

# Community Garden Design

By Tonya Ashworth

When designing your community garden, think first about what your garden model and goals are. Will your garden be a in the form of a communal space where several people grow crops all together and produce is shared or donated? Will it take the form of plots to rent to individual growers? These kinds of choices will inform your design.

## Identify your garden model/goals

- Education- Demonstration gardens will need good signage. School gardens will need beds that are easy for children to reach into.
- Community building- Your garden will need places to gather and socialize such as picnic tables, a grill, maybe even a pavilion and a play space for kids.
- Neighborhood beautification- Emphasis will need to be placed on signage, entryways, blooming plants for accents, and a fence that says “welcome” instead of stay away.
- Food production- Emphasis should be placed on maximizing plant-able space.

## Choose which garden features to include in your plan

Make sure to dream big and leave space for features that you would like to add over time.

- Growing spaces- Raised beds are typically 4’ wide and up to 10’ long. In-Ground beds are any size that works, but a 10’x10’ plot for small gardens or a 20’x20’ plot for large gardens is a good reference.
- Universally Accessible Beds- Raised beds that wheelchairs can fit underneath or raised beds with built-in benches on the sides.
- Paths- Main paths should be 5-6’ wide and paths between beds should be 3-4’ minimum.
- Compost area- Locate in a dry, shady spot if possible.
- Storage- Tool sheds or benches that have storage under the lid that can serve as seating too. Think about where mulch and soil will be stored too.

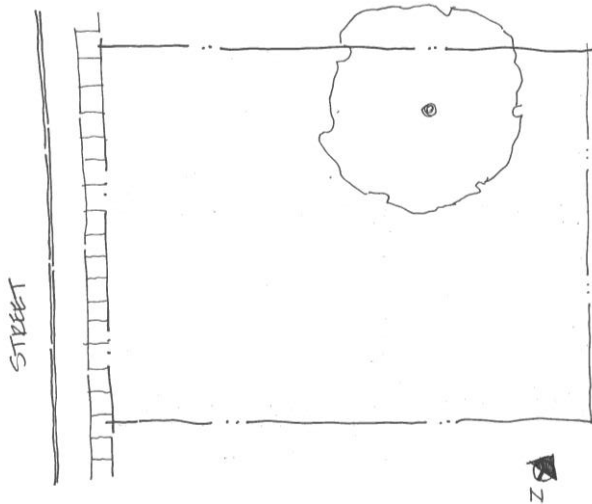
- Resting Space and Playing Space- Chairs, benches, or picnic tables in the shade for resting. A children’s area can be as simple as a dirt pile and toys or can include playground equipment.
- Teaching space- A pavilion or outdoor classroom for school gardens or community gardens that will hold classes.
- Structures- Chicken coops, hoop houses, and arbors are examples of structures plan for.
- Fencing and Entryway- Chain link fences, picket fences, or even hedges can be used as a garden border. Make sure to leave a 10’ wide entryway for tractors, trucks, or emergency vehicles to gain access.
- Restrooms- If there are none already on-site, consider renting a portable toilet or building a shed with a composting toilet.
- Signage- A sign with visiting hours for gardens that will have locked gates, an emergency contact number, a list of sponsors, and a bulletin board may be needed.
- Garden art- Art in the garden can be as whimsical or as sophisticated as you like.

## Draw the base map

Base maps should include:

- Scale-  $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$  or  $1'' = 10'$  is a good place to start
- A north arrow
- Boundaries of the site
- Permanent elements on the site
  - Mature trees
  - Existing Structures
  - Underground utilities
  - Paved areas

## Sample Base Map



## Draw a functional diagram

Make sure to dream big and leave space for features that you would like to add over time.

Functional diagrams should :

- Be based on site analysis
- Include the garden features you have selected
- Show pathways for people to move through the space.
- Show how garden elements relate to each other.

Illustrations by Daniel Ashworth, Jr.

## Sample Functional Diagram

