, the garden organization may want to obtain 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status so donations are tax-deductible—thus attract more contributions. (See “Legal Issues: Becoming a Nonprofit and Applying for 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Status” section on page 24 for more discussion on this matter.) The organization can either apply for its own tax-exempt status or it can affiliate with a parent organization such as a church or non-profit group under which to run the community garden and thus share their non-profit status.

If your community gardening organization wishes to raise money by soliciting donations from individuals, corporations or foundations, you will need to obtain a business license by incorporating--such as by becoming a nonprofit or LLC (see the “Legal Issues” section). The license cost for incorporating as a non-profit is \$150 as of March 2004.

Any business (non-profit or for-profit) in Florida is required to obtain a *Charitable Solicitations License* from the Florida Department of Consumer Protection. The fee for the license is approximately \$100 per year. A fundamental rule for fund raising is “Do not be afraid to ask: If you do not ask, you will not get it.” Successful solicitations will encourage you to continue until you have met the budgetary goal. The fund raising organization should identify likely donors (gardeners, neighbors, local institutions or anyone else who will benefit from the garden). When raising a relatively small amount of money (which is likely the case for most community gardens), individual contacts will be the focus of your solicitations. Friends and acquaintances in

particular are often those most willing to donate a little extra cash.

The initial start-up cost can range can exceed \$5,000 depending on the size, the elements (tool shed, irrigation system, type of fencing, extra wood, and compost) that will be included in the garden and how much materials can be donated. The ongoing yearly budget can range from \$300 and up depending on size, water used, what’s offered to the community gardeners by the organization (seeds, tools, compost), and repair costs (irrigation system). It is often cheaper for businesses to donate in-kind rather than with financial contributions. Go to your local institutions, gardening and hardware stores where you are familiar with the owners or staff and ask them for donations. Take a “wish-list” of needed supplies. If you are not familiar, do not let that stop you. Simply introduce yourself and have information about your organization, a fund-raising letter and your “wish-list” ready to give to the store manager. (Tip: contact seed companies and ask them for some of their seeds that they were unable to sell from the previous year. These seeds will generally only have a slightly diminished germination rate). Remember to say thanks regardless of their response—they may decide to donate in the future when they become more familiar with your group. If an organization seems especially interested in your cause, ask them to be an official fiscal sponsor.

In organic gardening, planting a diversity of crops together in a garden plot helps to prevent pest epidemics and the spread of species-specific pathogens, therefore, planting diverse crops results in a more stable garden ecosystem. Similarly, using a diversity of fund raising strategies will increase the financial stability of the garden

organization. Several potential fund raising strategies are summarized below.

Direct-Mail Appeals

Direct appeal fund raising letters are given to local corporations/banks, foundations and individuals to solicit contributions. See the Resource Material for Starting a Community Garden section of this guide to find more information on how to craft successful letters. Include a “wish list” and a brochure with every letter you send to introduce your project to the targeted recipients. In-person delivery is preferable if possible and follow-up calls are advisable. In addition, thanking contributors and publicly acknowledging them is an essential way to show your appreciation and maintain a strong relationship. Do not be discouraged. Initial response may be minimal until the organization is more widely known.

Writing Grant Proposal

Grant writing can draw in significant contributions if done skillfully, though it can take six months or longer to get a response. Generally larger nonprofit organizations that have tax-exempt status utilize this strategy. Due to the elaborate process and limited space in this guide, grant writing will not be discussed here. (See the Resource Material for Starting a Community Garden section of this guide for good references on this subject.)

Door-to-Door Solicitation

(People hate to do it, but it is effective.) This strategy is self-explanatory. Remember to have information ready to give out and be willing to listen to the concerns and input of those you approach. Again, thank them for their time regardless of whether they make a contribution or not.

Fund Raising Events

It is easy to overextend fund raising events and end up spending as much or more

money organizing them then is raised in the end. Be careful to plan an event of the appropriate scale for your needs. It is not necessary to spend a lot of money to raise some. Be creative. Ideas to consider include: car washes, craft/bake sales, benefit concerts or lectures, auctions and raffles of donated items, plant sales, garden tours, harvest festivals/sales, creating and selling garden cookbooks and holding workshops taught by volunteer experts. When appropriate, entry fees can be charged. Fund raising events can also draw good publicity. Make certain that every potential donor is invited. Also, always have an official and recognizable “donation can” present at each function that you plan.

The above information is intended as guidance only. It is advisable to consult a lawyer regarding any legal issues that your organization is dealing with.

Insurance

In some instances, a simple “waiver of liability” form (see Sample Forms F-8 Waiver of Liability) may be acceptable in lieu of liability insurance. However this is not always possible. There are two general types of insurance to consider when deciding on an insurance plan for the garden: property and general liability insurance. Property insurance covers tools, the irrigation system, or other communal belongings deemed necessary to protect. Liability insurance (the more vital of the two) protects both the community gardening organization and the property owner from a lawsuit in the case that someone (invited or not) is injured within the garden. Both types of insurance can be written up into one insurance plan. Also, it is much cheaper to be covered under an existing umbrella policy than to create a new plan exclusively for one garden. If there isn’t an organization that offers this service consider setting up an umbrella insurance plan with other

community gardens. It may also be possible to affiliate with a parent organization such as a church or nonprofit organization that could incorporate the garden into their existing insurance plans.

In general, the cost of the liability insurance premium will be determined based on the size of the garden, the type of programs run there, the amount of anticipated traffic regularly passing through the garden, and in some cases, the appraised risk of injury to gardeners and visitors. For example, if a large garden receives hundreds of visitors a week, then the appraised risk, and hence the premium, will be higher than for a small garden that receives light traffic.

If the garden organization plans to host a public benefit party or any other type of garden festival that will draw a crowd, then additional event coverage may need to be included in the plan. Other issues that may come up when determining an insurance plan include whether or not the garden is locked-up at night (increased chance of property vandalism and theft), or if gardeners are allowed to use potentially dangerous power tools within the garden.

The recommended general liability coverage is \$1,000,000 for each occurrence and a \$2,000,000 “aggregate” coverage, but this may vary from agency to agency.

If a garden is created on public property the community garden organization might not need an insurance plan because the property might be self-insured by the entity that has jurisdiction over it (the city, county, or state).

When starting a garden on public property the gardening organization should check with the particular jurisdictional entity they

are working with to find out if any additional insurance is needed.

The City of Orlando and Orange County, public property used for a community garden usually requires an individual public liability insurance plan, as it will not be covered by the city or county. However, because government policies continually change, organization members should always inquire about whether or not additional insurance is needed as the lease is being negotiated. If liability insurance is needed consult and shop around to find the best deal.

Prepare and Develop the Site

Once the garden plan has been finished and the necessary materials and funds gathered, it is time to prepare and develop the site. This is when the sweat and toil endured over the planning table begins to fruit, tangibly and the organization and community gardeners actually get to stick their fingers into the earth and be glad.

Several tasks need to be completed during this stage:

- 1) Organize one or more garden workdays to develop the garden space
- 2) Notify all volunteers and prepare them for the workday
- 3) Have utility companies mark out any water, gas, or utility lines and hook-up water before the workday
- 4) Amass all the input material, supplies and tools needed to create the garden

When planning the garden workdays it is important to pick a day(s) based on when you think the most volunteers could participate, and then publicize the event widely. Get the word out to all neighbors, community gardeners, anyone who at any time expressed even a modicum of interest, and to the general public. Recruit volunteers

from universities, high schools, churches, neighborhood council groups, girl scouts, boy scouts, and any other community groups you can think of.

The more volunteers that are recruited, the faster the tasks will be accomplished and the more community interaction and cohesion. Hopefully this will be the first of many community gatherings that will occur in the garden space.

Before breaking the ground it is important that the whereabouts of all water, gas, or utility lines are known. The Garden Caretaker will call the non-profit Utilities Notification Center at 811 or 1-800-922-1987. Once the center is called they will contact utility companies and instruct them to mark-off their lines according to a pre-established color coding scheme. It takes a week or so before the land can be marked, so it is a good idea for the Garden Caretaker to call and schedule the markings to occur before the date of the workday.

It is also a good idea to make sure the water is hooked up and running by the workday so when the garden has been developed community gardeners can immediately begin planting and seeing the benefits of their planning efforts.

It is helpful to establish one or more Work Day coordinator(s) for the workday(s) to see that the event runs smoothly, i.e. to coordinate the materials and volunteers the day of the event, and act as the contact person. The Work Day coordinator(s) should be easily identifiable, wearing some form of insignia or colored shirt so that volunteers can find them and be directed. Before the workday begins, the Work Day coordinator(s) should refer back to the layout map and plan made during the garden planning stage. This will keep the volunteers

organized and make sure that the garden develops according to the decisions made during the planning stages. The Planning Committee may also want to contact and invite local press to catch some positive publicity for the community garden. In addition, someone should be assigned the task of taking pictures before, during, and after the workdays to document the changes and compare them with the garden later on in the season.

During the workday, the Garden Caretaker should make sure all the tools, supplies, and input resources needed for preparing and developing the site must be gathered at the site. Be sure to ask volunteers to bring their own tools if they are needed.

Once onsite, the first task is to clear the site of garbage, rubble, and large rocks. It is also good to remove weeds before tilling to avoid chopping and dispersing weed roots and seeds. After it is cleared the, site should either be tilled all together, or each individual plot should be delineated with string and stakes (or treated wood for raised beds), and then tilled individually. The latter option may be more efficient as pathways and sitting areas do not need to be tilled. If the parcel is covered with sod and the garden plots are to be “in-ground” rather than above ground (raised beds), remove the sod, then go forward with the above task. Sod can be removed by hand and shovel, or by a sod cutter. If by hand, cut into the sod with shovel to a depth of three inches, lift up the edge of the sod, wedge a shovel underneath, pry up the section and remove it.

Compost and extra topsoil (if needed) can be added before or after tilling. Either way it is more cost efficient to add these materials to individual plots rather than waste them on

the paths or other areas that will not be cultivated.

Once in-ground plots have been marked and tilled, each one can be double-dug (mixing in any compost or soil amendments if they have not been already). This will aerate, loosen and enrich the soil up to two feet deep, and is thought to create the optimal growing conditions. This is good to do in addition to tilling because even deep-tined tillers usually do not penetrate deeper than a foot. For raised beds, the soil and compost may be sufficiently loose, aerated and mixed, simply by the act of filling them up, and therefore require no additional preparation.

After each plot has been clearly marked, tilled and double-dug, it is time to layout the waterlines and setup the timer (for drip irrigation or sprinkler systems) or hook-up the hoses. If no one in the group has experience setting up irrigation systems, find a local expert, such as a member of the Florida Irrigation Society (<http://fisstate.org/>) and ask them to donate their expertise.

Once all the plots and paths have been created, the remaining designated areas should be established. These include setting up the compost area, building or assembling the shed or tool box, creating the meeting spaces and shady spots, building the fence, erecting the sign and bulletin board, laying down woodchips or mulch over the paths, and planting the communal garden plots. With a sufficient number of volunteers working these tasks together, the community garden should be completed in no more than a couple of days. At this point, the Planning Committee may want to throw a grand opening party to publicly acknowledge the efforts of those involved in its creation, and to celebrate the new asset of the community. All volunteers, neighbors, community

gardeners, contributors of any kind and the general public should be invited. The press should be contacted to gain some positive publicity. The party could be in barbeque/potluck style with music. During the event, every individual, church, foundation or business that contributed time, materials or funding should be publicly acknowledged and thanked.

Organize the Garden

Legal Issues: Becoming a Nonprofit and Applying for 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Status

At some point during the planning process the Planning Committee will likely consider the pros and cons of incorporating as a non-profit (through the Department of Commerce) and applying for 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status (through the Internal Revenues Service). Initially, a group may be interested in incorporating to make it easier to acquire 501(c)(3) status. This status allows donors to make tax-deductible charitable donations, and thus, greatly increasing a not-for-profit organization's ability to raise funds. Organizations with 501(c)(3) status may also be granted exemption from federal income tax and state income, sales, and property tax.

An organization does not need to be incorporated as a non-profit to obtain 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status and eligibility to receive tax-deductible charitable donations.

For example, by incorporating as a nonprofit, an organization achieves government recognition as a "legal entity," separate and distinct from its "owners," or in this case, from the garden organization members. This status can be critical in protecting the personal assets of individual members in the event that a lawsuit is brought against the organization. Liability

insurance protects the gardening organization in such a circumstance, though only to the extent of the coverage determined in the insurance plan. If, for example, a gardener is seriously injured in the garden and decides to sue the organization for \$10,000,000—and the liability coverage is only \$2,000,000-- then the individual members of the unincorporated organization may be responsible for covering the difference.

Another legally recognized organizational structure that offers similar protection as non-profit status is the “Limited Liability Company” (LLC). Again, as a recognized “legal entity” the LLC protects the individual members of the organization in the case of a lawsuit. In some cases, a LLC may offer more complete limited liability than a nonprofit organization, may be less complicated to start and manage, and may entail simpler rules of operation. A LLC can also apply for 501(c)(3) status.

A community gardening organization may also want to incorporate to gain the ability to purchase and hold valid title over real estate. If there is no legally recognized garden organization to hold title over land or to sign a lease, then individual members must take sole responsibility of ownership instead--a heavy burden for individual members to bear.

Moreover, filing as a non-profit corporation or LLC that maintains its existence as a legal entity, regardless of changes in organization members, is useful as members come and go over the years. This last point is important when considering the difficulties that may arise with changing land ownership if the title-holding member of the organization moves away.

Therefore, for a community garden created and organized by a group of community members and gardeners, it is less complicated for reasons of fairness, legality (liability) and practicality to create a legally recognized organization.

Lastly, incorporating as a non-profit provides the organization with access to special nonprofit bulk mailing rates from the U.S. Postal Service.

Incorporating as a non-profit and applying for 501(c)(3) status can be a dauntingly complicated process, full of confusing forms and legal jargon. It may not be worth incorporating if funds can be generated in other ways than receiving tax-deductible donations. The question should be explored: Is the gardening organization willing and motivated to go through the process of incorporating and gaining tax-exempt status? It may not be worth scaring interested gardeners and community members from participating in the planning process. The budget for starting and maintaining a simple neighborhood garden can be quite small. A combination of money pooling and receiving smaller, non-deductible contributions from community members may be sufficient for meeting the garden’s budget. For most gardens, the initial input of capital will be significantly larger than the yearly cost of maintenance, which, with some good planning and community connections, may be covered by the money generated by the annual garden plot rental fees.

That said, there are significant benefits and protections offered by incorporating and/or obtaining 501(c)(3) status, as mentioned above. Gardening organizations should seek consultation from a lawyer as well as assistance from Department of Commerce and Internal Revenues Service agents on the

matters discussed in this section. Some local bar associations may offer “pro bono” legal service to not-for-profit community groups. Also, for obvious reasons, this section should drive home the recommendation to invite a lawyer to participate in the planning process or become a supporter, as suggested in the section on forming a planning organization. Helpful information for seeking further assistance and concerning the process of incorporating and applying for 501(c)(3) status is given below.

See the series of University of Florida (UF) publication on working with nonprofit organizations listed in the Resource Material for Starting a Community Garden section of this guide.

How to Incorporate or Register as a Limited Liability Company

The following information is given as guidance only. Organizations applying for tax -exempt status should consult a Tax Advisor to assure all procedures and rules are followed correctly. Organization deciding whether or not to become a legal entity such as filing as a non-profit corporation, are strongly advised to seek legal council from a lawyer and follow the procedures given by the Department of Commerce

If registering as nonprofit the processing fee is required and is to be remitted with Article of Incorporation. To legally solicit charitable donations the nonprofit organization must also file for a *Charitable Solicitations License* from the Division of Consumer Protection. The annual fee for such a license may change . The fee for filing as a Limited Liability Company may change and must be remitted with Articles of Organization. For more information contact the Florida Department of Commerce.

Obtaining Tax Exempt 501 (c)(3) Status:

The following information is given as guidance only. Organizations applying for tax -exempt status should consult a Tax Advisor to assure all procedures and rules are followed correctly. Organization deciding whether or not to become a legal entity such as filing as a non-profit corporation, are strongly advised to seek legal council from a lawyer and follow the procedures given by the Department of Commerce

Exempt status is automatically granted to “any organization (other than a private foundation) normally having annual gross receipts of not more than \$5,000...”(pg.18 Pub 557, IRS). However, if an organization files Form 1023 they will receive a letter from the IRS recognizing their exempt status. By doing so, potential contributors are assured by the IRS that contribution will be tax-deductible.

Organizations applying for 501 (c)(3) status should review pertinent sections of *Pub 557*, and then send completed *Forms 1023, 8718, and SS-4* with Articles of Organization (an example can be found on page 19, section Draft A, of *Pub 557*) with all accompanying documents and fees to the Internal Revenues Service.

For additional information see Helpful Internal Revenue, Forms & Publications for Obtaining Tax Exempt 501(c)(3) Status in the Resource Material for Starting a Community Garden section of this guide.

Things to Consider Including in a Lease

- Description of land
- Beginning date, length of lease term.

Procedure for lease renewal/ termination. Will it be automatically renewed? With or

without notice? Will it be negotiated and resigned each year? Will there be a lease termination procedure? Will the notice be sent out to be received a specified number of days before lease terminates, automatic termination when lease expires unless resigned?

Clause allowing community garden organization to sub-lease plots for fee-- specify tenant's right to assign or sub-lease

- Rental cost per year—Who is responsible for paying it and by what date each year?
- What type of rent will be paid (cash, share, etc.)? How will rent be calculated? When will rent payments be due?
- Other costs—Who is responsible for paying the water bill?
- Who will be responsible for property damage that occurred during the term of the lease?
- Attach Community Garden Rules and Regulation. Have a clause referring to them as part of the agreement. Add any additional rules and restrictions to the lease that are not covered in the Community Garden organization's Rules and Regulation.
- Clause stating that the community garden organization will not act unlawfully and will operate at all times in accordance with city/county zoning codes.
- Hours of operation--when garden will be unlocked and open to public
- Who is allowed in garden?
- What to do when lease rules are broken-- lease violated, warning system, probationary period?
- Is there an option for the community garden organization to buy the land?

- Mention the “waiver of liability” clause that all community gardeners will sign as part of the plot rental application
- Agreement for community garden organization to obtain a general liability insurance plan if property owner desires it
- Division of expenses, specifying each party's share of expenses: maintenance, repairs, utilities, taxes, etc.
- Outline duties to maintain and repair property—landlord or tenant?
- Who is responsible for paying the property tax?
- Will the lease require the landlord's permission before improvements are made? If improvements are made, a method should be included for specifying either the landlord's share or how the tenant will be reimbursed for the improvements when the lease terminates.
- Nondiscrimination clause

This above information is for guidance only. It is advisable when negotiating a lease, to obtain legal review of the lease agreement.

(See a Sample Forms F-6 Lease Agreement for more information.)

Organize the Gardeners

Once the groundwork has been laid, you will have more people who are interested in being a part of the community garden. If you anticipate having room in the community garden for more people beyond the Community Garden Organization, now is the time to recruit more gardeners. Post flyers in your neighborhood, make small presentations at local churches and community centers, and always communicate through word of mouth. Explain what people need to do to be involved, how the community garden is laid out, any community garden rules that have

been established, and how soon they can get started. (See Appendix A-2 Orientation Outline to help the Community Garden Organization President acquaint new gardeners with the community garden.)

Long-term Planning

At last the community garden is in full operation. (See Planting Guides in the Resource Material for Starting a Community Garden to determine what to plant and when.) The gardeners are becoming acquainted with their soil, neighbors are chatting merrily under shady trees, children are constructively playing in their youth plots, squash plants are sinuously vining and flowers blossoming prolifically. Now it is time to consider how to maintain the urban paradise you have so laudably created. This is the long-term planning stage, crucial for sustaining the garden.

There are a number of issues to consider regarding the long-term viability of a community garden. How can you ensure that the land will remain available to your gardeners over the long run? One of the most common threats to community gardens is land loss. The property owner could decide to develop the land, the garden organization could crumble due to a lack of financial support, the land could be rendered unproductive due to intensive unsustainable gardening practices, the community gardeners could lose interest, or a group of neighbors or government official could campaign against the garden leading to its expulsion from the site. Although in some instances the community garden will not be able to avoid these challenges and must relocate, a little foresighted planning can go a long way.

The Land

When signing a lease for a particular property, try to negotiate as lengthy a lease as possible. Orange County Extension

Service recommends a minimum of 3 to 5 years, but the longer the better. Some gardens have been able to negotiate a 10, 20 and even a 99-year lease. In addition to lease length if the property owner agrees, it is a good idea to include a clause outlining the lease renewal procedure and an “option to buy” clause in the lease. Organizing a fund raising drive to buy the land is the surest way to maintain the garden for perpetuity. Again, maintaining active and solid public support will aid in the success of such a campaign. In the case that the property owner is determined to develop the property, it may be necessary for the garden to relocate. However, because the garden administration and gardeners are already organized the search for land should be easier than the initial hunt.

Lastly, attention should be given to the garden’s ecological sustainability. For example, growing heavy feeder crops such as corn on the same plot of land without adding organic matter, rotating crops or planting cover crops will eventually deplete the soil. Periodically adding compost, cover cropping and rotating crops will help the soil retain adequate nutrient levels and help prevent the proliferation of soil born pests such as nematodes and pathogens. Good stewardship and cultivation practices will help community gardens stay productive over the long run. By predominantly using inputs grown and prepared on site, a garden can come close to achieving a self-reliance that will contribute to its sustainability.

Neighborhood Support

It is essential that the community and especially the direct neighbors of the garden remain invested and in positive relation with the garden. Maintaining strong community contentment with the garden will assure future support in case the garden becomes endangered in the future for any of the reasons mentioned above. This point has

been mentioned before but it cannot be stressed enough. Furthermore, the larger and more diverse the coalition of supporters, the more successful and secure the garden will be in the long run. (See the “Troubleshooting” section on the next page for more on neighborhood support).

By working with county and city officials you may also be able to have community gardening or your particular garden included into neighborhood plans by means of garden-friendly zoning ordinances or other municipal community garden policies. Even if no policy initiative is attempted, the garden will be more secure simply by maintaining good relations with government officials and community leaders.

Lastly, by actively recruiting new gardeners and volunteers using the same methods employed during the planning stages, the community garden will never have to worry about losing community support. Most successful community gardens will have a waiting list for interested gardeners or gardening groups until plots become available.

Setting Up a New Gardening Organization

Administrative and Organizational Issues

There are some administrative questions that should be answered to prepare for changes that may occur in the long-term. These include: How will your organization make amendments to the Rules & Regulations if they are needed? How will new Garden Caretaker and Community Garden Organization member positions be filled as individuals come and go? And, how will they be trained once they are elected? (Revisit the Appendix A-4 Management of the Garden for more on these topics). All administrative issues should be addressed in the By Laws.

As time passes the community garden organization, firmly rooted in the community, may wish to expand their role. This may arise from the internal desires of the organization, or in reaction to changes in the community as demographic turnover occurs. It is a good idea to keep up communication with the community immediately surrounding the garden to address their changing needs. This will maintain the community garden’s usefulness and therefore the community’s support for it. Some of the organization’s goals and objective may entail offering more public education programs, opening up additional gardens, or offering new services to the public. It is helpful to stay cognizant of long-term issues in the present to help steer the organization in the desired direction. Also, when expanding programs and operations, it is advisable to take manageable steps to avoid overwhelming the organization and triggering its collapse. Such changes in direction might merit updating the organizations official mission statement.

Finances

As mentioned earlier, if your community garden charges a fee for plot rental, it is sometimes possible to determine the rental fees so that they cover the yearly cost of maintenance (for water, repairs, etc.) Otherwise it will be necessary to engage in fund raising campaigns each year. See the earlier “Fund Raising” section for fund raising ideas. The Treasurer should keep up a checking account, and if possible, maintain a small balance to help the organization in case unforeseen costs arise.

Maintenance

The Garden Caretaker will maintain a maintenance plan that assigns necessary tasks and schedules community garden workdays that will help keep up a comely

appearance, prevent weed infestations, and keep the surrounding community satisfied.

Maintaining the Site and Promoting Positive Community Relations

Once the community garden has been established and plants begin to grow, do not forget that it will need continued attention throughout the year. Weeds will be a problem every season. The best way to battle them is to pull them out before they go to seed – this will require communal effort. You may experience vandalism. Be prepared with the number of the graffiti hotline and get to know the law enforcement officer who patrols your neighborhood. You will undoubtedly have problems with your new water system. Make sure that you retain good relations with the person who helped install it. Do not forget to have a harvest party at the end of each season to thank everyone for their hard work and to celebrate the fruits of their labor.

Maintain community involvement by attending community council meetings, posting flyers in your neighborhood, making presentations to youth groups, civic groups, church groups, etc.. Always notify neighbors of the community garden of any changes you plan or any events that will be taking place – they can be your best allies.

Troubleshooting

Lack of Community

After the first few seasons, interest may plateau or even start declining without any active outreach. This is when the community garden (if not owned) may become vulnerable to development or collapse. There are a number of outreach activities that can help sustain community interest over the long run, such as holding biannual garden festivals and offering public classes

on gardening techniques. In addition, keep friendly terms with the neighbors. Update them about the community garden's status and any events held there—both to invite them and to give them a heads up.

'Enemies' of the Community Garden

It is important to invite anyone and everyone with any possible interest in the community garden project to participate in the creation of the garden from the beginning. People that feel left out may develop an ultimatum against the garden. Maintaining good relations and communication with the community, making lots of friends, and keeping a good track record by dealing with complaints quickly and respectfully are the best ways to limit the number of 'enemies' of the community garden. In the case that someone has a determined and rigid hatred of the community garden, try understanding their concerns and invite friendly dialogue. Avoid degenerating to name calling. If their attack continues, your history of good relations and solid community support will serve as your best protection.

Vandalism and Theft

It is a good idea to be prepared for vandalism and theft in a new community garden. However, the problem tends to be an exaggerated one that most gardens experience only minimally. Fences are used to deter vandals and keep stray dogs out. Neighbors and gardeners are asked to keep an eye out for strangers who may not be respecting the garden property. Signs can be posted requesting visitors to refrain from picking community gardeners' produce. Also, by inviting the whole community to participate in the garden early on, potential troublemakers become positively involved in the garden rather than causing problems. Refer back to the "Neighborhood" paragraph in the "Investigating Land Options and Choosing a Site" section for more information on how to avoid crime

related issues with good planning. Lastly, including youth programs or plots in the community garden will invite their positive participation in the garden and give them a sense of ownership. Neighborhood children who have no relation to the garden may be more likely to vandalize it.

Rule Enforcement and Conflict Resolution

In general, good communication between gardeners, the Community Garden Organization, Garden Caretaker, and supporters of the community garden will help avoid animosity in the garden. If ever a conflict arises between any of these entities, it is helpful to have a fair system established for resolving issues and for enforcing rules. Gardens need not be governed by draconian rules. However, in the rare case that someone continues to violate the rules that they agreed to obey when they applied, immediate enforcement will demonstrate the gravity and legitimacy of the rules. A warning system for rule violations is a good way to avoid problems getting out of hand. This may all seem strict for a friendly community garden scene, but the rules and regulations serve a purpose—to maintain a safe, clean, beautiful and friendly environment for community gardeners and the community at large. Therefore, as community gardeners are applying for garden plots, be sure to communicate clearly the garden organization's expectations, and in turn, the expectation that gardeners should have for the organization. Everyone entering the community garden should know the community garden rules. One way to achieve this is to post the rules near the garden entrances and by giving all community gardeners copies of the rules as they sign them. (See Sample Forms F-4 Community Gardener Agreement for more information.) In addition, make sure gardeners, neighbors, Community Garden Organization members, and Garden

Caretaker have a way to voice their opinion and influence the way the community garden is run and maintained. Giving everyone a voice will channel differences of opinion towards productive means of resolution.

Maintaining the Gardens Appearance

Maintaining a clean and attractive appearance for a community garden is essential for keeping the surrounding community happy. Unkempt community gardens elicit complaints, create community garden adversaries, and generally diminish the quality of a neighborhood. Good planning will help maintain a beautiful and attractive community garden.

One possibility is to assign highly visible plots to experienced and dedicated gardeners or to plant the border plots communally or as well-kept demonstration beds. Showy ornamentals can be planted along the fence lines. Having a nice sign for the community garden, keeping clean and slightly pathways, and incorporating art into the community garden are other ways to help maintain a good appearance.

Perhaps the most essential aspect of keeping the garden looking beautiful is establishing and enforcing garden rules that state weeds are not permitted, the dates for individual plot cleanup, as well as a minimum number of hours each community gardener must contribute to maintaining communal areas.

It is helpful if the Garden Caretaker lives within close proximity to the community garden, and if possible, if the community gardeners do as well. The closer the Garden Caretaker and gardeners are to the community garden, the more they will use it and care for it. Those who do not live within walking distance are likely to visit the garden less often and, therefore, more likely to neglect their plots. Lastly, if a composting

site will be included into the community garden plan, make sure the design of the compost bins keep rodents away, ensure that fruit and vegetable food waste is buried, and prohibit the disposal of meat waste or animal excrement into the piles.

Happy Gardening!!!

Resource Material for Starting a Community Garden

Books/Publications/Articles/Websites on Community Gardening

Community Gardening Guides

- A Handbook of Community Gardening, by Boston Urban Gardeners, edited by Susan Naimark, 1982
- “Starting a Community Garden,” American Community Garden Association (ACGA), (<http://www.communitygarden.org/pubs/starting.html>)
- “Community Garden Start-up Guide,” University of California Cooperative Extension in Los Angeles, (http://celosangeles.ucdavis.edu/garden/articles/startup_guide.html)
- The New Organic Grower: A Master's Manual of Tools and Techniques for the Home and Market Gardener, Eliot Coleman, Chelsea Green, 1995

Fund Raising

- “How to: Fund Raising,” by Gary Goosman, in Community Greening Review 1998, ACGA
- The Complete Book of Fund-Raising Writing, Don Fey, The Morris-Lee Publishing Group, 1995
- The Complete Book of Model Fund-Raising Letters, Roland Kuniholm, Prentice Hall, 1995
(See *Local* section for local assistance in becoming a nonprofit)

General Gardening Resources

- Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening, J. I. Rodale, Rodale Press, 2000
- “Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide” (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/VH021>)
- Vegetable Gardening in Florida, James M. Stephens, University Press of Florida, 1999
- All New Square Foot Gardening, Mel Bartholomew, Cool Springs Press, 2005
- How to Grow More Vegetables, John Jeavons, Ten Speed Press, 1995
- Rodale's All-New Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening, Barbara W. Ellis (ed.), Rodale Press, 1992

Companion Planting

Carrots Love Tomatoes, Louise Riotte, Storey Books, 1998

Great Garden Companions, Sally Jean Cunningham, Rodale Press

Composting

The Rodale Book of Composting: Easy Methods for Every Gardener, Martin & Gershuny, eds., Rodale Press, 1992

Edible Landscaping

Designing and Maintaining Your Edible Landscape Naturally, Robert Kourik (out of print)

The Edible Landscape, Tom MacCubbin, Waterview Press, 1998

Lead in Soil

(http://www.cleveland.com/insideout/index.ssf/2009/04/test_soil_for_lead_before_plan.html)

Resource Material for Starting a Community Garden

University of Florida(UF) Publications on Working with Nonprofit Organizations in Community Settings

(http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_series_working_with_nonprofit_organization_in_community_settings)

This series of 2-5 page fact sheets provides guidance for building a non-profit organization, from establishing its mission to effectively lobbying.

Includes:

- FCS9243/FY830 Concept, Problem Identification (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FY830>)
- FCS9244/FY831 Governance, Board Functions (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FY831>)
- FCS9245/FY832 Governance, Florida Statutes and Legislation (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FY832>)
- FCS9246/FY833 Governance, Accountability and Transparency (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FY833>)
- FCS9247/FY834 Governance, Board Officer Descriptions (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FY834>)
- FCS9248/FY835 Governance, Organizations (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FY835>)
- FCS9249/FY836 Governance, Board Manual and Assessment (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FY836>)
- FCS9250/FY837 The Strategic Plan (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FY837>)
- FCS9251/FY838 Developing a Code of Ethics for your Organization (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FY838>)
- FCS9252/FY839 Fund Raising Strategies for your Organization (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FY839>)
- FCS9263/FY1091 Preparing your Organization to Work with Volunteers (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FY1091>)
- FCS9264/FY1092 Preparing your Organization to Lobby (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FY1092>)

Local Resources:

Compost

Orange County Compost - Free

- L.B. McLeod Road Transfer Station; 5000 L.B. McLeod Road; Orlando, FL 407-245-0931
- Orange County Landfill; 12100 Young Pine Road; Orlando, FL 407-836-6601
- Porter Transfer Station; 8750 White Road; Orlando, FL 407-296-5198

Monterey Mushrooms Inc 5949 Sadler Rd; Zellwood, FL 32798; 407-905-4000
(<http://www.montereymushrooms.com/>)

Local Garden Centers and Big Box Stores (e.g., Lowe's or Home Depot) sell by the bag

Straw

- Palmer Feed Store, 912 W Church St; Orlando, FL 32805-2296; 407- 841-8924
(<http://www.palmerfeedstore.com>)

Resource Material for Starting a Community Garden

- Farm City Inc, 1610 Atlanta Ave., Orlando, FL 32806 – 407- 843-7470 (<http://www.farmcityfeed.com>)
- Tractor Supply Company, 16849 E Colonial Dr; Orlando, FL 32820-1910; 407-568-5116

Drip Irrigation

- Florida Irrigation Supply Inc, 2400 Paseo Ave; Orlando, FL 32805-6262; 407-425-6669
- Imperial Builders & Supply Inc., 3012 General Electric Rd; Apopka, FL 32703-3312; 407- 889-4147; (<http://www.imperialbuilders.com>)

Tools, Etc...

- Ace Hardware (<http://www.acehardware.com/>)
- Home Depot (<http://www.homedepot.com>)
- Lowe's (<http://www.Lowes.com>)
- A.M. Leonard (<http://www.amleo.com/>)

Soil Testing

- pH & soil nutrients: University of Florida; Orange County Extension Service; 6021 S. Conway Rd.; Orlando, FL 32812; 407-254-9200; (<http://ocextension.ifas.ufl.edu/>)
- Heavy metals & toxins: Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) Volusia County Extension; 3100 E. New York Avenue; DeLand, FL 32724; 386-822-5778 (<http://volusia.org/extension>)

Florida Fund Raising, Incorporating, Legal Assistance

- Florida Bar 651 E. Jefferson Street Tallahassee, FL 32399-2300 (850) 561-5600 (<http://www.floridabar.org/>) (850) 531-9077
- Florida Nonprofits Association 260 S. Central Campus Drive, Room 214, Orlando, FL 32815 Telephone: (801) 581-4883
- Internal Revenues Service Tax Questions: 1-800-829-1040 Tax Forms: 1-800-829-3676
- State of Florida Dept. of Commerce 160 East 300 South Main Floor, Orlando, FL (Walk-In) Information Center: (801) 530-4849 (877) 526-6438 (<http://www.commerce.florida.gov>)

Horticultural Specialists/Master Gardener Volunteers

- University of Florida
- Brevard County Extension Service; 3695 Lake Drive, Cocoa, FL 32926; 321-633-1702; (<http://brevard.ifas.ufl.edu/>)
- Lake County Extension Service; 1951 Woodlea Road, Tavares, FL 32778 | 352- 343-4101; (<http://lake.ifas.ufl.edu/>)
- Orange County Extension Service; 6021 S. Conway Rd.; Orlando, FL 32812; 407-254-9200; (<http://ocextension.ifas.ufl.edu/>)
- Osceola County Extension Service, Osceola Heritage Park, 1921 Kissimmee Valley Lane, Kissimmee FL, 34744-6107 321- 697-3000 (<http://osceola.ifas.ufl.edu/>)

Resource Material for Starting a Community Garden

- Seminole County Extension Service; 250 W. County Home Rd; Sanford, FL 32773-6197; 407- 665-5551; (<http://www.seminolecountyfl.gov/coopext/>)

Organic Garden Certified Products

The Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) is a national nonprofit organization that determines which pest control products are allowed for use in organic production and processing. OMRI Listed—or approved—products may be used on operations that are certified organic under the USDA National Organic Program.

OMRI Mailing address: Box 11558; Eugene OR 97440 Street address: 2495 Hilyard Street, Suite B; Eugene, OR 97405; Phone: 541-343-7600; Fax: 541-343-8971; E-mail:info@omri.org; Web Address: (<http://www.omri.org/>)

The National Organic Program (NOP) develops, implements, and administers national production, handling, and labeling standards for organic agricultural products. The NOP also accredits the certifying agents (foreign and domestic) who inspect organic production and handling operations to certify that they meet USDA standards.

(http://www.omri.org/OMRI_products_list.php)

Pest Control

- Bugs, Slugs, and Other Thugs, Rhonda Massingham Hart, Storey Books, 1991
- Dead Snails Leave No Trails, Loren Nancarrow and Janet Hogan Taylor, Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, CA 1996
- Good Bugs for Your Garden, Allison Mia Starcher, Algonquin Books, 1995
- “Integrated Pest Management” (http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_pest_management)
- Rodale's Color Handbook of Garden Insects, Anna Carr, Rodale Press, 1979
- Rodale's Successful Organic Gardening Controlling Pests and Diseases, Michalak & Gilkeson, Rodale Press, 1994
- The Organic Gardener's Handbook of Natural Pest and Disease Control, Barbara Ellis, Rodale Press, 1996

Periodicals

- *Organic Gardening*, Rodale Press, (<http://www.organicgardening.com>)
- *Florida Gardening* (<http://www.floridagardening.com/>)

Raised beds and Container Gardening

- “Building a Raised Bed Garden” (<http://harris-tx.tamu.edu/hort/pubs/pubs/buildingraisedbeds.pdf>)
- “Container and Raised Bed Gardening” (<http://www.ces.purdue.edu/new/HO-200.pdf>)
- “Minigardening (Growing Vegetables in Containers)” (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/VH032>)
- “Raised-Bed Gardening” (<http://extension.missouri.edu/publications/DisplayPub.aspx?P=g6985>)
- “Raised-Bed Gardening” (<http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-1345/ANR-1345.pdf>)

Resource Material for Starting a Community Garden

Seed Catalogs:

- Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds (<http://rareseeds.com/>)
- Bountiful Gardens (<http://www.bountifulgardens.org>) 18001 Shafer Ranch Road Willits, CA 95490
- Burpee (<http://www.burpee.com/>)
- Blum (<http://www.seedsblum.com>)
- Ferry-Morse (<http://www.ferry-morse.com/>)
- Gurney's Seed & Nursery (<http://gurneys.com/Default.asp?bhcd2=1249440695>)
- Henry Field's Seeds & Nursery (<http://henryfields.com/Default.asp?bhcd2=1249441300>)
- Heirloom Seed Sources (<http://www.halcyon.com/tmend/links.htm>)
- Johnny's Seeds (207) 437-4301 (<http://www.johnnyseeds.com>) 184 Foss Hill Road Albion, ME 04910-9731
- Kilgore Seed Co Inc 1400 W 1st St Sanford, FL 32771 407-323-6630
- Organic Seed and Seed Sources (<http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/Organic/complianceguide/organizations2.pdf>)
- Palmer Feed Store (407) 841-8924 (<http://www.palmerfeedstore.com>) 912 W Church St., Orlando, FL 32805
- Park Seed (<http://www.parkseed.com/gardening/GP/homepage/page1>)
- Peaceful Valley Farm Supply (888) 784-1722 <http://www.groworganic.com>) PO Box 2209 Grass Valley, CA 95945
- Rebecca's Garden 10601 Vista Road Columbia, MO 21044 410-531-5144 e-mail: ebsorggarden@aol.com
- Seed Savers Exchange (563) 382-5990 (<http://www.seedsavers.org>) 3076 North Winn Road Decorah, Iowa 52101
- Seeds of Change (888)-762-7333 (<http://seedsofchange.com>) PO Box 15700 Santa Fe, NM 87592-1500
- Shepherd's Garden Seeds (860) 482-3638 (<http://www.shepherdseeds.com>) 30 Irene Street Torrington, CT 06790
- Stokes Seeds (<http://www.stokeseeds.com/cgi-bin/StokesSeeds.storefront>)
- Tomato Growers Supply Company (888) 478-7333 (<http://www.tomatogrowers.com>) PO 2237 Fort Meyers, FL 33902

Tool Catalogs

- A.M. Leonard Horticultural Tool and Supply Co (800) 543-8955 (<http://amleo.com>) 241 Fox Dr., Piqua, OH 45356
- Ben Meadows (800) 241-6401 (<http://benmeadows.com>) PO Box 5277, Janesville, WI 53547-5277
- Forestry Suppliers, Inc (800) 647-5368 (<http://www.forestry-suppliers.com>) 205 W. Rankin St., Jackson, MS 39201
- Lee Valley Tools (800) 871-8158 (<http://www.leevalley.com>) PO Box 1780 Ogdensburg, NY 13669-6780

Resource Material for Starting a Community Garden

Vermiculture

- “Cheap and Easy Worm Bin”
(<http://ocextension.ifas.ufl.edu/OCS/pdffiles/Cheap%20and%20Easy%20Worm%20Bin.pdf>)
- “Worm Bin Composting” (<http://www.pluginolympia.com/green/documents/wormbin.htm>)
- Our Vital Earth (800) 237-4780 (<http://www.ourvitalearth.com>) Source of red wiggler worms, worm castings, worm compost tea
- Worms Eat My Garbage, Mary Appelhof, Flower Press 1982 Kalamazoo, Michigan

Helpful Internal Revenue, Forms & Publications for Obtaining Tax Exempt 501(c)(3) Status:

- *Asking tax questions.* Call the IRS with your tax questions at 1-877-829-5500.
- *Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Pub 4220: Applying for 501(c)(3) Tax- Exempt Status A helpful document about why and how to apply for 501(c)(3) status'*
- *IRA Pub 557: Tax-Exempt Status for Your Organization* The rules and procedures that pertain to organizations applying for federal income tax exemption under Internal Revenues Code 501(c)(3).
- *IRS Form 1023: Application for Recognition of Exemption Under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code* When does an organization *not* need to fill out *Form 1023*
- *IRS Form 8718: User Fee Exempt Organization Determination Letter Request* For “new organizations that anticipate gross receipts averaging not more than \$10,000 during the first 4 years,” the fee is \$150. For more than \$10,000, the fee is \$500. (*Form 8718*)
- *IRS Form SS-4: Application for Employer Identification Number* Every exempt organization must have an Employer Identification Number (EIN) even if they do not have any employees. If an organization files within 15 months from the end of the month in which they were organized, their exempt status will be recognized retroactively to the date it was organized. (Pg. 17, *Pub 557*)
- ***To order IRS forms and publications.*** Call 1-800-TAX-FORM (1-800-829-3676) (within U.S., Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands) or go to <http://www.irs.gov/formspubs/index.html>) and download the form or publication you need.

The above information is given as guidance only. Organizations applying for tax -exempt status should consult a Tax Advisor to assure all procedures and rules are followed correctly. Organization deciding whether or not to become a legal entity such as filing as a non-profit corporation are strongly advised to seek legal council from a lawyer and follow the procedures given by the Department of Commerce.

Resource Material for Starting a Community Garden

Resources for Florida Vegetable Gardeners

University of Florida EDIS Publications Relevant to Organic Gardening

Compost and Soil Amendments

- Compost Tips for the Home Gardener (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/EP323>)
- Composting Horse Manure: (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AN040>)
- Construction of Home Compost Units: (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/HE026>)
- Landscape and Vegetable Garden Test Information Sheet: (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/SS187>)
- Producing Garden Vegetables with Organic Soil Amendments:
(<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/MG323>)

Cover Crops

- Cover Crop Benefits for South Florida: (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/SS461>)
- Cover Crops: (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AA217>)

Pest Management

Beneficials

- Beneficial Insects #1: (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IN002>)
- Beneficial Insects #2: (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IN003>)
- Beneficial Insects #3: (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IN012>)
- Beneficial Insects #4: (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IN013>)
- Beneficial Insects and Mites: (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IN078>)
- Natural Enemies and Biological Control: (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IN120>)

Diagnostic Resources

- The Florida Plant Diagnostic Network (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PP151>)
- UF/IFAS Plant Disease Clinic Network (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/SR007>)

Disease

- Diseases in Florida Vegetable Garden: Beans: (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PP132>)
- Diseases in Florida Vegetable Garden: Pepper: (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PP122>)
- Diseases in Florida Vegetable Garden: Tomato: (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PP121>)
- Diseases in Florida Vegetable Garden Beans (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PP132>)

Insect and Mite Pests

- Insect Management in the Home Garden: (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/VH036>)
- Vegetable Garden Insects #1: (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IN006>)
- Vegetable Garden Insects #2: (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IN007>)

Nematode Pests

- Managing Nematodes for the Non-Commercial Vegetable Garden:
(<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/NG005>)
- Marigolds for Nematode Management: (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/NG045>)
- Nematode Assay Laboratory (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/SR011>)
- Soil Organic Matter, Green Manures and Cover Crops for Nematode Management
(<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/VH037>)

Other Animals of the Garden

- Coping with Deer Damage in Florida: (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW128>)

Weeds

- Weeds in Florida (http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/TOPIC_BOOK_Florida_Weeds)

Resource Material for Starting a Community Garden

Vegetable Gardening

- Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide: (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/VH021>)
- Growing potatoes in the Florida Home Garden: (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/HS183>)
- Minigardening (Growing Vegetables in Containers): (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/VH032>)
- Producing Peanuts for Home Use: (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AA182>)
- Seed Production and Seed Sources of Organic Vegetables:
(<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/HS227>)

Websites

- Clemson University: (<http://hgic.clemson.edu/>)
- Cornell University: (<http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/>)
- Mississippi State University: (<http://msucares.com/lawn/garden/vegetables/index.html>)
- North Carolina State University:
(<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/Publications/lawngarden.php#vegetables>)
- Purdue University:
(<http://www.entm.purdue.edu/entomology/vegisite/commercial/hotline2004.html>)
- Texas A&M: (<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/plantanswers/vegetables/veg.html>)
- The Ohio State University:
(http://extension.osu.edu/lawn_and_garden/vegetables_herbs.php)
- University of California – Davis: (<http://vric.ucdavis.edu/veginfor/veginfor.htm>)
- University of Florida: (<http://ftsg.ifas.ufl.edu/index.htm>)
- University of Illinois: (<http://www.solutions.uiuc.edu/directory.cfm?series=4&cat=67>)
- University of Florida's online publication website (EDIS)
(http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/TOPIC_Vegetable_Gardening)
- University of Florida's Information on freezing and canning vegetables
(http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_food_preservation)

Additional Reliable Organic Garden Resources - Internet

- **ATTRA (National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service)**
Home: (<http://www.attra.org>)
Master Publication List: (<http://attra.ncat.org/publication.html>)
- **Florida's Online Composting Center**
This site is managed by IFAS/Sarasota County: (<http://www.compostinfo.com/>)
- **FOG (Florida Organic Growers and Consumers)**
Home: (<http://www.foginfo.org>)
- **OMRI (Organic Materials Review Institute)**
List of Allowed Materials: (http://www.omri.org/OMRI_brand_name_list.html)
Organic Seed Database: (http://www.omri.org/OMRI_SEED_list.html)
- **Purdue University Extension**
Guide to Organic Vegetable Production:
(http://www.ces.purdue.edu/extmedia/ID/ID_316.pdf)
- **USDA National Organic Program**
Home: (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/indexIE.htm>)
-

Resource Material for Starting a Community Garden

- **University of Florida Extension Soil Testing Laboratory**
Home: (<http://soilslab.ifas.ufl.edu/>)
- **University of Florida Plant Disease Clinic**
Home: (<http://plantpath.ifas.ufl.edu/pdc/Default.htm>)

Additional Resources – Books

- How to Grow More Vegetables Than You Ever Thought Possible on Less Land Than You Can Imagine: A Primer on the Life-Giving Biodynamic/French Intensive Methods. Jeavons, J., 1985.
- “Manage Insects on your Farm: A Guide to Ecological Strategies”, Altieri, M.A, C. I. Nicholls and M.A. Fritz, 2005, Sustainable Agriculture Network, SARE, Beltsville, MD. 119 pp.
- Manual of Minor Vegetables , Stephens, James M., 1988, Bulletin SP-40, University of Florida. (<http://ifasbooks.ifas.ufl.edu/>)
- Resource Guide for Organic Insect and Disease Management, Caldwell, B., E.B. Rosen, E. Sideman, A. Shelton and C. Smart, 2005, Cornell University. NY State Agric. Exper. Station, Geneva, NY. 169 pp. Online free version: (<http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/pp/resourceguide/>)
- Sustainable Agriculture Network. Building Soils for Better Crops , Magdoff, F. and H. vanes, 2000, 2nd Ed. 241 pp. (<http://www.sare.org/publications/bsbc/bsbc.pdf>)
- The New Organic Grower , Coleman, Elliot, 1995, Chelsea Green, White River Junction, VT. 340 pp.
- The Sustainable Vegetable Garden: A Backyard Guide to Healthy Soil and Higher Yields, Jeavons, J. and C. Cox, 1999.
- Vegetable Gardening in Florida , Stephens, James M., 1999, University Press of Florida. (<http://ifasbooks.ifas.ufl.edu/>)

To obtain additional copies of this Community Gardeners Guide contact:

Orange County/ University of Florida IFAS Extension Service
Orange County Extension Education Center
6021 S. Conway Rd., Orlando, FL 32812
407-254-9200

Resource Material for Starting a Community Garden

CROP	SEEDS/PLANTS 100' OF ROW	SPACING IN INCHES		SEED DEPTH INCHES	PLANTING DATES	PLANT HARDINESS	POUNDS YIELD 100'	DAYS TO HARVEST <small>(from transplanting)</small>
		ROWS	PLANTS					
Beans, Bush	1 lb.	18-30	2-3	1-2	Mar – Apr, Sep	Tender	45	50-60
Beans, Pole	1/2 lb.	40-48	3-4	1-2	Mar – Apr, Aug – Sep	Tender	80	55-70
Beans, Lima	2 lb.	24-36	3-4	1-2	Mar – Apr, Sep	Tender	50	65-75
Cantaloupes	1/2 oz.	60-72	24-36	1-2	Mar – Apr	Tender	150	75-90 (65-70)
Corn, Sweet	2 oz.	24-36	12-18	1-2	Mar, Aug – Sep	Tender	15	60-95
Cucumbers	1/2 oz.	36-60	12-24	1-2	Mar, Sep	Tender	100	50-65 (40-50)
Eggplant	50 plts / 1 pkt	36-42	24-36	1/2	Mar, Aug – Sep	Tender	200	90-110 (75-90)
Okra	1 oz.	24-40	6-12	1-2	Mar – Aug	Tender	70	50-75
Peas, Southern	1/2 oz.	30-36	2-3	1-2	Mar - Sep	Tender	80	60-90
Peppers	100 plts / 1 pkt	20-36	12-24	1/2	Mar, Aug – Sep	Tender	50	80-100 (60-80)
Potatoes, Sweet	100 plts	48-54	12-24	---	Feb – Jun	Tender	75	(120-140)
Pumpkin	1 oz.	60-84	36-60	1-2	Feb – Mar, Aug	Tender		90-120 (80-110)
Squash, Summer	1 1/2 oz.	36-48	24-36	1-2	Mar, Aug – Sep	Tender	150	40-55 (35-40)
Squash, Winter	1 oz.	60-90	36-48	1-2	Mar, Aug	Tender	300	80-110 (70-90)
Tomatoes, Stake	70 plts / 1 pkt	36-48	18-24	1/2	Mar, Sep	Tender	125	90-110 (75-90)
Tomatoes, Ground	35 plts / 1 pkt	40-60	36-40	1/2	Mar, Sep	Tender	200	90-110 (75-90)
Tomatoes, Container					Mar, Sep	Tender		90-110 (75-90)
Watermelon, Large	1/8 oz.	84-108	48-60	1-2	Mar, Aug	Tender	400	85-95 (80-90)
Watermelon, Small	1/8 oz.	48-60	15-30	1-2	Mar, Aug	Tender	400	85-95 (80-90)
Watermelon, Seedless	70 plts	48-60	15-30	1-2	Mar, Aug	Tender	400	85-95 (80-90)

WARM SEASON CROPS

Planting Chart - Orange County FL.

Resource Material for Starting a Community Garden

CROP	SEEDS/PLANTS 100' OF ROW	SPACING IN INCHES		SEED DEPTH INCHES	PLANTING DATES	PLANT HARDINESS	POUNDS YIELD 100'	DAYS TO HARVEST (from transplanting)
		ROWS	PLANTS					
Beets	1 oz.	14-24	3-5	1/2 - 1	Oct - Mar	Hardy	75	50-65
Broccoli	100 plts / 1/8 oz.	30-36	12-18	1/2 - 1	Aug - Jan	Hardy	50	75-90 (55-70)
Cabbage	100 plts / 1/8 oz.	24-36	12-24	1/2 - 1	Sep - Jan	Hardy	125	90-110 (70-90)
Carrots	1/8 oz.	16-24	1-2	1/2	Oct - Mar	Hardy	100	65-80
Cauliflower	55 plts / 1/8 oz.	24-30	18-24	1/2 - 1	Oct - Jan	Hardy	80	75-90 (55-70)
Celery	150 plts / 1/8 oz.	24-36	6-10	1/4 - 1/2	Aug - Feb	Hardy	150	115-125 (80-105)
Chinese Cabbage	125 plts / 1/8 oz.	24-36	12-24	1/4 - 3/4	Oct - Jan	Hardy	100	70-90 (60-70)
Collards	100 plts / 1/8 oz.	24-30	10-18	1/2 - 1	Aug - Mar	Hardy	150	70-80 (40-60)
Endive/Escarole	100 plts	18-24	8-12	1/2	Jan - Feb, Sep	Hardy	75	80-95
Kale	100 plts / 1/8 oz.	24-30	12-18	1/2 - 1	Sep - Jan	Hardy	75	80-95
Kohlrabi	1/8 oz.	24-30	3-5	1/2 - 1	Oct - Mar	Hardy	100	70-80 (50-55)
Lettuce: Crisp, Butter Head, Leaf, Romaine	100 plts	12-24	8-12	1/2	Sep - Mar	Hardy	75	50-90 (40-70)
Mustard	1/4 oz.	14-24	1-6	1/2 - 1	Sep - Mar	Hardy	100	40-60
Onions, Bulbing	300 plts or sets / 1 oz.	12-24	4-6	1/2 - 1	Sep - Dec	Hardy	100	120-160 (110-120)
Onions, Bunching (green onions)	800 plts or sets / 1 1/2 oz.	12-24	1-2	2-3	Aug - Mar	Hardy	100	50-75 (30-40)
Onions, (Shallots)		18-24	6-8	1/4 - 3/4	Aug - Mar	Hardy	100	(30-40)
Peas, English	1 lb.	24-36	1-2	1-2	Sep - Mar	Hardy	40	50-70
Potatoes	15 lbs.	36-42	8-12	3-4	Jan - Feb	Semi Hardy	150	85-110
Radish	1 oz.	12-18	1-2	3/4	Sep - Mar	Hardy	40	20-30
Spinach	1 oz.	14-18	33-5	3/4	Oct - Nov	Hardy	40	45-60
Strawberry	100 plts	36-40	10-14	---	Oct - Nov	Hardy	50	(90-110)
Turnips	1/4 oz.	12-20	4-6	1/2 - 1	Jan - Mar, Sep - Nov	Hardy	150	40-60

COOL SEASON CROPS

Planting Chart - Orange County FL.

Appendix

A-1 Time Line for Planning a Community Garden

1. Publicize the community garden project, make a list of interested individuals, and then call, e-mail or give each of them an introduction/welcome letter.
2. Call a meeting for those who showed interest in the garden project.
3. 1st meeting agenda:
 - ✓ *Welcome, introduction*
 - ✓ *Envisioning stage. What type of garden—theme (ex. Neighborhood garden), goals, objectives.*
 - ✓ *Form a planning organization (sub-organizations for each task), organizational structure, positions*
 - ✓ *Next steps: (1) Investigate land options (2) Outreach/build support, funding*
 - ✓ *Schedule next meeting date*

Month #1 (Ideally: January)

1. Contact your County Extension Service Office
2. Continue outreach, generating interest
3. Review and assess land options/contact owners, soil test
4. Start drafting budget, listing garden needs, determine garden plot rental fee (if there will be one)

Months #2 - #3 (Ideally: February & March)

1. Plan the garden--determine rules and regulations
2. Choose a site, negotiate lease
3. Insurance
4. Finalize budget/start fund raising, looking for donations (\$ and in-kind)

Months #4 - #5 (Ideally: April & May)

2. Continue fund raising
1. Outreach—look for volunteers (to help develop site) and gardeners
2. Plan the garden--layout

Month #6 (Ideally: June)

1. Organize the Gardeners: orientation, applications, waivers, fees, etc.
2. Finalize garden plan
3. Gather all remaining materials needed—plants, seeds, tools, compost, etc.

Months #7 - #8 (Ideally: July & August)

1. Start seeds for transplanting (4 - 6 weeks before transplant date).
2. Prepare and develop site

Appendix

A-2 Orientation Outline

All Community Gardeners are required to attend a garden orientation in their assigned garden before they are assigned a specific plot. New gardeners must attend a Garden Orientation one month prior to the beginning of the season in which they will begin to garden (orientation in: August for the First Warm Season; September for the Cold Season, and January for the Second Warm Season). Returning gardeners are strongly encouraged to attend the August or September Orientations as well.. The following information should be used when planning spring orientations.

1. Preparation

- A. In August, set the dates for Orientations
 - i. Each garden should have two options scheduled – Orientation and alternate Rain Date
 - ii. Try to schedule on a Tues., Wed. or Thurs. evening to catch those who work
 - iii. Schedule Garden Cleanups on Saturdays soon after the orientation date
 - iv. Usually Orientations are scheduled at the end of June, beginning of August. This gives gardeners enough time to work their plots before the September 1 deadline.
- B. Notify gardeners of Orientation dates
 - i. Print the dates in the Summer Newsletter
 - ii. Print postcards and send to new and returning gardeners
 - iii. Do not tell people about the orientation until they have returned their registration form.
 - iv. Reminder phone calls might be helpful, but not required
- C. Materials
 - i. Print any handouts you will need at least a week before the first Orientation
 - ii. Prepare drip irrigation demos
 - iii. Make sure that you have access to dry erase board and writing implements

2. Orientation

- A. Orientation should take 30-45 minutes
 - i. Some gardeners will have more questions than others
 - ii. Be prepared to repeat items for latecomers
- B. Use Gardener Information and Policies sheet as a guide for discussion topics
 - i. Remember to discuss rules for "subletting" garden plots
 - ii. Be sensitive to group dynamics; maintain group attention
 - iii. Emphasize importance of community/working together
- C. Goals
 - i. To discuss and familiarize gardeners with garden policies
 - ii. To emphasize drip irrigation protocol
 - iii. To emphasize appropriate planting practices
 - iv. To assign plots to new gardeners
 - v. To provide gardeners with an opportunity to get to know each other
- D. Do a short garden tour
 - i. Tool bin /Storage shed
 - ii. Bulletin board or place to communicate
 - iii. Water source
 - iv. Compost pile(s)
 - v. Combination Locks
 - vi. Garden Layout
- E. Assign plots to new gardeners - Gardeners must complete Orientation before receiving plot assignment

Appendix

A-3 Month-to-Month Gardener's Checklist

June

- Choose crops to grow for next gardening year
- Order Seeds for the next gardening year
- Mow the garden paths
- Harvest warm season crops
- Put waste plant material in compost pile
- Turn the compost pile
- Refresh garden bed media
- Repair raised beds
- Repair irrigation
- Water the garden bed media
- Solarize garden bed if soil pest were a problem
- Cover with black plastic (omit this if you plan to solarize)
- Celebrate with pot luck
- Recruit gardeners for next gardening year

What will continue to grow?

Okra
Cherry Tomatoes
Sweet Potato
Southern Peas

July

- Mow the garden paths
- Turn the compost pile
- Start seedlings of tomato, pepper, eggplant, squash, beans (warm season crops)
- Continue with repairs of raised beds, irrigation and other structures/materials

What will continue to grow?

Okra
Cherry Tomatoes
Sweet Potato
Southern Peas

August

- Mow the garden paths
- Turn the compost pile
- Continue care of new seedlings
- Remove plastic cover(s)
- Refresh the garden bed media
- Apply organic fertilizers
- Water the garden bed media
- Provide orientation to new gardeners

What will continue to grow?

Okra
Cherry Tomatoes
Sweet Potato
Southern Peas

September

- Mow the garden paths
- Turn the compost pile
- Apply inorganic fertilizer
- Plant transplants (warm season crops)
- Plant seeds (warm season crops)
- Install trellis, cages for vining plants
- Keep the garden bed media moist
- Control pest as needed
- Leave room for cool season crops to be planted out next week
- Start seedlings of lettuce, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, collards (cool season crops)

What to Plant?

Warm Season Crops
See:
Florida Vegetable Garden Guide

Appendix

October

- Mow the garden paths
- Put waste plant material in the compost pile
- Turn the compost pile
- Fertilize warm season crops as needed
- Train vining crops to climb trellis, cages, etc.
- Control pest as needed
- Plant transplants (cool season crops)
- Plant seeds (cool season crops)
- Keep the garden bed media moist

What to Plant?

Warm Season Crops and
Cool Season Crops
See:
Florida Vegetable Garden Guide

November

- Mow the garden paths
- Put waste plant material in the compost pile
- Turn the compost pile
- Fertilize crops as needed
- Keep the garden bed media moist
- Control pest as needed
- Start succession planting (cool season crops)

What to Plant?

Cool Season Crops
See:
Florida Vegetable Garden Guide

December

- Mow the garden paths
- Put waste plant material in the compost pile
- Turn the compost pile
- Fertilize crops as needed
- Harvest warm season crops
- Put waste plant material in the compost pile
- Refresh the garden bed media
- Plant more cool season crops
- Control pest as needed
- Continue succession planting (cool season crops)
- Celebrate with pot luck

What to Plant?

Cool Season Crops
See:
Florida Vegetable Garden Guide

January

Mow the garden paths

- Put waste plant material in the compost pile
- Turn the compost pile
- Fertilize crops as needed
- Put waste plant material in the compost pile
- Harvest crops as they reach maturity
- Plant more cool season crops
- Control pest as needed
- Start seeds indoors near the end of the month tomato, pepper, eggplant, squash, beans (warm season crops)

What to Plant?

Cool Season Crops
See:
Florida Vegetable Garden Guide

Appendix

February

- Mow the garden paths
- Put waste plant material in the compost pile
- Turn the compost pile
- Continue care of new seedlings
- Refresh the garden bed media
- Apply organic fertilizers
- Control pest as needed
- Keep the garden bed media moist

Continue to Grow?

Cool Season Crops

Do not plant anything new

March

- Mow the garden paths
- Put waste plant material in the compost pile
- Turn the compost pile
- Apply inorganic fertilizer
- Plant transplants (warm season crops)
- Plant seeds (warm season crops)
- Install trellis, cages for vining plants
- Control pest as needed
- Keep the garden bed media moist

What to Plant?

Warm Season Crops

See:

Florida Vegetable Garden Guide

April

- Mow the garden paths
- Put waste plant material in the compost pile
- Turn the compost pile
- Fertilize warm season crops as needed
- Train vining crops to climb trellis, cages, etc.
- Control pest as needed
- Keep the garden bed media moist

What to Plant?

Warm Season Crops

See:

Florida Vegetable Garden Guide

May

- Mow the garden paths
- Put waste plant material in the compost pile
- Turn the compost pile
- Fertilize warm season crops as needed
- Control pest as needed
- Keep the garden bed media moist

Continue to grow?

Warm Season Crops

Do not plant anything new

Appendix

A-4 Management of the Garden

Community gardens should be managed by a garden organization and a Garden Caretaker. The garden organization supports the Garden Caretaker and handles the garden's administrative matters such as: selecting the garden location, soliciting support for the garden, establishing and managing a budget, general maintenance, garden celebrations, community relations, garden fees and fundraising, establishing rules for the garden, and the initial and long-term planning for the garden. The Garden Caretaker manages the day-to-day operation of the garden. The Community Garden Organization and Garden Caretaker are supported by the Orange County Extension Service through the Community Garden (MG) Advisor.

Responsibilities

Property Owner

- Owns the garden and all installed enhancements (raised beds, shed, fencing, plumbing, etc.)
- In conjunction with a grantee (if there is one) approves all garden leaders (organization members and Garden Caretakers)
- Signs a lease (preferably for 3 years or longer) to allow use of the land for community gardening
- If they so choose, they may be a voting member of the community garden organization or may appoint a property owner representative to be a voting member of the organization

Grantee

- Provides funding for the community garden
- In conjunction with a property owner approves all garden leaders (organization members and Garden Caretakers)
- Signs commitment agreement (preferably for 3 years or longer) in which is specified the amount of funding the grantee is providing to the community garden
- May be a voting member of the community garden organization or may appoint a grantee representative to be a voting member of the organization

Orange County Extension Service (through the Master Gardener Coordinator Extension Agent)

- Appoints Community Garden Advisor (Florida Certified Master Gardener (MG) Volunteer) for each community garden, and administers support provided by the Community Garden Advisors
 - Holds monthly Community Garden Advisors meeting to help identify and resolve issues
- Provides a community garden training program (how to administer the garden, how to grow vegetables, etc.)
- Assists in the formation of new community gardens and the continuation of existing community gardens anywhere in the county

Appendix

- Provides guidance to community gardens anywhere in the county
- Does not have a voice on the community garden organizations

Community Garden Advisor (Florida Certified Master Gardener (MG) Volunteer)

The Community Garden Advisor is a volunteer from the Orange County Extension Service. The Community Garden Advisor is not a member of the Community Garden Organization. Therefore he/she may not vote on Community Garden Organization issues. The Community Garden Advisor is also not a supervisor. Therefore he/she may not tell the Community Garden Organization members or Garden Caretaker what to do or how to do anything.

- Assists the community garden he/she is assigned to be the best possible garden
 - Build a strong friendly relationship with the garden leaders and gardeners
 - Set a good example (attitude of helpfulness, keep promises, be diplomatic, etc.)
- Experienced in growing vegetables in Central Florida
- Know the community garden related resources available within the county
- Work to ensure that the community garden organization is effective
- Visits his/her assigned community garden regularly
 - Tour the garden plots at least every 2 weeks
 - Attend the community garden organization meetings
 - Report any issues to the Master Gardener Coordinator Extension Agent immediately
- Serves as the coach and counselor for the Garden Caretaker and the Community Garden Organization Members
- Ensures that garden leaders and gardeners have ample training opportunities in administering the garden and growing plants in the garden
- Visits with the property owner and grantee at least annually to learn about their concerns if any
- Facilitates timely renewal of annual property owner and grantee commitment agreements
- Attend monthly Community Garden Advisor meetings
- Does not have a vote on the community garden organizations

Garden Caretaker (appointed by the Community Garden Organization)

The Garden Caretaker should be a gardener in the community garden. If the Community Garden Organization cannot find someone to serve as the Garden Caretaker the Community Garden Organization President will serve as a temporary substitute.

- In charge of the operation of the community garden
- Role model (know how to garden effectively – has or is in the process of obtaining adequate training)
- Friendly mentor for other gardeners
 - Give direction
 - Provide coaching
 - Provide support & encouragement

Appendix

- Trust others
- Have fun and work to help other have fun gardening
- Enforces the community garden rules and bylaws
- Attends Community Garden Organization meetings, reports on operational issues in the garden, and requests administrative support as necessary
- Is not a voting member of the community garden organizations

Community Garden Organization (Consists of the Community Garden Organization President, and at least two other elected members)

The Community Garden Organization should have both people who are interested in being gardeners and people who have good community contacts with the local government (city and county) and local businesses.

Elected Community Garden Organization members (from which the Community Garden Organization President, Secretary, Treasurer, etc. are chosen) should be gardeners in the community garden, and they are elected each year during the August members meeting to serve for one year. **Other possible Community Garden Organization members** include: representatives of the land owners, representatives of grantees to the garden, representatives from local schools, neighborhood council members, church leaders, local politicians, representatives from nonprofits, lawyers, and neighbors who live near the garden.

This Community Garden Organization:

- Supports the Garden Caretaker in developing a quality community garden
- Handles community garden administration
- Recruits Garden Caretaker and Assistant Garden Caretakers as necessary

Community Garden Organization President

The Community Garden Organization President heads the Community Garden Organization and should be a by a well organized person who is willing to organize and coordinate Community Garden Organization functions.

- Organizes the Community Garden Organization to see that all garden administrative functions are delegated, coordinate, and completed
- Prepares Community Garden Organization meeting agendas
- Calls, presides over, and promotes attendance at monthly Community Garden Organization meetings and any special meetings that may be necessary
- Arranges for annual renewal of Property owner and Grantee commitment agreements
- Is a voting member of the Community Garden Organization, but only votes in the case of a tie

Other possible Community Garden Organization Members selected from the elected members of the Community Garden Organization (must have at least two, but may have as many as needed)

Appendix

Secretary

- Keeps Community Garden Organization meeting minutes and sends out Community Garden Organization meeting notices.
- Is a voting member of the Community Garden Organization

Treasurer

- Handles community garden funds*, collects dues, and pays bills on the recommendation of the Garden Caretaker and with the authority of the Community Garden Organization.
- Keeps adequate financial records, and provides the Community Garden Organization with a financial report at each Community Garden Organization meeting
- Takes the lead in preparing the annual community garden budget
- Is a voting member of the Community Garden Organization

* **Note:** Administration of the garden's budget and funds should be in the hands of several people (e.g., checks should require the signature of at least two Community Garden Organization members).

Fundraising Chair

- Plans and organizes community garden fundraiser
- Is a voting member of the Community Garden Organization

Other positions as defined by the Community Garden Organization

- Assistant Garden Caretakers (appointed by the Community Garden Organization as needed)
 - Assists the Garden Caretaker in operating the garden with specific assignment from
 - the Garden Caretaker
 - Role model (know how to garden effectively – has or is in the process of obtaining
 - adequate training)
 - Friendly mentor for other gardeners
 - Give direction
 - Provide coaching
 - Provide support & encouragement
 - Trust others
 - Have fun and work to help other have fun gardening

Members of the Community Garden

- Interested in having the best possible garden for growing vegetables
- Abide by the By Laws and Rules of the community garden

Appendix

- Signs an annual commitment agreement
- May attend all Community Garden Organization meetings, but does not have a vote unless they are elected Community Garden Organization members

Job Descriptions

As the community garden nears completion, the volunteer garden staff positions should be created and filled. In the “Forming a Organization & Appointing a Garden Caretaker” section the administration and operation of the garden were discussed. The Community Garden Organization handles all the administrative issues of the garden and supports the Garden Caretaker. The Community Garden Organization is headed by the Community Garden Organization Chair who acts as the garden contact person and coordinates gardeners and plot assignments, water access, and communication with the landowner; a Treasurer, to handle the fees and money generated by fundraising, and maintain the checking account; and a Garden Caretaker, who is in charge of operating the garden (making basic repairs, making sure the garden is well-maintained, and that gardeners are following rules established by the Community Garden Organization), mentoring the other gardeners in the community garden, and requesting support from the Community Garden Organization as needed. The link between the Organization Chair and the gardeners, the person responsible for making basic repairs in the garden (water system, fence, etc.), and making sure the garden is well-maintained and the rules followed. The division of responsibilities can vary as the Community Garden Organization sees fit. Therefore, more than recommending indispensable positions, those noted above serve to highlight responsibilities and essential tasks. Some Community Garden Organization Presidents may also serve as the treasurer. Other gardens may have more than one Garden Caretaker. The most essential issue is to have at least one person in the garden managing it and acting as a liaison between the gardeners and the garden organizer, and one person who deals with administrative issues such as community relations, finances, and plot assignment.

If the community garden is a youth garden then the positions outlines above will differ in responsibilities. For example, instead of assigning plots to individual community gardeners, the Organization Chair might assign them to different youth groups or simply coordinate the garden educational series and select or develop curriculum. Regardless of the type of garden, it will still need people to manage the garden, coordinate administrative affairs, and to handle the money. Other possible positions include an ongoing Fundraiser and an Events Coordinator. Given the minimal budget of most community gardens payment for staff persons is not often possible. Offering plot fee waivers for the term of service is a nice way to compensate volunteers for their services.

Examples of job descriptions for the Garden Caretaker, Community Garden Organization Chair and Treasurer positions are given below. These documents are primarily intended to give guidance to the Community Garden Organization and staff persons, as every community garden’s needs, purpose and organizational structure will be different.

Appendix

Garden Caretaker Job Description

Term of Service/ Selection Process

One year (August - July)

Appointed by Community Gardening Organization

Preseason Responsibilities

- ✓ Assign garden plots
- ✓ Understand roles, responsibilities, expectations of garden organization, community gardeners and Garden Caretaker
- ✓ Define authority, rule enforcement process (warning system) before the season begins
- ✓ Maintain/repair the irrigation system
- ✓ Investigate leadership styles, different ways to operate garden, how to deal with difficult people, conflict resolution
- ✓ Develop goals and strategies for achieving them

Example Goals for the Season

- *Improve water conservation by all gardeners*
- *Increase gardener attendance at gardening classes and workshops*
- *Increase gardener participation in maintaining communal areas*
- *Hold a community celebration in the garden*
- *Determine garden calendar for coming year*

Continual, In-season Responsibilities

- ✓ Conduct routine clean-up/inspection rounds
- ✓ Mentor gardeners and address community gardeners concerns in a timely manner
- ✓ Act as a spokesperson for your garden - communicate garden needs
- ✓ Act as a link between the Community Garden Organization and the gardeners in the community garden
- ✓ Help Community Gardening Organization Chair plan and implement social events, garden gatherings, and work projects in the garden
- ✓ Make basic repairs on the garden water system
- ✓ Implement positive change in your garden
- ✓ Monitor the garden for signs of theft and/or vandalism
- ✓ Monitor the garden for chemical usage (e.g. Miracle Grow, Round Up) Ensure that all gardeners are following Integrated Pest Management strategies and that Organic Gardeners are not using synthetic chemicals or chemicals not approved by the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI)
- ✓ Make and post seasonal checklist (First Warm Season: August – November, Cool Season October - February, & Second Warm Season February - June) for individual plots and communal areas

Tips for Garden Caretakers Position

- Proximity is important—Garden Caretaker should live close to garden and pay frequent visits to the garden
- Ask each gardener what they could contribute to the garden—use their strengths
- Understand that the Garden Caretaker's strong points should be - technical knowledge (how to garden and how to maintain garden facilities), people person, well organized

Appendix

- Understand and work on Garden Caretaker's weaknesses
- Enforce rules quickly—when some gardeners obey rules and some do not, tension and animosity can result.
- Maintain garden systems such as the drip irrigation system, compost bins, etc.

Who to Contact in Case of: (ensure you have the correct telephone numbers)

Emergency	911
Local Water emergency	407-xxx-xxxx
Local Utility Company	407-xxx-xxxx
Vandalism, Violence, Police (non-emergency)	407-xxx-xxxx
Orange County Sherriff	407-254-7000

Organization President/Chair Job Description

- ✓ Coordinate and Train Garden Caretaker, enable him/her to handle gardener disputes and organize communal space work projects
- ✓ Work with the Organization to support the Garden Caretaker
- ✓ Organizes Community Garden Organization meetings
- ✓ Recruit gardeners for garden each season as space is available
- ✓ Plan and conduct garden orientations for community gardeners, work projects, and general garden meetings
- ✓ Help organization determine which community gardeners would make good organization members or Garden Caretaker - ask them if they are interested in volunteering for a job.
- ✓ Determine roles, responsibilities, expectations of garden organization, community gardeners and Garden Caretaker
- ✓ Lay out community garden goals with the Organization Members and Garden Caretaker
- ✓ Determine method of communication with Garden Caretaker (check-in schedule)
- ✓ Investigate leadership styles, different ways to administer the garden, how to deal with difficult people, conflict resolution
- ✓ Understand water and compost systems, policies and enforcement
- ✓ Maintain good community relations, active public outreach, community contact list (community councils, churches, businesses, neighbors, non-profits, government staff, etc.)
- ✓ Resolve conflicts that the Garden Caretaker and gardeners are unable to resolve
- ✓ Sign lease on behalf of garden organization
- ✓ Renew garden insurance plan
- ✓ Help organization members as needed
- ✓ Help Organization plan and implement social events, garden gatherings, and work projects in the garden
- ✓ Determine calendar for coming year with Garden Caretaker and Organization Members

Appendix

Treasurer Job Description

The treasurer position doesn't take as much of a time commitment as the Garden Caretaker or Organization Chair positions, but it does entail a lot of responsibility.

Tasks include:

- ✓ Managing the organizations finances and bank account
- ✓ Paying the bills—water, insurance, utilities, resources, etc.
- ✓ Issuing checks for expenses requested and approved by organization
- ✓ Depositing rental fees

Sample Forms

F-1 Budgets

Initial Community Garden Budget (Sample)			
Start-up	Min. Cost	Max. Cost	Payment Explanation (ways to minimize cost)
Soil Test	\$30	\$30	
Compost	\$60	\$350	Cheaper source/partial donation
Drip Irrigation System	\$250	\$625	Donation from local farm that has leftovers
Water Timer	\$30	\$60	Cheaper model/partial donation
Fencing	\$150	\$2,000	Salvaged wood/cheaper source/partial donation
Sign	\$0	\$100	Salvaged materials/donation
Tools	\$50	\$250	Tool drive donation Initiative
Wood for Tool Bin	\$50	\$100	Look for donation/reclaimed wood
Liability Insurance	\$50	\$350	"Min." with Organizational sponsorship
Benches (3)	\$0	\$100	Look for donations/used
Miscellaneous	\$100	\$250	Incidentals that might arise
Renting Tiller	\$0	\$50	Look for donation
Outreach/PR	\$20	\$60	Min. with flyer printing/ Max. printing + ad
Cost Totals	\$790	\$4,325	

Budget for a Community Garden (Example)						
	Budget		Budget		Budget	
	1st Year		2nd Year		3rd Year	
	(8/1/09-7/31/10)		(8/1/10-7/31/11)		(8/1/11-7/31/12)	
Revenue/Income						
Plot Fees (# plots x \$/plot)	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Grants	\$18,673.00		\$3,542.00		\$2,772.00	
Fundraiser	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Balance from previous year	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Total Income		\$18,673.00		\$3,542.00		\$2,772.00
Expenses/ Costs						
Paid Personnel		\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00
Salary	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Benefits	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Payroll Taxes	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Occupancy (Rent, and other office space expenses)		\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00
Travel & Training		\$1,600.00		\$1,000.00		\$500.00
Professional Fees (specify)		\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00
Garden Setup & Utilities		\$8,035.00		\$780.00		\$780.00
Water Meter & Hookup	\$700.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Water Usage	\$240.00		\$240.00		\$240.00	
Electrical Meter & Hookup	\$500.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Electrical Usage	\$240.00		\$240.00		\$240.00	
Garden Sign	\$100.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Irrigation Distribution (Pipe & Valves)	\$1,000.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Lumber (2" X 12") & Nails (12d common hot dipped galvanized) or 3" deck screws for 4' X 16' raised beds	\$1,700.00		\$300.00		\$300.00	
Concrete Blocks for 4' X 16' raised beds	\$125.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	

Sample Forms

Budget for a Community Garden (Example)						
	Budget		Budget		Budget	
	1st Year		2nd Year		3rd Year	
	(8/1/09-7/31/10)		(8/1/10-7/31/11)		(8/1/11-7/31/12)	
Smartimberz (synthetic lumber made from recycled milk jugs with a 50 year durability warranty) for 4' X 16' raised beds	\$1,300.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Compost bins made from 4' wall wire mesh	\$250.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
6' high security fence	\$1,500.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
6' x 10' Gate	\$350.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
2' of 2" chain for locking gate	\$10.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Pad lock for gate	\$20.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Equipment		\$6,350.00		\$480.00		\$280.00
Irrigation timers (8-Cycle Digital) ~ 10 1st year	\$300.00		\$90.00		\$90.00	
Water hoses (5/8" Dia. x 50') ~ 12 1st year	\$300.00		\$100.00		\$100.00	
Drip Systems	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
8' x 8' Shed with lock	\$1,200.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Hand tools (claw hammer, screw drives, long handled shovel, bow rake, hoe, long handled cultivator, short handled cultivator, yardstick, digging fork, etc.)	\$800.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
55 gal. trash cans ~ 5 1st year	\$120.00		\$30.00		\$30.00	
Wheel Barrow (6 Cu Ft) ` 2/yr	\$180.00		\$60.00		\$60.00	
Picnic Table	\$400.00		\$200.00		\$0.00	
Benches (3)	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Gazebo	\$2,000.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Play Ground Equipment (swings, slide, sand box, climbing bars, etc.)	\$500.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Mantis mini tiller	\$350.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Cordless drill & bits	\$200.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Consumables/Supplies		\$990.00		\$960.00		\$960.00
Compost	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Mulch	\$340.00		\$340.00		\$340.00	
Peat Moss	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Potting Soil	\$300.00		\$300.00		\$300.00	
Test Soil (pH)	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Nails & Screws	\$50.00		\$20.00		\$20.00	
Seed starting trays	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	
Plants & Seeds	\$300.00		\$300.00		\$300.00	
Liability Insurance		\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00
Outreach / PR / Advertising (Flyers, etc.)		\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00
Contingency (approx 10%)		\$1,698.00		\$322.00		\$252.00
Total Expenses		\$18,673.00		\$3,542.00		\$2,772.00

Note: If your community garden has a budget, keep administration of the budget and funds in the hands of several people (e.g., checks should require the signature of at least two organization members).

Sample Forms

F-2 Community Garden Information & Policies

Welcome to the ____ (date) gardening season! _____ Community Gardens is a local non-profit organization. We cultivate individual growth and neighborhood unity through community gardening and youth gardening education. Our community gardening policies and procedures are important for all community gardeners to understand. If you have any questions about this information, please call _____ (contact name) at _____ (phone #).

Reserving your plot

Each gardener is entitled to one plot (approximately 4 by 16 feet) if space is available. If there is space remaining by _____ (date) gardeners will have the opportunity to rent additional plots for the remainder of the season. A \$30 garden plot rental fee is required of all gardeners. Garden plots must be cleared of weeds by ____ (date). If a gardener has not used his/her plot by ____ (date), the plot will be given to another. The \$30 fee will not be returned.

Land

We do not own the land used for gardens. We have lease agreements with the owners but there is always a possibility that we will lose the use of the land. For this reason, there are some planting restrictions (i.e. trees and some perennials).

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Practices must be used by all gardeners

Our goal is to protect human health and the environment by using the least toxic methods to control pest and stimulate plant growth. This means all gardeners must have knowledge of and practice IPM methods. These methods include, but are not limited to: identification of plant pests; not over fertilizing; using pest resistant varieties of plants; using plants that are right for your site; avoiding the use of pest prone plants; follow recommended planting dates for specific plant for the area in which you are gardening; Using the least toxic and most effective method of insect control; avoiding the use of broad spectrum residual pesticides (kill pests & beneficial insects – nonselective); spot treating infested areas only; using pesticides only when needed; reading and following label directions on pesticides; and not using more pesticides than is absolutely necessary. Gardeners found not using IPM practices will lose their gardening privileges!

If you chose to try Organic Gardening only Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) herbicides, pesticides ,and fertilizers are allowed

The goal of organic gardening is to create and nurture healthy soil and a healthy plant environment in the garden without the use of synthetic chemicals. It s believed that plant and soil health deteriorates with the use of chemicals, they are not allowed in any of our organic community gardens. Gardeners using synthetic chemical weed killers, fertilizers and/or pesticides in organic gardens will lose their gardening privileges!

Weeds and trash

The local government ordnances require that we keep all weeds below six inches in height. Weeds compete for sun, space, nurturance, and water and may adversely affect the garden harvest. It is the gardeners' responsibility to remove the weeds and trash in their own plots and adjacent pathways, and to clear their plot of trellis materials and debris at the end of the season. Gardeners are also required to assist with weeding common areas.

Sample Forms

Water use, irrigation and mulch

Our goal is to have an automatic drip irrigation systems operating at each site. If there is an automatic drip system the Orange County Community Garden (OCCG) will maintain this system. Please do not alter the system in any way. Please report any problems or leaks to OCCG. The drip system is a water-efficient method of garden irrigation. Each gardener will learn how the drip irrigation system works at the gardener orientation meetings. If an automatic drip system is not installed then water hoses and hose attached sprinklers should be used (with battery powered hose bib water timers). You can also help make sure that water is not wasted, and greatly reduce your garden's water needs by using mulch (this also helps keep out weeds).

No Rebar

For safety reasons, rebar is not allowed for staking or trellising. However rebar may be used to construct raised beds (care should be taken to ensure that the rebar does not protrude above the top of the raised bed).

Cooperation and community

This project will be more successful if all of our gardeners work together. We ask that in addition to your \$30.00 annual fee, you also make a contribution of your time by participating in clean-up projects in the summer and winter and general maintenance throughout the season. Each gardener is expected to contribute 12 hours of labor to the garden during the year.

Please remember

_____ Community Gardens is a small non-profit organization supported by donated funds that must be raised annually. Staff size is small and varies according to funding. The purpose of our community gardening program is to provide access to land, water and general garden administration. The care and maintenance of the garden is the collective responsibility of the community gardeners.

Garden Addresses

Insert addresses of community gardens as they are established.

Sample Forms

F-3 Community Garden Rules and Gardener's Responsibilities

Rules and regulations serve a purpose—to maintain a safe, clean, beautiful and friendly environment for community gardeners and the community at large. Therefore, each gardener must understand and agree to the following rules and responsibilities before gardening with _____ Community Garden:

_____ *Community Garden Rules*

1. Chemical weed killers, fertilizers and pesticides are not allowed in organic gardens.
[Note: The only herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers allowed are those listed by the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI)]
2. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices must be followed in all gardens.
3. Non-refundable garden fees are \$30.00 per plot, payable when gardener registers for plot.
4. Plots are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Gardeners are limited to one plot (approximately 4' x 16'). Gardeners may have more plots and may be put on a waiting list for extra plots, if extra plots are available by _____(date) of the gardening season.
5. Disrespectful or abusive language or destructive behavior can result in the immediate loss of all gardening privileges, and forfeiture of any crops remaining in the garden.
6. New gardeners must attend a Garden Orientation in August. Returning gardeners are strongly encouraged to attend Orientations as well.
7. Gardeners are responsible for weeding their plots by _____(date), and clearing their plots at the end of each growing season (usually by _____).
8. Gardeners are responsible for planting, cultivating and maintaining their own garden plots.
9. Gardeners are responsible for assisting with maintenance of common areas at each garden.
10. Gardeners must contribute 4 hours in the spring, 4 hours in the summer and 4 hours in the fall in the maintenance of common garden space.
11. Gardeners are responsible for removing and keeping weeds out of their gardens and adjoining.
12. Gardeners are responsible for clearing all plant and trellis materials out of their own garden by the end of each gardening season. Dead material should be placed in compost piles.
13. No pets are allowed anywhere in the garden (except seeing eye dogs).

_____ *Community Gardens' Responsibilities*

1. _____ Community Garden is responsible for administering the Community Gardening Program.
 2. _____ Community Garden is responsible for registering gardeners and assigning available plots to each gardener.
 3. _____ Community Garden will provide tools, technical assistance and skills training when possible.
 4. _____ Community Garden is responsible for maintenance of water and drip irrigation systems and overall administration of each garden site.
- _____ Community Garden reserves the right to make changes or exceptions to policies where and when appropriate

Sample Forms

F-4 Community Gardener's Agreement

I hereby apply to become a member of the {insert name of the community garden}. I would like to have a garden plot in the

- Non-Organic Gardener Section or
- Organic Garden Section

Select one of the above by circling it.

I will comply with all the rules and regulations contained in the community garden's bylaws, and I understand that I will lose my gardening privileges in the community garden if I do not comply with these rules and regulations.

Name (Please Print)

Address (Please Print)

Phone Number

E-mail Address

Signature

Date

Note: This form must be resubmitted annually, and you MUST sign this form and return it to the Organization Chair before you can work your plot!

Sample Forms

F-5 Flyer

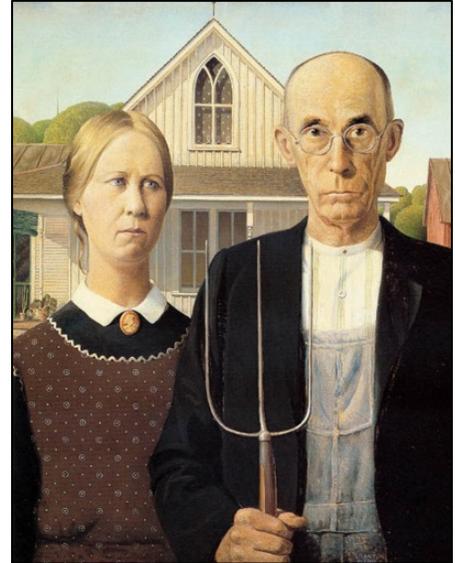
A flyer inviting the community and neighborhood people to learn more and become involved in a new community garden.

Show Us Your Green Thumb!

Join us to create an amazing Community Garden in your neighborhood

What is a Community Garden?

A community Garden is a piece of land shared by the community to grow vegetables and flowers.



What benefits would you gain from having a community garden?

Garden plots would be offered to members of the Orlando community and surrounding neighborhoods

Opportunity for positive social interaction in your neighborhood

Learn how to enjoy growing your own food
Opportunity to grow and donate food to the local food bank

Establishment of an educational and beautification landmark in our community
What to get involved? Ask questions? Give input?

Contact the _____ Community Garden at 407-xxx-xxxx



Sample Forms

F-6 Lease Agreement

Between _____ Community Gardens and Mrs. Jane Doe

Mrs. Jane Doe, owner, agrees to lease the property located at 100 North in Orlando free of charge to _____ Community Gardens (to be referred to as the Gardens in this document). The property is 15,000 square feet, not including the front lawn located south of the gate.

The leased property is to be used as a public community garden with subleased plots, to be administered by the Gardens. This three year lease agreement shall commence August 1, 2010 and continue through July 31, 2013.

The Gardens agrees to sublease plots to the tenants of the apartments at 100 North for half-price (amounting to \$15 for the 2010/2011 season). The Gardens agrees to pay the full cost of water used during the time the lease is active.

This lease agreement will be reviewed at the termination date stated above with the option of renewal each year according to the desires of Mrs. Jane Doe. Mrs. Jane Doe agrees to permit The Gardens and the community gardeners participating on the leased property to hold at least one community party/event on the property.

The Gardens will be open daily. The garden's Rules and Regulation will be visibly posted at the entrance of the garden. If any member of the public acts in violation of these Rules and Regulation, they will be given a preliminary warning. If a further violation occurs the individual will be asked to leave the property for the remainder of the day. If repeated violations occur, the individual will be banned from the garden.

All gardeners will be required to sign a "waiver of liability" clause as well as an agreement to the garden's Rules and Regulations.

The Gardens will not discriminate against any individual or group on the basis of sex, race, sexual orientation, religion or political affiliation.

At the termination of this agreement the site will be returned to the owner in a neat and orderly condition.

Property owner:

Jane Doe

Date

For The Gardens:

Organization Chair

Date

Sample Forms

F-7 Letter to Property Owner

Dear,

My name is _____. I am contacting you on behalf of the _____ Community Gardens, a group of Orange County residents working on starting a community garden in Orange County . Our organization has met several times for planning meetings and has started building a strong and diversified coalition of supporters for the garden including a representative of the Hope Hospital Employee Advisory Council, the Sweet Library Branch, the Greater Orange County Community Council, and the Cathedral of the Madeline Church.

We've recently started searching for potential sites for the _____ Community Garden and have come across your property at 9th Ave. and G Street (494 East G. St.). As you might guess, the purpose of this letter is to inquire about using your land as the site of the garden.

In general, the garden would be a place where community members who do not have their own gardening space (those living in apartment buildings), or who have too much shade (like so many residents in Orange County) could grow nutritious produce on plots that they would rent for the cost of maintaining the garden each year. Other possible uses for community gardens include offering adult educational workshops, youth gardening programs, growing food for local food bank, and integration within senior centers.

The garden would be managed by the not-for-profit Friends of _____ Community Gardens and there would be an elected Community Garden Organization and a Garden Caretaker appointed by the organization to oversee the project in its entirety. The Community Garden Organization will handle all administrative matters for the garden, and the Garden Caretaker will handle all operational matters of the garden. The Garden Organization is a well-organized group of interested Orange County residents committed to the creation and continued upkeep of a community garden. We hope this will help you trust that the garden will be a success if you granted us permission to use your land.

On behalf of the Garden Organization, I thank you for your consideration of our proposal. Please feel free to contact me. My phone number, e-mail address, and mailing address are included below.

Thanks again.

Respectfully,

Ima Gardener
407-555-1234
Ima.Gardener2@aol.com
1234 S Conway Road
Orlando, FL32801

Sample Forms

F-8 Waiver of Liability

Waiver of Liability

The process of renting a plot in the “_____” Community Garden involves gardening - an activity which may include risks such as, but not limited to, effects of the water (heat and cold extremes), interaction with other participants, falls and injury due to the use of garden equipment. I hereby expressly assume all risks including personal injury and death, arising in any way out of my participation in the “_____” Community Garden.

I am solely responsible for my own health and safety. I respect and warrant that I am physically fit and able to participate in this project. I agree that I will stop and request assistance if I experience any symptoms which would make it difficult or unsafe to continue.

I agree, for myself, my heirs, executors and administrators, to not sue and to release, indemnify and hold harmless the County of Orange, their affiliates, agents, volunteers, and employees, and all sponsoring businesses and organizations and their agents and employees, from any and all liability claims, demands, and causes of action whatsoever, arising out of my participation in this and related activities - whether it results from the negligence of any of the above or from any other cause.

I understand that neither the “_____” Community Garden Officers and Members, nor owners of the land are responsible for my actions. I therefore agree to hold harmless the “_____” Community Garden Officers and Members, and owners of the land for any liability, damage, loss, or claim that occurs in connection with use of the garden by me.

I, the undersigned, have read and agree to abide by the “_____” Community Garden Rules and By-Laws. I understand that the failure to adhere to the “_____” Community Garden Rules and By-Laws, may result in the loss of my gardening privileges. I understand that only gardeners who have signed this contract are authorized to work in the “_____” Community Garden.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____