

COMMUNITY GARDENING 101

SOCIOLOGY: MAKING THE GARDEN A NEIGHBORHOOD EFFORT



MAKE CONNECTIONS – BUILD COMMUNITY – GATHER THE NEIGHBORS

When people think about community gardens, they have various images in their heads based on experience or knowledge. But, for the most part, they think of geographic space with plants. Space and plants create nothing more than a garden; it is the addition of people that makes it a *community* garden.

1. Build a core group...

Talk to your neighbors and friends.

Look around your neighborhood for potential sites and talk to neighbors of those properties.

Make presentation at neighborhood association meetings.

Post flyers at local watering holes.

2. With your core group of at least 5 unrelated people...

Reach out further.

Request each core member to bring 2 others to the project.

Plan and publicize a community-wide meeting.

Choose a site and contact the property owner.

3. With at least 15 garden members...

Host a community-wide meeting.

Invite a representative of Green Spaces Alliance or another garden to speak to the group.

Continue to build membership.

Request members provide contact information, a time commitment and related skills.

Start listing desirable components of the garden.

4. Construct a reciprocal partnership map

Line out how the garden and these entities can both benefit from the garden project:

Schools and universities

Neighborhood associations and community centers

Churches and non-profit organizations

Businesses and government agencies

Civic and cultural groups

Senior centers and assisted-living housing

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5. Define Your Group Structure

Many community gardens come to a point in their development when they need greater recognition and additional resources in order to effectively meet the goals of their group. These groups often look to their neighbors and define an organizational structure in which they work together.

The Community Gardens Network.

Green Spaces exists to assist community groups through the process of establishing gardens. The network serves the same purpose on a grander scale.

Gardens as a whole join the network. Garden members are then encouraged to share knowledge, experiences, techniques, and excess resources with other network community gardeners.

Communal or plotted garden

At communal gardens, all the members share in all the work and all the benefits.

At plotted gardens, each member maintains and benefits from his or her own plot.

Some gardens are composites of these two styles.

Others communally garden a single plot to donate its produce to needy neighbors.

6. With garden members assembled...

Refer to Community Gardening 102 to ask and answer some vital questions.

Refer to Community Gardening 103 to choose a site and design the garden.

Refer to Community Gardening 104 to delegate tasks and title task leaders.

Refer to Community Gardening 105 to determine which members have connections to which resources.

Create basic garden rules regarding:

- Garden dues (if any)

- Plot renewal

- Attendance (required time commitment)

- Garden appearance (required maintenance, harvesting, weeding & replanting)

- Visitors (pets, guests of gardeners and total strangers)

- Organic, not organic or designation of regions

- Water conservation

- Equipment use and storage

- Allowed and disallowed plants

- Grievances