The Benefits of a Community Garden

• **Beautification:** A community garden can make the community a more pleasant and relaxing place to live.

• **Food security:** Community gardens can increase the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables, which is especially important in areas with limited access to grocery stores or farmers markets.

• **Environmental improvements:** Community gardens can provide a habitat for pollinators like bees and butterflies, beneficial insects, and other wildlife.

• **Economic benefits:** Community gardens can help people earn income by selling fruits and vegetables from their plots.

• **Health improvements:** Gardening has been shown to improve mental and physical health.

Can you name a few other benefits of a community garden?

1. ______________

2. ______________

3. ______________

4. ______________

How to Build a Community Garden

What is a community garden?

A **community garden** is planned, planted, maintained, and sustained by people of all ages, abilities, and levels of knowledge. The “community” is a group of individuals sharing a physical space and linked by a common goal, organization, or mission.

Community gardens come in all shapes and sizes. Gardens can be as small as a raised bed in front of a school, a library, or on top of a building, or as large as a couple of acres outside of town.
Step 1: Talk to Your Neighbors and Friends
Schedule brainstorming sessions at a neighborhood location like a library or community center. You can advertise for these meetings at local restaurants, businesses, and in newspapers. These meetings can help you determine community interest. Does your community want a garden? Do you have enough volunteers to maintain a garden? How should your community garden be organized?

Do you have a few neighbors or friends you can invite to your meeting?

1. _______________________________________
2. _______________________________________
3. _______________________________________

Step 2: Identify Resources
A community garden requires a lot of volunteers. Check to see if your neighborhood has any gardening clubs or other groups like a local Girl Scout or Boy Scout troop that might be interested in helping you start your garden.

Group 1. _______________________________________
Group 2. _______________________________________
Group 3. _______________________________________

Step 3: Find a Site
A community garden requires a lot of volunteers. Check to see if your neighborhood has any gardening clubs or other groups like a local Girl Scout or Boy Scout troop that might be interested in helping you start your garden.

• is not being used for anything else
• gets plenty of sunshine—at least six hours a day, if you are planning to grow vegetables
• is relatively flat
• has an available source of water
• does not contain any large, heavy pieces of debris that would be difficult to remove
• is close to you and the other neighbors who want to take part in the community garden

Where would you like to build your community garden?

Step 4: Plan Your Garden
Before you begin building your community garden, it is important that you think about how you would like it to be set up.

1. Do you want gardeners to have individual garden plots, group garden plots, or both?
   Individual ____  Group ____  Both ____

2. Do you want walking paths between beds?
   Yes ____  No ____

3. Will you have compost bins?
   Yes ____  No ____  If yes, how many? ____

4. Do you want gardeners to have individual garden plots, group garden plots, or both?
   Individual ____  Group ____  Both ____

5. Where will you keep your gardening supplies?
   ______________________________________

6. How will you water your plants?
   ______________________________________

7. Will your community garden have a common area for gathering? Does it include benches, picnic tables, or a source of shade? Describe what you might want in your common area.
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________

8. Do you want a fence around the outside to protect your garden from vandalism and theft?
   Yes ____  No ____

Before you begin building your community garden, it is important that you think about how you would like it to be set up.

Draw a picture of what you want your community garden to look like.
Step 5: Develop a Budget

A budget is a plan that can help you spend and save your money wisely. To build a budget, you need to identify your expenses.

Expenses are the cost required for something or the money spent on something.

To build a budget, you should think about what types of supplies you will need to build your community garden and how much they will cost. Examples include shovels, gloves, spades, seeds, composting bins, trash cans, fertilizers, and mulch.

**SUPPLIES** | **EXPENSE**
---|---
*Example: Gardening Gloves* | *Example: $5.00*

How will you pay for your expenses?

- **Finding sponsors:** A sponsor is an individual or organization that pays some of the costs. Examples of sponsors might include restaurants, grocery stores, or other local businesses.

  Can you think of some potential sponsors in your neighborhood?

  1. 
  2. 
  3. 

- **Holding fundraisers:** A fundraiser is an event to help generate money for a program or project. Examples of fundraisers include a bake sale, lemonade stand, car wash, design challenge, or a contest to choose the name of the garden.

  Can you think of some fundraising ideas for the community garden?

  1. 
  2. 
  3.
Step 6: Prepare the Site

You're almost ready to start your community garden! Once you have a plan for how you want your garden to look and you've created a budget, you're ready to start working on the site. Be sure to use the checklist below when preparing the site for planting.

- Clear the site of debris
- Set up the irrigation system, which may require digging trenches and laying pipes (if included in your plan)
- Mark the location of beds
- Put up a fence (if included in your plan)
- Dig the beds and add compost
- Plant seeds (remember to consider how much sun they will need and how tall they will grow)
- Cover paths with mulch or gravel (if included in your plan)

Step 7: Establish Rules

Just like in the classroom, there should be simple and clear rules to follow. A few examples include walk don't run when in the garden area, stay on the pathways, use tools appropriately, keep soil and insects in the garden, share tools and gardening resources, and work together.

What rules will be a part of your community garden?

1. ____________________________
2. ____________________________
3. ____________________________
4. ____________________________
5. ____________________________
6. ____________________________
7. ____________________________
8. ____________________________

Step 8: Start Gardening

You did it!
Remember to have fun and enjoy your new community garden.