

A stylized black and white illustration of a garden scene. In the foreground, there is a white picket fence. Behind the fence, various plants and vegetables are depicted, including a large leafy plant on the left, a tomato plant with several round tomatoes in the center, and a climbing vine with large leaves on the right. The background features a large, dark, stylized leaf or plant shape on the left and a decorative swirl on the right. The entire scene is framed by a thick, irregular black border.

Community  
Garden  
Handbook

**A Program of DSM Parks & Recreation**

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# Introduction



What is a community garden?

Benefits of Community Gardening

How to Start a Neighborhood Greening Project

# What is a Community Garden?

(Information from "Growing Communities Curriculum")

A community garden is an area used for growing plants or animals, which has been collaboratively created and is maintained by members of the public. A community garden can take place on public or private land and can involve a broad cross-section of the public, as in a neighborhood community garden. Or it can involve specific sectors of the population, such as a school garden that involves students, teachers, parents, and other community members who support the garden for education.

## Benefits of Community Gardening

(Information from ACGA website)

- Provides a catalyst for neighborhood and **community development** by creating a space where people can gather and a common project that they can work together on  
"The spaces provide opportunities for neighborhood residents to develop and control part of their neighborhood, an advantage not afforded by traditional parks," [Mark Francis] concluded after a 1987 study of park and garden users in Sacramento, California. "Gardens are active places that people make themselves, use for work and socializing, and can 'love', he found.
- **Stimulates social interaction** by bringing neighbors together in a community space  
"We didn't know many people in our garden until we started telling one another about how tasty our vegetables were,' a gardener told another researcher, Ishwarbhai C. Patel, who runs urban gardening programs in New Jersey. Such interactions create a common ground on which neighbors, often isolated by walls or outlook, can build a shared feeling that they have power over their lives. A community activity such as gardening can be used to break the isolation, creating a sense of neighborliness among residents,' says Charles Lewis. 'Until this happens, there is no community, but rather separate people who happen to live in the same place.'"
- **Encourages self-reliance** by providing an opportunity for people to grow their own food, become active participants in their own food security, and access social programs that they might not otherwise have known about  
"The simple act of starting a garden can teach previously powerless people how to get access to city hall, and it can change the perception of the people with power who are looking into the community for the first time."
- **Beautifies neighborhoods** by creating aesthetically pleasing green spaces  
"In Salem, Oregon, for example, urban land next to a greenbelt was worth \$1,200 more per acre than urban land only 1,000 feet away. Similarly, other surveys found that home owners believe that a well-maintained landscape can increase the value of their homes by a whopping 15 percent, and that properties in New York City less than two blocks from a city park are more valuable than more distant properties."
- **Produces nutritious food** such as fresh fruits and vegetables
- **Reduces family food budgets** by providing a cheaper source of fresh foods
- **Conserves resources** by decreasing the number of pathways that food must pass through before reaching the consumer
- **Creates opportunities** for recreation, exercise, therapy and education



# How to Start a Neighborhood Greening Project

Any community greening or gardening project consists of three basic elements – a site, a group, and a plan. Start the planning process by looking at your group.

## Group

**Start with at least ten adults** from at least five different households or a variety of staff at your agency. Kids are great and can be very helpful, but they are not enough to begin and maintain your project.

**Who are people in your group?** Do they live in the neighborhood? Are there some long-term participants? Homeowners and long term residents in the area are the ones with the most investment in the area and your group will need some of each. Church groups and schoolteachers are great, but alone cannot often sustain a project over time. Somehow nearby residents need to be included to watch out at night and protect the garden from vandalism.

**Need a mix of people.** Different types of people bring different assets to a project. Diversity makes a garden stronger. For example, if your garden consists mainly of seniors, you'll need some younger participants to help with the physical work. People who have skills in the areas of landscaping, carpentry, design, or art can all be helpful additions to your garden. Ask participants about their skills and interests! Everyone has something unique to offer.

**What is the nature of the group?** How long has the group been in existence? Have they done any type of group projects together before? How do those projects look now? Groups must demonstrate willingness to maintain and grow the project over time.

**What's the gardening experience of the group?** You will need at least one or two people who have some experience. These people are easy to find – walk around and see who has flowers, gardens or pots on their porch – these are gardeners in your area. We will help to provide you with expert gardeners in your area. We will help to provide you with expert gardeners but having someone in your group will help.

**What's the motivation and goals for the project?** Want to reclaim the neighborhood? Just love gardening and want to create more space for it? Develop horticultural therapy? Create something for the kids to do? (If the project is for youth – who is in charge? How much does that person know about gardening? Will they plan, schedule and guide the children through the growing season?)

**How many hours/week can group members give** for the project? Doing what? Gardens involve mowing, picking up trash, weeding, weeding, weeding. Does the group have the time and commitment needed for a garden to succeed over time? If it is another staff person at your agency, are they involved in the planning process?

**Does the group have tools** or the supplies? Investigate the resources in your group and inventory what else will be needed.

**Does the group have a central location** to store tools, meet, etc.? How will gardeners access the tools when they need them?

## **Site Plan**

Your plan should be appropriate for the site and for the goals of your group that will plant and maintain the project. Always start with a small success – you can build that success in the future. If your group is small or if group members are elderly, select a project that they can manage – one small flowerbed may be enough and can be visually effective. When a group is new – less is more!

**The planning process is important, too!** As many group members as possible should be involved in the project planning. Those who help from the start are more invested in the success of the project over the long-term.

**Size matters** – The size of the planting area should be equal to the amount of time the group wants to be out there in the heat of the summer (including mowing time, etc.)

**The site plan can be simple** – nothing fancy. Start with a drawing of the lot as it exists now – measure the dimensions and draw in existing trees (including the area they shade), alleys, sidewalks, buildings, water sources, etc. Knowing the goals of the project and the amount of space you have, think about what type of greening project you would like to develop.

**In planning your project, consider the effect you want to achieve.** Do you wish to implement a large scale, visually cohesive project through your neighborhood? If so, you might consider using containers on every corner or flower boxes. If you wish to deal only with one problematic vacant lot you might design a pocket park, a perennial garden or a community vegetable garden (See “Community Garden Ideas” section of this publication). Each type of project requires a different amount of time and effort. It is also important to consider the number of people in your group and what kind of commitment they are willing to make to the project.

**Make a sketch of the proposed garden area.** Make another drawing using what exists now and some of the ideas your group has for the lot. If you are interested, we can connect you with a landscape architect for additional ideas and information about specific plants. Put your beds near a water source and leave plenty of room for pathways. See the handout on community garden ideas for information. We have sample sketches of community gardens at the Botanical Center.

**Maintaining a greening project is hard work.** A medium sized ornamental bed (20 x 30 ft) takes up to an hour and a half of watering and weeding 2-3 times each week. More care time will be necessary in July and August of the first year. Mowing, trash clean up, weeding, and mulching is even more work, so are other things the group might wish to organize like educational workshops, potlucks and workdays. Remember, smaller is often better.

**Communal or individual maintenance** – How will responsibility be delegated? Will you have communal plots such as herb plots or corn rows? Will you have individual plots? What are your deadlines for getting individual plots planted? Do you have one garden leader or several in charge?

**Ask for help!** The DSM Community Gardening Coalition is here to help. We are willing to work with you to plan your project. You should first bring your group together and start planning on your own. If you need help, we will come and meet with you but we want you to initiate the planning on your own. Talk to the Community Gardener Coordinator, e-mail [TLDawson@dmgov.org](mailto:TLDawson@dmgov.org).

## **Site Selection**

**Select a location** and determine address of lot by checking neighboring buildings. Who owns the lot? If your organization is developing a community garden, do you have land for the garden? Is there another greenspace nearby? The most protected gardens are owned by the agencies themselves. If you have found a vacant lot, call Polk County Auditors Office at 286-3080 to see who owns the lot. If the city owns the lot, it is possible to “adopt” a lot from the city for \$1/year. It is possible that your organization could buy the lot and be responsible for paying taxes on it. If you plan on having your garden around for a long time, take measures to protect it from future development. If a church, school, neighborhood association or an individual owns the lot make sure you know their future plans for the area.

**Size of the lot** – Are you going to have a garden on the whole lot? Remember to start small. What will happen to the rest of the lot? Is the area primarily residential or commercial? What would look best there? If you wish to implement a project in a commercial area, your group may need to develop more formalized plans and present them to area business people and neighborhood associations.

**Previous uses of the lot** – What was your lot previously used for, and how might that use affect your ability to garden? Was it a parking lot? If so, the soil might be compacted and difficult to plant. Was it used for housing? If so, you should check lead levels before growing vegetables.

**What is the present use of the lot?** Ask neighbors about the lot's history. If problems exist now, they may continue even after you plant. If cars are parked on the lot, or kids use it to play ball, chances are these activities will continue. This can be frustrating for everyone and can wreak havoc on an otherwise well-planned project. Your group may select another site, or plan for fencing.

**Visibility** – Highly visible lots tend to have a higher success rate – more people know about the project, and there is more neighborhood support. It is important that the lot is visible to those who will be maintaining it so that the group can keep an eye on it during evenings.

**Access to water** – Where is the water source for the project? Will a neighbor allow the use of their water? Fire hydrants have the possibility of hooking up their own meter. How will you pay for the water? How far away is the water source? How many hoses will you need to hook up to get there? If water source is more than 100 feet away, think twice about that location.

**Amount of sun** – You will need about 8 hours of sunlight each day for most plantings. Visit the lot throughout the day to determine how much sun exposure it gets. Are there some areas of shade for a meeting or resting place?

**Access for trucks?** Where can trucks gain access to the lot? Is there an alley? Check to be sure that large trucks or tractors can get onto the lot with minimal obstacles – dumpsites, low wires, tree branches.

**Access many resources** – Talk to local business and private funders for additional funding and support. Build as much local support for the garden as possible. Connect with a variety of agencies in your area for volunteer support or donations. The more funding you have the more you can do with your site. Build as much local support for your program as possible.

**Soil Quality** – Is the soil very rocky and therefore hard to plant? Is the soil of high quality with a lot of organic matter, or is it of poor quality? Do soil tests indicate significant amounts of lead or other hazardous materials?

**Slope** - Ideally, plant your garden in a flat location. Try to avoid areas with steep hills because water will run off the top and pool at the bottom causing erosion, soil loss and other problems. If you must plant on a slope, mulch the plants and water gently to avoid gulleys.

# Building Community Support

Garden Planning Team Monthly Activity Planner



Sample Sign-up Sheet

Sample Rules: Managing Your Community Garden

Creating a Garden Team

Growing Communities Principles

Participatory Approach

Nurturing Leadership

Elements of a Well-Planned Meeting

Asset Mapping

Recruitment

Neighborhood Associations

Deterring Vandalism and Theft

How to Organize a Planting Party

Human Bingo

How to Organize a Community Harvest Celebration

# Garden Planning Team Monthly Activity Planner

## January

First thing to be done this month is to gather a good mix of all those involved in planning the garden project. Confirm the goals of the project, the individuals involved, the design and location of the garden. Start a list of needed resources such as seeds, plants, tools, expert gardeners, adult volunteers to work with youth, curriculum, field trip ideas, translation of your flyers or garden information. Will you add a compost pile, arbor, sand box, perennial garden, or a cold frame? Note the supplies you have, the ones your group can get and those you will need help to access.

Begin to make a list of what needs to be accomplished each month. Nail down specific days to do those things.

Build a successful and diverse community garden by mapping your community's assets. Community assets generally fall into five main categories: individual gifts (talents and skills), associations, institutions, land and buildings, and local businesses. Map out what resources you might need and what type of people, associations, etc. might aid you in accessing them.

## February

Tools, wood chips, compost and other requested material, except seedlings, should be delivered in March or April. Schedule your spring work days to spread the compost, till the garden, lay wood chip paths, build fencing or raised beds, and opening day for planting. What will be the weekly meeting times? Do you have any social or educational activities planned?

Meetings can make or break a garden project. Set clear goals for each meeting. Your meeting site should be familiar, accessible, and contain the facilities that you need (tables, chairs, overhead, etc.). Schedule meetings regularly and set up the room before hand. Actively recruit members - make phone calls, knock on doors, etc.

If you need more volunteers, begin to talk to and distribute flyers to PTAs, churches, grocery stores, cafes, community centers, neighborhood groups, etc. Remember, people recruit better than paper. We will also advertise all public community gardens through WIC and the newspaper.

Map out reciprocal partnerships with associations in your neighborhood such as the police who might check on the garden or make donations as a way for them to support an alternative activity to violence; a local retailer to donate supplies in exchange for publicity; or seniors at a center that might give wisdom exchange for a therapeutic activity.

## March

Organize a meeting with all involved to finalize the design, education schedule, meeting times, work days and activities. Make sure all agree upon the rules and have input in the decisions. Share the storage location of the tools & how they can access them.

Public greenspaces including street corners, boulevards, space between the curb and sidewalk and land owned by nonprofits including schools can receive annuals from the Park and Recreation Department. Get a form from your neighborhood association contact and they can include you in their order. Neighborhood associations support many public beautification efforts. If you don't know what neighborhood association you are located in contact the City Action Center at 283-4500 or visit the Community Development Dept. [www.dmgov.org/](http://www.dmgov.org/).

Remember to take pictures of your garden in all seasons, pre-plowing, tilling, planting days, work days, & harvest parties.



# Garden Planning Team Monthly Activity Planner

## April

Need some extra labor to build a garden bed or to show kids how to make a bird feeder? Contact businesses such as Home Depot and schedule a volunteer day.

It's better for you than candy bars! You can earn 50% profit by ordering bulb kits to be sold as a fundraiser. It is endorsed by National Gardening

Association and is a great way to make money for your garden and beautify your community. All of the flower bulbs offered this spring are for summer and fall blooms and guaranteed to grow. For more information about the Dutch Gardens Bulb Fundraising program, call 1-888-854-1788 or visit [www.dutchgardens.com/gardening/fundraising.asp](http://www.dutchgardens.com/gardening/fundraising.asp)

## May

Plan one of the following garden events to help promote a sense of community: work parties, cultural festival, garden contest (compete for prizes for the biggest tomato, strangest gourd, etc.), "Night Out Against Crime" (neighbors hold violence free garden potlucks), harvest fair to sell of display produce and flowers from gardens, gifts from nature sale, memorial garden or other commemorative area to pay homage to loved ones who have fallen victim to violence or disease, or encourage different community groups to hold meetings at your garden. Ideas from *Cultivating Community: Principles and Practices for Community Gardening as a Community-Building Tool* published by the

American Community Gardening Association. [www.communitygarden.org](http://www.communitygarden.org)

For all outside activities planned, set a rain date in advance so all can put the date on their calendars in advance.

Document your community greening project. Take before pictures, pictures of people working, pictures of the garden during the summer, events at your garden, etc. Use the photos while fund-raising for you organization. Show them what great activities go on in your community.

## June

When your gardening effort is looking its best (usually June and July) , show it off to the community and fundraise by hosting a garden tour.

- Pick a date now. Choose a time to have your tour when it's cooler in the garden and plants are looking their best, either in the morning or in the early evening.
- Send out invitations. Invite families of the children who have worked in the garden during

the summer, neighbors in the community, local businesses and garden partners.

- The week before, have volunteers spruce up the garden by pulling weeds, mulching paths and keeping it well watered.
- Most likely it will be hot on the tour day, offer refreshments like lemonade or water. Share your harvest, make a snack from the garden like chips and salsa or vegetables and dip. Have a tea party with small sandwiches made with vegetables from your garden.

## July

Remind gardeners to control weeds along the community garden borders, communal areas and in pathways. Any gardens with excessive weeds are in danger of not receiving resources next year. Community Garden Coalition staff periodically checks all gardens. If you have more than you can handle, mow to maintain some areas. Do not allow weeds to flower and go to seed. This will dramatically increase your weed problem in the future.

Keep brainstorming ways to encourage interaction between community gardeners. Develop name tags for plots. Plan education workshops. Have a harvest party. Community is also about those that live around your garden. Make friends with the neighbors of the garden. Encourage community groups and neighborhood associations to hold their meetings at the garden. If your garden is part of an agency, hold staff meetings at the garden. Get the garden included in neighborhood events such as tours.

# Garden Planning Team Monthly Activity Planner

## August

A harvest party is a great way to finish off the season, recognize outstanding volunteers and gardeners, share recipes from the garden, and discuss September work days. See "Community Harvest Celebration" section of this publication for more ideas.

Encourage gardeners to take extra produce to a local food pantry. Call DMARC at 277-6969 for locations.

If ripe tomatoes are coming up missing, there is some community outreach that needs to be done. Make sure you have good communication with the neighbors of the garden. They are your best watchdogs. If they are not directly involved in the garden project, offer them free produce or flowers in exchange for their guardianship. Enlist the help of neighbor kids; they may do a lot of playing in the area and know who the strangers are in the garden. Hold evening meetings in the garden. See "Deterring Vandalism" section of this publication for more ideas.

## September

Win the National Gardening Association's Youth Garden Grant and receive an array of tools, seeds, plant materials, products and educational resources during the winter/spring. The application is simple and can be downloaded at [www.kidsgardening.com/](http://www.kidsgardening.com/). If you don't receive it this year, apply again next year. You'll move up on the list.

Take a field trip and support locally grown produce; visit an apple orchard this month to pick up apples and cider. Buy some extra to make applesauce or freeze for making apple pies.

Encourage gardeners to apply for the upcoming Master Gardener class through Iowa State Extension, Polk County. The low-cost program

exchanges current research-based home horticulture information and education with volunteer service to Extension. Early fall is the deadline for applications. Call 263-2660 for more information or visit [www.extension.iastate.edu/polk/hort/mg.html](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/polk/hort/mg.html).

Make a list of things that went well with the garden project this year and things you would like to change for next year. What could you have done to decrease the work load (mulch more)? How could more people have been involved? What plant varieties did well? What structures might you add to the garden? What are additional uses for the garden (use for staff meetings, community events, etc.)?

## October

Hold a Fall-Cleanup! Clean-up the garden area of weeds, stakes, twine, garbage, dead plants and anything that will interfere with tilling. Perennial beds need to be clearly marked. This is a good time to make new beds or install new structures such as fencing. Make arrangements

to have the communal flower or herb areas harvested for drying by mid-October.



# Garden Planning Team Monthly Activity Planner

## November

The National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard Habitats Program provides materials and teacher training workshops for educators and school communities interested in creating or restoring wildlife habitat on school grounds. A program that started in 1998 has increase grants to be able to offer fifty \$250 mini-grants to schools across the country. To be eligible, you must be in the initial phases of a Schoolyard Habitats project, plan to use the site for educational purposes, and certify your Schoolyard Habitats site with the National Wildlife Federation by March. The deadline for applications is January. Applications can be downloaded from our website: [www.nwf.org/schoolyardhabitats](http://www.nwf.org/schoolyardhabitats) or call (800) 822-9919.

Send notes of appreciation to all who volunteered and contributed to your community garden project including those that donated time, knowledge, and money. Include pictures from this past year and any items from your garden.

Set up an evaluation meeting with as many gardeners and garden partners as possible. Make your meeting fun and enticing - give door prizes and offer food. Review the goals and activities of the past season and discuss what should be done differently next year. Create a time-line for those items to be accomplished.

Decide on a new community garden chair. Healthy committees rotate leadership.

## December

Complete an evaluation of the community garden. Make a final report and include a summary of activities, budget, pictures,

resources used, contacts, success stories and the suggested changes for next year. Distribute report to gardeners and other supporters.



# Sample Sign-up Sheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Evening \_\_\_\_\_

## Check the appropriate items:

- I have gardened here before and would like plot # \_\_\_\_ if available. See map of community garden on the back of this sign up sheet.
- I have physical mobility limitations and would like a raised bed.
- I have some gardening experience. (No experience is necessary to participate.)
- I would like to have a friend garden with me.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Evenings \_\_\_\_\_

## Plot preference: 1,2,3....

- I would like a 10 x 10 foot plot or 20 x 20 foot plot. Circle one.
- I would like to attend the free education classes in February offered by the Botanical Center.

## Check the following that you have access to and would be able to use in aiding this community garden:

\_\_\_ Car \_\_\_ Trailer \_\_\_ Pickup truck \_\_\_ Tiller \_\_\_ Leaf shredder \_\_\_ Mower

## Communal Work Dues: I will give \_\_\_ hours of work to one of the following tasks.

- Spring Work Day on May \_\_\_: Work on this day includes spreading compost, tilling gardens, laying of paths, planting communal areas, etc.
- Mid-summer work: I will be responsible for weeding the communal areas OR I will keep up the compost bin in the month of \_\_\_\_\_.
- Fall Work Day on October \_\_\_: Work on this day includes pulling out dead plants in communal areas or abandoned plots, spreading compost, planting winter crops and other fall plants, tilling, repair of fencing, cleaning of tools, etc.
- In exchange for the \$\$ hours of work, I will pay \$\$\$ to the garden group/organization.

**Rules & Regulations:** Before you are given a plot, you need to read and sign the rules for this community garden.

**Dues:** \$\$\$ for a 10 x 10 foot plot      \$\$ for a 20 x 20 foot plot

Remember that \$\$ of the dues will be returned to you after your plot is cleaned up in the fall. (Each community garden doesn't have to require dues – but the money could help in paying for water or extra structures in the garden.)

**Please return this application and the deposit to the garden leader by April \_\_\_\_.**

**Jane Grow  
1111 Squash Ave.  
555-5555**

# Sample Rules: Managing Your Community Garden

Having written rules and timelines is very important since they spell out exactly what is expected of all involved in the garden project. This is a brainstorming list, you by no means need to include all of them, nor is this a complete list of possible things to be regulated. Whatever rules and deadlines that you create, make sure all gardeners are aware of their responsibilities.

## **SAMPLE Guidelines & Rules**

### Individual Plot Care

- I will pay \$\$\$ to help cover garden expenses. I understand that of this, \$\$\$ will be refunded to me when I clean up my plot (or participate in fall clean up) at the end of the season.
- I agree to volunteer ?? hours toward community gardening efforts. Create a sign-up list of work days and tasks. (You may require volunteer hours instead of monetary commitment.)
- I will have something planted in my garden by (date) and I will keep it planted all summer.
- I will keep weeds maintained in my plot and in an area around my plot.
- If I'm notified that my plot becomes unkempt, I understand I will be given 1 week's notice to clean it up. If it is not cleaned up, it will be reassigned or tilled in.
- Do not spray on windy days.
- I will not use chemical in the garden, only natural fertilizers and pesticides.
- Please conserve the use of water. Mulch with leaves, grass clippings, straw or hay to reduce evaporation and decrease weeding.

### Things you plant

- I will plant tall crops where they will not shade neighboring plots.
- Corn and sprawling plants (crops that take up a lot of space) should be planted in the designated communal areas.
- I will pick only from my plants unless given permission by the plot user.
- Individual fencing is allowed. Please keep structures under 4 feet tall and neat. They should be removed for fall tilling.
- This is a no-till garden, meaning individual gardeners are responsible for tilling or double-digging their plots. Therefore, planting of perennials is allowed OR planting of perennials in individual plots isn't allowed because we till the garden each fall.
- I will keep things in my plot harvested, if not I will notify the garden leader. There are many food banks and seniors who could use extra vegetables.

## **Garden & Communal Area Care**

- I will keep trash and litter picked up in my plot and the general area. Use the trash receptacles available next to the garden. We request that all members volunteer their time for general maintenance (especially adjacent walkways) to keep the garden site looking good. The use of the site is contingent on our ability to maintain it.
- I understand that neither the garden group nor the owners of the land are responsible for my actions. I THEREFORE AGREE TO HOLD HARMLESS THE GARDEN GROUP AND OWNERS OF THE LAND FOR ANY LIABILITY, DAMAGE, LOSS OR CLAIM THAT OCCURS IN CONNECTION WITH USE OF THE GARDEN BY ME OR ANY OF MY GUESTS.
- The garden area is open from dawn until dusk, seven days a week. If you see anyone in the garden area during dark hours, please notify police?, garden leader?, neighbor?
- The compost pile is for dead plants, ashes & kitchen material. No trash or diseased plants please.
- Help us discourage losses by questioning unfamiliar faces. If vandalism does occur, notify the garden leader immediately.
- Tools: They should be cleaned and returned to the storage area when done.

## **Notify the garden leader if...**

- Vandalism has occurred.
- You are no longer able to tend to your plot.
- You have questions about your plants or pests in the garden.
- You have any questions, comments or complaints.
- Strangers are in the garden.
- You have more than you can eat in the garden and there is more to be harvested in your plot.



I understand all of these rules and regulations and promise to follow them.

Signature of the gardener \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the garden leader \_\_\_\_\_

### People Problems & Solutions

- Children involved in the garden process become champions of the cause rather than vandals.
- Your garden project may want to offer free small plots to children whose parents live in the neighborhood or to children whose parents already have a plot
- Angry neighbors may complain to local government, local politicians or sponsors about messy, unkempt gardens or rowdy behavior. This type of complaint can shut down a garden completely.
- Make sure all gardeners know what is expected of them and that they have the resources they need to be good gardeners. A well-organized garden with strong leadership and committed members can overcome almost any obstacle.

### SAMPLE Timeline & Deadlines

Jan., Feb., March	Planning meetings
February	Education classes at the Botanical Center
March	Begin plot registration & recruitment of gardeners, volunteers, funders
March	Free seeds to low-income gardeners distributed. Contact your area community services center for a request for seeds form.
April	Apply for free flowers from the Parks Department
April	Work day to spread compost, lay woodchip paths, install new structures.
April	Registration and/or deposit money due (if you require money)
May - mid	Neighborhood flower pick-up - pick-up your requested flowers
May	About mid-May, Community Services distributes their vegetable seedlings to low-income gardeners. Contact your local community center to apply.
May - mid	Planting day, work day
May	Each interested gardener can sign up for any unclaimed plots.
May or June	Last day to plant in the garden
June 1 <sup>st</sup>	Uncared for and/or unclaimed plots reassigned
June	Education class at your garden site
August	Harvest Party
Sept., Oct.	Fall clean up work day
Nov.	Evaluation meetings



# Creating a Garden Team

(Information adapted from *The Chicago School Garden Initiative*)

The success of your garden is dependent upon the members involved. It is important to have a team of people (not just one!) involved in the planning, organization, and execution of your project. This team should be diverse collection of people each with his or her own role in the project. The following suggested team make-up can give you ideas about what roles need to be filled.

## **The Facilitator**

This is often the person who initiated the project. His or her first responsibility is to recruit the other team members. The facilitator must participate in planning, enlist and motivate the other team members, approve events and activities of the team, enlist support of the community, and help with fundraising. He or she may also have to handle other leadership responsibilities that crop up with respect to the garden. In a school setting, this person would most likely be the principal or teacher. In a community garden setting, this person may be the city Urban Garden Program Coordinator who oversees the gardens but is not directly responsible for the individual projects.

## **Garden Coordinator**

Typically, the coordinator works closely with the facilitator in establishing the core team and serves as the liaison to the collaboration. This individual organizes regular meetings with the team and takes the lead for making plans. Because of this relationship, he or she usually oversees things relating to the physical garden, and so it is helpful if this person has some gardening experience. He or she also attends necessary meetings and passes on information to the rest of the team. In a school setting, this person is the main teacher in charge of the garden. In a community garden setting, this person is the community garden leader.

## **Planting Day Leader**

The garden installation and planting is a large-scale event and requires on person to take charge of coordinating the day's activities. The Garden Coordinator could do this, but experience has shown that delegating this job to another individual eases the burden on the Coordinator. The Planting Day Leader works ahead of time to promote pre-planting activities such as getting seeds started and acquiring materials. He or she must secure access to a water source and tools and work out a planting schedule.

## **Resource Leader**

It is the resource leader's job to help distribute and store garden materials including plant materials, tools, informational materials, etc. This person should also find ways to supplement the materials as necessary.

## **Fundraiser / PR Leader**

Additional funds will be needed to sustain the garden. A team member needs to seek sources of funding from local, state, and national agencies. This might begin with seeking donations from neighborhood businesses and organizing a school fundraiser. The individual who accepts this responsibility will probably work closely with the facilitator and garden coordinator and usually assume the lead role in publicizing garden successes, as this task is part of effective fundraising.

# Growing Communities Principles

These principles are designed to help you create a successful community gardening experience through which your community can grow and develop. They can help promote a participatory style of community organizing that grows from a community's self-defined interests and skills.

- Engage and empower those affected by the garden at every stage of planning, building, and managing the garden project.
- Build on community strengths and assets.
- Embrace and value human differences and diversity. Promote equity.
- Foster relationship among families, neighbors, and members of the large community.
- Honor ecological systems and biodiversity.
- Foster environmental, community, and personal health and transformation.
- Promote active citizenship and political empowerment.
- Promote continuous community and personal learning by sharing experience and knowledge.
- Integrate community gardens with other community development strategies.
- Design for long-term success and the broadest possible impact.

## Participatory Approach

(Information from "Growing Communities Curriculum")  
<http://www.communitygarden.org/growing.php>

A participatory approach is one in which those affected by decisions are part of the decision-making process. This process involves engagement by affected parties in the planning, implementation, on-going maintenance, and evaluation stages of a project. In order to implement a participatory approach, you should take the time to meet with the people involved in your project throughout the entire process. People will feel more involved in the project and take more ownership which may then lead to greater participation and an overall better result.

### Design Process

- Initial Meeting
  - ❖ Determine a schedule for the project
  - ❖ Identify goals and a vision
  - ❖ Find out who your stakeholders are (a stakeholder is anyone that affects or is affected by the outcome of the project)
  - ❖ Discuss issues and/or concerns that the planners have regarding the project
- Stakeholder Workshop – Issue Identification
  - ❖ Discuss the goals of the project with stakeholders
  - ❖ Find out what the stakeholders see as issues or concerns regarding the project and implementation (a short survey may be useful)
- Inventory/Analysis of Site Features
  - ❖ Soils, vegetation, slope, surface water, utilities, transportation, climate, etc.
- Make a plan that accounts for all issues and concerns, input from stakeholders, site features, and goals of the project. Make sure that you continue to involve stakeholders in the planning and implementation processes by holding regular meetings to update everyone on progress and problems.

### Participatory Design Activity

You've found a great space for a new community garden and know many people interested in helping you, but where do you start? How do you plan a garden that meets all of the diverse needs of your group? How do you create the best form and function without moving precious plant material around over and over? How will you create a space that everyone can enjoy and allow for the conditions of your site?



By making a mini 3D model of your garden you can arrange small pieces in many different configurations to come up with the best solution for your garden and have a good time doing it!

Here's how to get started:

### **ORGANIZING:**

The more the merrier! Make sure you've considered everyone who might use your community garden. What are the needs of your seniors? Children? Parents? Principal? Do teachers want to use your garden as a science lab or a creative writing place? Who will sustain the garden during the summer months? Do neighbors want to grow food? Who will do maintenance? Be sure to include everyone's perspectives, as this will affect the design and how your space is used. Also remember the more people involved, the less one person gets stuck doing all the work.

### **FACT FINDING:**

You will need to take a close look at all the conditions of your site. This may seem overwhelming at first but a little thought about each of the following questions will save you a lot of labor in the long run!

-What is the neighborhood character surrounding your space? Is there a lot of traffic circulating and making noise? Are there any legal restrictions for the area?

-What is the topography of the space? Where does it slope or grade? Where are potential erosion spots?

-What is the climate of the area? What are the sun, shade, wind, shadows, and sun angles during different seasons that will affect plant growth and survival?

-What is your drainage like? Does water stand in certain areas and run off quickly in others? Where is your water source?

-What is the condition of your soil? Are there hard clay areas or spots with rock or gravel?

-What are the existing structures surrounding your space? Do you need to create structures to enhance a view or protect your plantings? Are there existing trees, shrubs, or perennials? Where is there a need for pedestrian pathways? A place to sit down is always important.

### **GENERATING IDEAS:**

The sky's the limit when you're making a mini model! It's fun to make a wish list, a dream garden, with a swimming pool, an antique rose garden, an elaborate jungle gym, perhaps a gazebo with cold beverages, or a hedge maze. It's fun to make an entire mini 3D model version of impossibilities. Who knows, someone in your group may know how to build the thing you've been dreaming about. For inspiration try to visit places like the Botanical Center, the Neil Smith Prairie, the test gardens at Meredith, neighborhoods where you know you enjoy the landscaping, or cut out pictures of garden ideas you like from those garden magazines that are piling up, and organize them into a notebook. Working with your mini model will help you generate ideas as well.

### **MAKE THE MODEL!**

1. Start with the lid of a paper box or a large box with low sides, or the sides cut down to about 2 inches. This will represent the base of your model. If you have a diagram or plat of survey from the city of your space, you can use it as a map and tape it down in the bottom of the box.

2. Small items you may have around the house can be used as model pieces to represent parts of your garden. Here are some suggestions: For soil: dirt, of course! Fill your box with about 1 inch; try to imitate any slope you may have or want to create. Pathways: sand, small pebbles, aquarium rock Structures: small pieces of cardboard, sticks or bark. Trees and shrubbery: pine cones, small toys, spools of thread, small clippings of real plant material Small plant vegetation: acorns, seeds, pine needles, small pebbles, dried pasta



# Nurturing Leadership

(Information from *Cultivating Community: Principles and Practices for Community Gardening as a Community-Building Tool* by Karen Payne and Deborah Fryman)

## **Encourage leadership to emerge**

Garden projects offer gardeners a way to become active in their neighborhoods. Garden organizers must recognize and encourage opportunities for participants to problem-solve for themselves and create independently. Every phase of a garden project has a place for individual creativity. Successful projects empower garden members to accomplish tasks by cooperating with each other, so their reliance on outside direction diminishes. On a group and neighborhood level, community garden development should encourage cooperative leadership and decision making.

## **Utilize existing strengths**

A community garden project offers a chance of put neighbors' skills to use in flyer design, cookie baking, phone calling, clean up, public speaking, workshop instruction, taking meeting notes, tool shed organizing, asking for donations – the list is almost limitless. When people receive credit for the diverse skills they bring to the project, they are honored and gratified to be able to give back to their neighborhood.

## **Divide tasks**

When community gardeners share tasks among as many individuals as possible, they create opportunities to develop individual and shared leadership. By succeeding at small and doable tasks, people experience the reward of ongoing success and the confidence that comes from taking responsibility. This increases their investment in the garden and encourages them to take on more responsibilities.

## **Balance product with process**

A community garden as a 'finished product' is a desirable community resource. But even more important are the benefits gained from individual and community growth during the process of planning, creating and maintaining a garden. When garden groups set up a decision-making process that encourages people to share responsibilities and develop leadership, communication, and organizing skills, this does more than simply enrich individuals. These skills build leadership within the garden, and in turn they contribute to long-term garden viability and further neighborhood improvements.

## **Create opportunities for presentations**

Urban Garden Programs provide gardeners an opportunity to make presentations about their projects to groups within and outside their neighborhood. These opportunities help develop leadership. Each time people present their accomplishments, they can practice and improve their public speaking and networking skills. Presentations within the group provide gardeners with welcome recognition and serve to boost self-confidence. Participants can also become effective presenters to outside groups, strengthening connections with media, government, and community groups from other parts of their city.

## **Create mentoring opportunities**

When participants with special skills teach what they know, they build leadership skills as they share their knowledge. People learn to accomplish goals as a team. Group members who serve as mentors build confidence as they share information. Those they assist benefit by learning something new from a friend.

## **Provide networking and training opportunities**

Building and maintaining a garden offers opportunities to learn something new and to refine skills. New learning experiences increase people's interest, investment, and ownership in the project. Learning activities need not, and should not, be limited to horticultural and practical topics. A leadership development program can support personal growth and education goals. For instance, formally and informally, garden groups can help their members master skills in everything from facilitating meetings and public speaking to project planning and fundraising.

A well-designed workshop can encourage established garden leaders to empower emerging new leadership. This kind of training helps people discover how their experiences can be a resource to others and builds invaluable skills. It can be applied to situations outside the garden. Training can also help participants learn how to create networks beyond the neighborhood and put people in touch with existing resources.



# Elements of a Well-Planned Meeting

(Information from *Growing Communities Curriculum* by Jeanette Abi-Nader, Kendall Dunnigan, and Kristen Markley)

## Tips for Effective Facilitation

- Consider seating arrangement (circle of chairs, tables to work at, etc.)
- Welcome people
- Go over the agenda – Ask for changes and time limits
- Do substantial introductions (appropriate to group size)
- Define your role as facilitator
- Explain the Guidelines for Discussion
- Explain the decision-making process
- Invite participation (ask for it before the session begins)
- Make eye contact
- Use first names
- Use humor
- Use various facilitative tools and methods
- Trust the wisdom of each participant
- Change your position/move around the room
- Use visuals
- Record people's responses on a flip chart
- Avoid responding to each comment
- Give time for people to answer
- Don't lecture
- Give positive feedback
- Respect difference of opinion
- Empower people to speak and express themselves
- Seek commitments from people
- End session with overview and follow-up coordination
- Use evaluations
- Thank people for their work
- Pass out material after discussions

## Suggested Guidelines for Meeting Discussion

- Listen to others
- Don't interrupt
- Ask clarifying questions
- Welcome new ideas
- Start on time
- Disagree with ideas, not people
- Treat every contribution as valuable

# Asset Mapping

Asset mapping is a term that refers to the process of finding ways to connect with a wide variety of people and groups in your community that may be able to provide you with resources. Asset maps can help you create a visual display of the various assets within your community and can prompt you to discover new ways to connect with groups. Be creative in looking for groups to work with. Almost everyone has something to offer!

## Five Categories of Assets:

- 1) Individual gifts – Identify the specific talents and skills and put those skills to work to build the community.
- 2) Associations – Small formal or informal groups of people working together for a common goal (including shared interests). The basic community organization for empowering individuals and mobilized their capacities. An association is an amplifier of gifts, talents and skills of individual community members.
- 3) Institutions – Local government, businesses and community organizations have resources and knowledge which can be drawn on.
- 4) Land and Buildings – Ecology and infrastructure such as an elementary school with after-hours meeting space, open space for gardens, parks for meetings and celebrations, etc.
- 5) The local economy – Local businesses and lending organizations can donate, publicize, and support community work in a myriad of ways.



# Recruitment

## **People are motivated by their own self-interest, personalize the target.**

The task in organizing a community garden project is to find ways to make the issues and benefits involved in community gardens relevant to the life and experience of each participant. A person must be able to see a potential benefit or harm to themselves if the project succeeds or fails. The simplest way to find out what matters to folks is by asking. Knowing who people are, what they want, and how they may wish to contribute will not only save time throughout the organizing process, but may determine whether the project succeeds at all.

## **Paper doesn't organize people, people do.**

A million announcements via the mail will never substitute for a single direct contact. Asking a neighbor about his or her skills, interests and views, serves several purposes. It provides the information needed to build a strong and relevant project. It strengthens your relationship with the person and that person's with the project. It gives that person a sense of power in the project and thus greater connection. A personal invitation to a meeting is about 10 times more likely to get the person to a meeting. When people are asked why they don't participate in community projects, many people say it is because nobody has asked them to participate.

## **Look within your organization.**

The best place to find volunteers is within your organizations or neighborhood. Ask other teachers, neighbors, co-workers, etc. for their help.

## **Hold a social event for recruitment.**

Through a social event such as a garden party, planting party, or harvest celebration, you can draw attention to your garden and raise awareness. While people are there, ask them about their interests and talents and follow-up on this information.

## **Pair a garden discussion with other events.**

Use the opportunity created by another gathering to discuss your garden. If people are already assembled for another meeting or social event, half the work has been done for you. Use this captive audience. See "Asset Mapping" section of this publication for examples of groups to talk to.

## Neighborhood Associations

Your neighborhood association can be a useful resource for your garden. They can be a source of support, recruitment, advertisement, and even supplies. For more information about your neighborhood association, call the City Action Center at (515) 283-4500 or visit [www.dmgov.org](http://www.dmgov.org).



# Deterring Vandalism and Theft

- Vandalism is a common fear among community gardeners. However, the fear tends to be much greater than the actual incidence. Try these proven methods to deter vandalism:
- Make friends with your neighbors whose window overlook the garden. Trade them flowers or produce for a protective eye. Let them know what they should do if they see something suspicious in the garden.
- Put a sign in the garden. Let people know to whom the garden belongs and that it is a neighborhood project.
- Invite everyone in the neighborhood to participate from the very beginning. Persons excluded from the garden are potential vandals.
- Fences can be made of almost any material. Plant raspberries, roses or other thorny plants instead of putting in a regular wooden or chainlink fence. Fences serve as much to mark possession of a property as to prevent entry, since nothing short of razor-wire and land mines will keep a determined vandal from getting in. Short picket fences or turkey wire will keep out dogs and honest people.
- Create a shady meeting area in the garden and spend time there.
- Children involved in the garden process become champions of the cause rather than vandals.
- Your garden project may want to offer free small plots to children whose parents live in the neighborhood or to children whose parents already have a plot.
- Hold meetings and encourage other groups to hold meetings or social events in the garden.
- Harvest ripe fruit and vegetables on a daily basis. Red tomatoes falling from the vines invite trouble.
- Plant potatoes, other root crops or less popular vegetables such as kohlrabi along the sidewalk or fence. Plant the purple varieties of cauliflower and beans or the white eggplant to confuse a vandal.
- Post a sign, "Please do not take food from our garden but rather join us and grow your own food. We can teach you how to garden and offer lots of resources."
- Plant a "vandal's garden" at the entrance. Mark it with a sign: "If you must take food, please take it from here."



# How to Organize a Planting Party

Spring planting is an exciting time in the garden. Hosting a planting party is a great way to invite people to your garden, enjoy a beautiful spring day together, and get the work done.

**Pick a day.** Choose an alternate rain date too. You may want to coordinate your party around Earth Day (April 22), Arbor Day (last Friday in April), May Day (May 1), Cinco de Mayo (May 5), National Teacher's Day (May 7), or Mother's Day (May 12) a mother-child planting activity would be fun! Some dates to remember: May 10 is considered the frost-free date in Des Moines, when it is safe to plant out all warm-weather plants (tomatoes, peppers, etc.), the free annuals for those who requested them will be available in May. The Great Perennial Divide pick-up day is also in May for those participating.

**Send out postcards.** Let kids design the cards. Invite friends, volunteers, parents of children who work in the garden, other staff who have not been involved in the garden in the past, master gardeners (contact Polk County Master Gardener's program at 263-2660), local government officials, potential partners, community leaders, funders, neighbors...the more the merrier when there is work to be done. Assign jobs to individuals ahead of time to ensure their participation in the event, like inviting the principal to hand out nametags and run the introduction game.

**Have a plan.** Before everyone is standing around waiting for your orders, make a plan on paper and make several copies so that people can take one with them while they are working in different parts of the garden. Do you need your guests to help out with spring clean up, layout the garden, spread mulch or compost, make paths, till, design row markers, create a trellis, or do an art project?

**BYOT?** Do you have enough tools for everyone (especially trowels, shovels, hoes, and gloves)? Or do they need to bring their own? The Tool Lending Library located at 1153 24<sup>th</sup> St. is a great resource for tools for a special event like this. Call 244-8665 to reserve them ahead of time. They have hand tools, wheelbarrows, shovels, and tillers, just to name a few. Round up everything else you will need that day: seeds, seedlings, compost, wood chips, granular fertilizer, row markers, pens, watering cans, hoses, access to water turned on, twine, a camera.

**Get to Know Each Other.** Provide name tags for everyone. Bring the whole group together and introduce people to each other with a short game to get acquainted. Make up a short scavenger hunt, try human bingo, or have participants choose a favorite plant that starts with the same letter as their first name.

**Team Work.** Working together in small groups allows people to get to know each other and get work done in all areas of the garden at the same time. Pair up groups of children with 1-2 adults.

**Eat, drink and be merry.** Provide your guests with beverages and a nourishing snack for all of their hard work. Make sun tea or peppermint tea the day before and have lots of water available. Fresh fruit, yogurt, or granola bars are a satisfying snack.

**Invite them back.** Wasn't that a lot of fun! Give your guests opportunities to help in the garden in the future. Think through volunteer areas needed and post a sign-up sheet. Have a harvest party or other informal garden party in the summer or fall so that your guests can see how their plantings have grown.  
By Stephanie Petersen, Polk County Extension Horticulturist

# Human Bingo

*Get to know your gardeners and their gifts*

Play Human Bingo at your Planting Party and get to know your neighbors (and their skills) better! Use these bingo cards (or make similar ones yourself). Give each person at the party a card and a pencil. Then, have everyone walk around the room meeting people and marking down the characteristics they can find. The first person to fill up a row wins! You can make your own rules and have as many variations of this game as you like. Have fun mapping the assets of your neighbors!

Speaks another language	Has carpentry skills	Likes to plan parties	Comfortable using email	Likes to tell or read stories to children
Like to make snacks for gatherings	Enjoys making crafts	Knows how to can produce	Grows vegetables	Likes to plan
Likes to talk to people	Has lived in their neighborhood all of their life	<b>Free</b>	Could repair outdoor gardening equipment	Has experience selling products
Plays an instrument	Is a member of a neighborhood association.	Enjoys writing	Enjoys working with kids	Can facilitate a meeting
Able to volunteer during the weekday	Has painted outdoor objects	Enjoys making and sending cards	Owens a truck	Gardened with their family when they were young

Has written a grant	Has masonry skills	Likes to take pictures	Can put together a newsletter on the computer	Knows someone with landscape design skills
Likes to cook with vegetables from the garden	Has extra garden tools to donate	Grows flowers for cutting	Has gardening or landscaping experience	Likes to plan work for others (i.e. planning a planting event)
Enjoy speaking to groups	Has volunteered for an area organization	<b>Free</b>	Could repair outdoor gardening equipment	Has experience selling products
Comfortable managing a budget	Can make photocopies for free	Enjoys greeting and meeting new people	Is a member of a community organization	Can facilitate a meeting
Able to volunteer during the weekend	Enjoys making crafts	Has grown a fruit tree	Owens a tiller	Is familiar with some area garden groups



# How to Organize Community Harvest Celebration

## Mix Well for Best Results

**Purpose:** To share the harvest with the whole community, to celebrate the children's accomplishments in the youth garden, to raise awareness and gain publicity for your garden project.

**Discovery Question:** How can we include the larger community harvest-time activities?

**Materials:** A season's worth of harvested crops, invitations, crafts from summer activities, storytellers, dancers, musicians, etc.

## Procedure:

1. Choose a date and rain date (very important) for the harvest festival. Borrow chairs, tables, and utensils from a school, church or senior center.
2. Have the children design invitations and posters using the garden's logo, and distribute to family, friends, and businesses that donated goods and services, as well as farmers who came to lecture, the local media, etc.
3. Have children sign up to bring a potluck dish (appetizer, entrée, salad, and dessert) using as many garden-grown ingredients as possible. If you have access to a kitchen during the program, prepare make-ahead dishes, like casseroles that can be frozen, preserves, pickles, dried fruits, and vegetables.
4. Decorate with dried flowers, corn stalks, autumn leaves, photos, and artwork the children made during the program: make centerpieces for the tables from garden produce.
5. On the day of the celebration, have participants and guests finish up harvesting and preparing the garden for winter.
6. Have craftspeople work with produce to make holiday harvest gifts.
7. Arrange a program of music, stories, and dance. Schedule a time for the children to share experiences, read stories and poems about the garden, and a time for parents to share their appreciation.
8. Sell copies of the garden cookbook to raise money for next year's program.
9. Eat, drink and be merry!



# Garden Design



Community Garden Design Ideas

Accessible Gardening

# Community Garden Design Ideas

*Start new gardens with an idea that fits  
the surroundings and the group's purpose.*

## **Intensive Food Production**

Maximum yield from limited space  
Narrow paths and vertical growing  
Composting area

## **Neighborhood Entrance**

Floral greeting  
Include garden components for year-around interest  
Choose plants compatible with problem areas

## **Edible landscape**

Food production and community enhancement  
Vegetables, fruit trees and shrubs  
Plant unusual varieties and combinations

## **The Gathering Place**

Comfortable seating in shade and sun  
Sand box, bulletin board, swings  
Wide paths to encourage people to walk through  
Accommodate people with special needs  
Tables, grill area  
Groups to meet there

## **Art Garden**

Sculptures included in garden area  
Beds design in specific shapes

## **Small Space Sites**

Create visually cohesive project throughout the neighborhood  
Areas unified by color, plant types, material use  
Sloped beds  
Containers, window boxes, or front yard gardens

## **Pocket Parks**

Develop vacant lots into pocket park  
Relaxation site and/or active recreation  
Arbors  
Shrubs or trees to screen sights and sounds

## **Community Vegetable Gardens**

Individual plots  
Communal lot  
Composting area  
Wide paths  
Rented sites  
Shared equipment

## **Accessible Gardens**

Wide brick or crushed brick paths  
Raised beds

Shaded areas

## **Youth Garden**

Small individual vegetable plots  
Plant diverse crops  
Recruit flexible and patient instructor  
See "theme ideas"

## **Market Garden**

Carefully choose crops-spring, summer, fall harvest  
Develop connections with local farmers  
Attend local farmer's markets  
Develop urban subscribers  
Develop a niche of crops- herbs, organically grown produce, etc.  
Know the population you are selling to- what culturally specific foods do they eat?

## **Gardens for wildlife**

Prairie plants, native grasses and wildflowers  
Butterfly gardens  
Wetlands and ponds  
Woodlands

## **Theme Gardens:**

- Pizza garden
- Salsa garden
- Maize maze
- Sunflower house
- Rainbow garden
- Red garden (everything planted is red or whatever color)
- Salad garden
- Soup garden such as potato soup
- Underground garden-planting only root crops
- P-patch-plants that start with the letter "p"
- Garden for the hungry-extra rows for food pantries
- Grow your own sign-spell things out with plants
- Bean tee-pee
- Pumpkin patch
- Sundial- using rocks or bricks
- Sensory garden-things to see, smell, hear and taste
- Tea garden-mint, bee balm, and chamomile
- Herb garden
- Country gardens- design the bed in the shape of a country and grow only plants that come from that country
- Ethnic garden- groups represented can be broad categories such as Asian- American, European- American, African- American, Central American, etc.



# Accessible Gardening

(Information from: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/DG6757.html> and from *Accessible Gardening for People with Disabilities* by Janeen Adil and *Accessible Gardening* by Joann Woy)

Creating an accessible garden can allow you to include a wider variety of people in your gardening effort. Some suggestions for making your garden more accessible can be found below. For more information, check the website.

## Accessible Garden Containers

- 1) Raised beds – Try growing vegetables that require a lot of weeding
- 2) Boxes and pots – Try growing bush-type peas, beans, cucumbers, kale, broccoli, lettuce, beets, carrots, onions, lettuce, leeks, turnips, kohlrabi, corn, or zucchini
- 3) Hanging baskets – Try growing cascading or trailing plants like nasturtiums and ivy geraniums, vegetables such as whippersnapper and tumbler hybrid cherry tomatoes, salad bush hybrid cucumbers, pot hybrid sweet peppers, or herbs such as rosemary
- 4) Table planters – Try plants listed under “Boxes and Pots.” Remember not to select plants with extensive root system.
- 5) Deep boxes, barrels, and tubs – Try using as miniature raised beds for flowers, vegetables, and herbs

## Considerations for Creating an Accessible Garden

### Water

Make sure that water is available, close to the garden site, and in a paved area so the ground does not get muddy. Place the spigot at 24 to 36 inches above ground and use hand levers (not round spigot handles) and snap connectors. Soaker hoses and mulch will also reduce watering needs in the garden.

### Plant Choice

There are many new varieties of plants that are appropriate for the accessible garden container. Look for plants listed as compact (e.g. "Pixie" tomatoes). Compact plants will typically be more suitable for container growing smaller and easier to reach if you use a wheelchair. Also look for tall plants or vines that reach a certain height, thus making them good choices for growing on poles, stakes, and trellises. Choose flowers not only according to their light requirements and shape, but also by their colors, textures, and fragrances.

### Paved Surfaces

Garden path surfaces must be firm, smooth, level, and provide traction. The grade of the path should be between 5 and 8 percent. Provide direct routes throughout the garden. Use edge guides if you have ambulating and/or visual disabilities. Audible water features and wind chimes also help orient you through the garden. One-way traffic needs a five-foot minimum width to accommodate the turning radius of a wheelchair. Two-way traffic requires a seven-foot minimum width.

### Tools

Gardening tools may present one of the biggest obstacles to persons with physical disabilities. It is difficult to use ordinary, full-sized shovels, hoes, rakes, and other implements if you are using a wheelchair, a power scooter, or a walker. If you have limited hand strength or mobility, using trowels, pruning shears, and other small tools can be awkward and even painful. Special tools for people with physical disabilities are available. Also, many common tools can be easily adapted for better use. Be creative! See pictures below for some ideas for adapting tools. For more information, see *Accessible Gardening: Tips & Techniques for Seniors and the Disabled* by Joann Woy.



# Getting Answers to Your Gardening Questions

General Resources



Polk County Extension

Land Records

Farmer's Markets

ISU Extension Publications

Gardening with Native Plants

# General Resources

- Hortline - (515) 294-3108 [hortline@iastate.edu](mailto:hortline@iastate.edu)  
Hortline provides assistance to home gardeners on lawn, garden, and ornamental questions. Hours are Monday through Friday from 10 to 12 a.m. and from 1 to 4:30 p.m.
- ISU Horticulture and Home Pest News <http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews>
- ISU Plant Disease Clinic <http://www.exnet.iastate.edu/Pages/plantpath/pdcintro.html>
- Master Gardener Program <http://www.hort.iastate.edu/pages/conshort/mghome.html>
- ISU Extension Home Page <http://www.exnet.iastate.edu>
- Iowa Insect information <http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/iin/>
- Virtual Vegetable Page [http://www.hort.iastate.edu/pages/extnsion/e\\_frame.html](http://www.hort.iastate.edu/pages/extnsion/e_frame.html)
- Yard and Garden Column [http://www.hort.iastate.edu/pages/conshort/c\\_frame.html](http://www.hort.iastate.edu/pages/conshort/c_frame.html)
- National Gardening Association <http://www.garden.org>
- Iowa Network for Community Agriculture (INCA) – 1465 120<sup>th</sup> St., Kanawha, IA 50447; [libland@frontiernet.net](mailto:libland@frontiernet.net) 515-495-6367
- Iowa Dept. of Agriculture and Land Stewardship [www.state.ia.us/agriculture](http://www.state.ia.us/agriculture); 515-281-5402
- ISU Extension Publications – Call 263-2660 or [www.extension.iastate.edu/Pages/pubs/](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Pages/pubs/) to order *Growing for Market* a journal of news and ideas for market gardeners – P.O. Box 3747, Lawrence, KS 66046; 785-748-0605
- Iowa Fruit & Vegetable Grower's Association [www.state.ia.us/agriculture](http://www.state.ia.us/agriculture); 515-281-5402

## Polk County Extension

Polk County Extension can provide:

- Publications (see “ISU Extension Publication” section of this publication)
- Master gardeners to lead gardening classes or demonstrations
- Answers to your questions through the Hort Line or other means (see “Answers to your Questions” section of this publication)
- Soil tests (see “Soil Testing” section of this publication)
- Nutritionists to do demonstrations or classes about preparing food from your garden and general nutrition
- 4-H programming.

Go to <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/polk/homepage.html>.

## Land Records

If you are interested in starting a community garden, one of the first things that you need to know is who owns the land you want to use. You can find this and other detailed information about the property you are interested in at the Polk County assessors website (<http://www.assess.co.polk.ia.us/>).



# Farmer's Markets

You can buy fresh produce as well as market your own garden produce at various farmers' markets in Des Moines and the surrounding area. Here is a listing of the possibilities.

**Name of Market:** Downtown Des Moines Farmers Market  
**Contact Person:** Kelly Egenberger  
**Address:** 4th & Court Ave.  
Des Moines, IA 50309  
**Web Address:** www.desmoinesdt.com  
**E-Mail Address:** events@desmoinesdt.com  
**Phone Number:** (515) 243-6625  
**Location:** 4th & Court Avenues  
**Accept WIC (Y/N):** Yes  
**Open:** May - Oct.  
**Days and Hours Open:** Sat.: 7:00 a.m.-noon

**Name of Market:** Drake Neighborhood Market  
**Contact Person:** Ginny Gieseke  
**Address:** 2500 University Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50311  
**Phone Number:** (515) 277-6951  
**Location:** 1st Christian Church  
**Accept WIC (Y/N):** Yes  
**Open:** June - Sept.  
**Days and Hours Open:** Wed. 4:00 pm-7:00 pm

**Name of Market:** Ingersoll Farmers Market  
**Contact Person:** Bev Thomas  
**Address:** 1001 Office Park Road, #105  
West Des Moines, IA 50265  
**Phone Number:** (515) 440-6057  
**Location:** 2700 Ingersoll-Office Max parking lot  
**Accept WIC (Y/N):** No  
**Open:** June - Sept.  
**Days and Hours Open:** Tues. 4:00 pm-6:00 pm

**Name of Market:** Valley Junction Farmers Market  
**Contact Person:** J.D. Mullen  
**Address:** 217 5th Street  
West Des Moines, IA 50265  
**Web Address:** www.valleyjunction.com  
**Phone Number:** (515) 222-3642  
**Location:** 100 200 & 300 blocks of 5th Street  
**Accept WIC (Y/N):** Yes  
**Open:** May - Sept.  
**Days and Hours Open:** Thurs. 4:00 pm-8:00 pm

**Name of Market:** All Iowa Farmers Market  
**Contact Person:** Dean Gatton  
**Address:** 619 Broad Street  
Story City, IA 50248  
**Phone Number:** (515) 733-6071  
**Location:** Living History Farms-2600 111th St.  
**Accept WIC (Y/N):** No

**Open:** June - Oct.  
**Days and Hours Open:** Tues.: 3:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

**Name of Market:** Downtown Urbandale Farmers Market  
**Contact Person:** Frank Glas  
**Phone Number:** (515) 276-1800  
**Location:** Parking lot of Welter Office Supply  
**Accept WIC (Y/N):** No  
**Open:** May - Sept.  
**Days and Hours Open:** Mon. 3:00 pm-7:00 pm

**Name of Market:** Urbandale Farmers Market  
**Contact Person:** Bryan Etchen  
**Address:** 9875 Meredith Drive  
Urbandale, IA 50322  
**Phone Number:** (515) 276-0852  
**Location:** Parking lot of Iowa Orchard  
**Accept WIC (Y/N):** Yes  
**Open:** June - Oct.  
**Days and Hours Open:** Thurs.: 3:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.

**Name of Market:** Johnston Farmers Market  
**Contact Person:** Judy Anderson  
**Address:** 5985 NW 61<sup>st</sup> Avenue  
Johnston, IA 50131  
**Phone Number:** (515) 278-0939  
**Location:** City Hall parking lot-Northwest 62d & Merle Hay Road  
**Accept WIC (Y/N):** Yes  
**Open:** May - Oct.  
**Days and Hours Open:** Tues.: 2:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.

**Name of Market:** Metro Market  
**Location:** 20<sup>th</sup> and Woodland  
**Open:** year round  
**Days and Hours Open:** Fri. -Sat.: 9am - 7pm



# Iowa State University Extension Gardening Publications

All publications are available online at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/pubs/ga.htm>.

To order publications, contact the ISU Extension Distribution Center:

119 Printing and Publications Building  
Iowa State University  
Ames, Iowa 50011-3171

Telephone: (515) 294-5247  
Fax: (515) 294-2945

Contact the Distribution Center by E-mail at [pubdist@iastate.edu](mailto:pubdist@iastate.edu). Please include publication title and ID number in your message. A downloadable order form that you can print also is available. It is in .pdf format. After printing it, you can fill it out and mail it or fax it to the address above. Minimal fees are charged for multiple copies of publications and for single copies of publications of more than four pages. Shipping and handling charges may also be charged but are usually minimal as well.

## ID Number

## Publication Title

EDC 20	Horticulture & Home Pest News [February 1995]
IAN 303	Iowa's Plants Series - Benefits and Dangers of Iowa Plants [September 1994]
IAN 305	Iowa's Plants Series - Seeds, Nuts, and Fruits of Iowa Plants [September 1994]
IAN 306	Iowa's Plants Series - Mushrooms and Nonflowering Plants [September 1994]
NCR 461	Ornamental Grasses for the Midwest ordering information [November 1992]
PD 31	Plant Disease Identification Form [Revised February 2002]
PM 666	Weed Management in the Home Garden [September 1996]
PM 683	Composting Yard Waste [March 1993]
PM 815	2003 Garden Calendar ordering information [Revised Aug. 2002]
PM 874	Starting garden transplants at home [Revised June 2003]
PM 1204	Morels, false morels, and other cup fungi ordering information [Revised March 1996]
PM 1357	Guide to plant societies and associations [Revised January 2002]
PM 1542	Tips for Providing Plant and Insect Samples to ISU [April 1998]
PM 1644	Hardy Perennials: Ferns ordering information [November 2002]
PM 1692	Community Supported Agriculture: Local Food Systems for Iowa [December 1996]
PM 1693	Community Supported Agriculture: Iowa CSA Farms and Organizers [Revised July 2003]
PM 1777	Master Gardener brochure [December 1999]
RG 104	Horticulture Publications [January 2002]
RG 105	Garden Tips: Guidelines to Seasonal Chores [July 2002]
RG 201	Integrated Pest Management for Vegetable Gardens [April 1999]
RG 202	Understand Pesticide Labeling [September 1995]
RG 203	Choose Pesticides Wisely [September 1995]
RG 204	Apply Pesticides Safely [September 1995]
RG 205	Store Pesticides Safely [September 1995]
RG 206	Questions About Composting [Reprinted March 1997]
RG 207	Nonchemical Pest Control for the Home Lawn and Garden [September 1996]
RG 208	Botanical Insecticides in the Home Garden [September 1996]
RG 209	Organic Mulches for Gardens and Landscape Plantings [June 1997]
RG 212	Pollinators in the Garden [November 2002]
RG 401	Ornamental Grasses for Winter Interest [Electronic version July 2000]
RG 601	Gardening for Butterflies [Revised March 2002]
RG 603	Iowa Butterfly and Caterpillar Food Preferences [Revised July 2003]



RG 604	Water Gardens: Aquatic Plants [April 2003 ]
RG 703	Lichens [September 2002]
RG 901	Insect Investigator [June 2002]
RG 902	Plant Zoo [May 2002]
ST 11	Soil sample information sheet for horticulture crops [Revised September 2002]
SUL 12	Using Mulches in Managed Landscapes [August 2001 ]

## Flowers

IAN 301	Iowa's Plants Series - Iowa's Spring Wildflowers [September 1994]
IAN 302	Iowa's Plants Series - Iowa's Summer and Fall Wildflowers [September 1994]
PM 1319	Forcing Flower Bulbs [December 1999]
PM 1925	Growing Dahlias ordering information [July 2003 ]
RG 301	Growing Annual Flowers in Containers [Revised March 2001]
RG 302	Edible Flowers [Revised September 2000]
RG 303	Daylilies [Revised April 2003]
RG 304	Late Season Perennial Flowers [Reprinted July 2002]
RG 305	Growing Chrysanthemums in the Garden [Revised September 2001]
RG 306	Delphiniums [June 1997 ]
RG 307	Clematis [Revised July 2001]
RG 309	The Griffith Buck Roses [Revised July 2002]
RG 310	Caring For Roses in Iowa [Electronic version July 2000]
RG 311	Growing and Overwintering Tender Perennials [November 2001 ]
RG 312	Suggested Daffodil Cultivars for Iowa [April 1997]
RG 313	Growing Garden Lilies [May 2002]
RG 314	Growing Petunias [January 2003]
RG 315	Dahlias [Revised June 2003]
RG 316	Poinsettia Care [Revised December 2002]
RG 317	Annual Vines [February 2002]
RG 318	Early Spring Blooming Perennials [December 2001]
RG 319	When To Divide Perennials [November 2001]
RG 320	Growing and Overwintering Garden Geraniums [November 2001 ]
RG 321	Miniature Roses [April 2003 ]
RG 323	Cannas for Home Landscapes [May 2002]
RG 601	Gardening for Butterflies [July 1999]
RG 602	Perennials For Shady Areas [Revised September 2000]
RG 903	Where in the World? [Revised June 2003]
SUL 8	Crown Rot - Hosta [February 2000]

## Fruit

PM 719	Rhubarb in the Home Garden [Revised June 1998]
PM 1282	2003 Commercial Tree Fruit Guide [January 2003 ]
PM 1707	Growing Grapes in the Home Garden [ May 1997]
PM 1887	Selling Fruits and Vegetables [April 2002]
PM 1887(S)	Cómo Vender Frutas y Verduras [March 2002]
PM 1892	Melons [June 2003]
RG 501	Pruning Raspberries [September 1995 ]
RG 502	Pruning Grapevines [May 1997] 98K RG 503 Growing Blueberries in Iowa [April 2003 ]

## Houseplants

PM268	How to Air Layer a Houseplant [Revised May 2001]
PM 713a	Foliage house plants [Reprinted December 1996]
PM 713b	Flowering house plants [Reprinted December 1996]
PM 713c	Succulents as house plants [Reprinted September 1993]
PM 713f	Soil for houseplants [Revised December 2001]
PM 713g	Diagnosing house plant problems [Reprinted March 1991]
RG-308	Growing Holiday Cacti [October 1996]
RG 316	Poinsettia Care [March 2001]

## Lawn, Shrubs, Trees

IAN 304	Iowa's Plants Series - Iowa's Trees [September 1994]
IAN 307	Iowa's Plants Series - Iowa's Shrubs and Vines [September 1994]
PM 482	Oak Wilt [November 1987 ]
PM 930	Home Lawn Care: Weed Control [Revised September 1994]
PM 1063	Turfgrass Management Calendar: Kentucky Bluegrass Lawns [September 1996]
PM 1304	Pruning shade and flowering trees [Reprinted September 1993]
PM 1383	Identification of Conifer Trees in Iowa [Revised May 1996]
PM 1384	Identification of Hardwood Trees in Iowa [Revised May 1996]
PM 1392	Iowa "Don't Bag It" Lawn Care [Reprinted March 1997]
PM 1429a	Community Trees: Establishing a Community Tree Program [Revised February 1999]
PM 1429b	Community Trees: Tree Ordinances for Iowa Communities [December 1999 ]
PM 1429c	Community Trees: Sample Tree Ordinances for Iowa Communities [Revised January 1998]
PM 1429d	Community Trees: Low-growing Trees for Urban and Rural Iowa [Revised October 1996]
PM 1429e	Community Trees: Street Trees for Iowa [Revised October 1998]
PM 1429f	Community Trees: Powerlines and Trees [April 1997]
PM 1487	Modifying Soils in Iowa Lawns and Gardens [Revised September 1998]
PM 1591	Community Tree Planting and Care Guide [October 1998]
PM 1676	Tree Planting: Planning [August 1996 ]
PM 1677	Tree Planting: Establishment and Care [August 1997]
PM 1680	Nonchemical Alternatives for the Home Lawn [September 1996]
PM 1749	Tips for Athletic Field Management on a Limited Budget [April 1998]
PM 1755	Understanding Thatch in the Home Lawn [April 1998]
PM 1812	The Forest Where Ashley Lives [February 2001]
RG 209	Organic Mulches for Gardens and Landscape Plantings [June 1997]
RG 701	Iowa's Oaks [April 2000]
RG 702	Guidelines for Selecting Trees [July 1996]
RG 704	Growing Rhododendrons and Azaleas in Iowa [May 2003]
SUL 1	Understanding the Effects of Flooding on Trees [June 1994]
SUL 6	Managing Storm-Damaged Trees [January 1999 ]
SUL 9	Pine Wilt [February 2000]
SUL 11	Fungal Cankers of Trees [August 2001 ]
WL-47	Rabbit Damage to Tree Plantings [Reprinted September 1994]

## Vegetables and Herbs

PM 534	Planting and Harvesting Times for Garden Vegetables [Revised August 1999]
PM 534 (S)	El horario para la siembra y cosecha de las hortalizas [October 2002 ]
PM 607	Suggested Vegetable Varieties For the Home Garden [Revised May 2002]
PM 608	Tomatoes [Revised May 2002]
PM 608 (S)	Tomates [September 2002]
PM 731	Harvesting and Storing Vegetables [Revised December 2002]
PM 814	Where to Put Your Vegetable Garden [Revised July 1999]
PM 814 (S)	Dónde sembrar su huerto doméstico [October 2002 ]
PM 819	Planting a Home Vegetable Garden [January 1996]
PM 870A	Small Plot Vegetable Gardening [Revised September 2001]
PM 870A(S)	El huerto de hortalizas en parcelas pequeñas [March 2002 ]
PM 870B	Container Vegetable Gardening [Revised July 2000]
PM 870B (S)	Las hortalizas en recipientes [March 2002 ]
PM 994	Asparagus in the Home Garden [Revised November 2000]
PM 1049	Curcubit Diseases-An Aid to Identification and Control [November 1993]
PM 1887	Selling Fruits and Vegetables [April 2002]
PM 1887(S)	Cómo Vender Frutas y Verduras [March 2002]
PM 1888	Peppers [September 2002]
PM 1888(S)	Chiles [October 2002]
PM 1889	Onions [August 2002]
PM 1889(S)	Cebollas [September 2002]



PM 1890	Potatoes [December 2002]
PM 1890(S)	Papas [June 2003]
PM 1891	Sweet Corn [November 2002]
PM 1892	Melons [June 2003]
PM 1893	Cilantro (English & Spanish) [April 2003]
PM 1894	Garlic [February 2003]
PM 1895	Tomatillos [April 2003]
PM 1896	Cole crops [June 2003]
RG-201	Integrated Pest Management for Vegetable Gardens [April 1999]
G-201(S)	El manejo integrado de plagas para los huertos de hortalizas [September 2002 ]
RG 801	Growing & Using Basil [Revised July 2003]

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All materials are available online at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/pubs/ga.htm>.

# Gardening with Native Plants

## Local resources for rain garden information:

City of Des Moines Park and Recreation Department – 515-237-8907, [www.dmparks.org](http://www.dmparks.org)

\* Free Rain Garden Toolkits containing a “How to make your own rain garden” manual, a video, local information, and more are available for download online or by contacting the Parks Department

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) – 515-964-1883

Urban Resources and Borderland Alliance Network (URBAN) – 515-964-1883

Watershed University (Metro Waste Authority) – 515-244-0021

\* Grants for (up to \$2,500 per project) to schools, businesses, public and private groups/clubs, and neighborhood associations for projects with an environmental focus, from litter clean-ups to school recycling programs are available. See [http://www.mwatoday.com/abo\\_grant.html](http://www.mwatoday.com/abo_grant.html) for more details.

## Lists of native rain garden plants that will work well in Iowa can be found at

[http://prrcd.org/inl/recommended\\_plants.htm](http://prrcd.org/inl/recommended_plants.htm)

## Local resources for native gardening information:

Public Lands Department (located at Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge) – 515-994-3400

Iowa Prairie Network – [www.iowaprairienetwork.org](http://www.iowaprairienetwork.org)

Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge – 515-994-3400

\* Education staff is available for field trip programming at the refuge. Additionally, they offer training in the “Project Bluestem” curriculum. This is an interactive curriculum designed for integrating native plantings into classroom curriculum. Refuge staff will train teachers and provide you with a copy of the curriculum in CD-rom form. See <http://www.tallgrass.org/activities.html> for examples.

## Local native plant suppliers:

Ion Exchange Native Seed and Plant Nursery

1878 Old Mission Drive

Harpers Ferry, IA 52146-7533

800-291-2143

[www.ionexchange.com](http://www.ionexchange.com)

Reeves Wildflower Nursery

28431 200<sup>th</sup> Street

Harper, IA 52231

888-411-9767

[rayreeves@lisco.com](mailto:rayreeves@lisco.com)

Prairie Moon Nursery

Route 3 Box 1633

Winona, MN 55987-9515

866-417-8156

[www.prairiemoonnursery.com](http://www.prairiemoonnursery.com)

Missouri Wildflowers Nursery

9814 Pleasant Hill Road

Jefferson City, MO 65109

573-496-3492

[www.mowildflowers.net](http://www.mowildflowers.net)

Heard Gardens Ltd.

8000 Raccoon River Drive

West Des Moines, IA 50266

515-987-0800 x204

[lynnkuhn@heardgardens.com](mailto:lynnkuhn@heardgardens.com)

## Local landscape architects who design rain gardens:

SVPA Architects Inc.

Kent Zarley

1466 28th Street, Suite 200

West Des Moines, IA 50266

Phone: 515-327-5990

E-Mail: [K-Zarley@SVPA-ARCHITECTS.COM](mailto:K-Zarley@SVPA-ARCHITECTS.COM)

Web Site: [www.SVPA-ARCHITECTS.COM](http://www.SVPA-ARCHITECTS.COM)

Dunbar-Jones PLC

104 Southwest 4th Street

Des Moines, IA 50309

Phone: 515-280-8026

E-Mail: [tdunbar@dunbarjones.com](mailto:tdunbar@dunbarjones.com)

# Supplies

Wood Chips

Compost



Plants

Extra Tools for Workdays

Garden Supply Wishlist

Soil Testing

Des Moines Community Garden Coalition

Community Services

Home Recycling Exchange

Habitat for Humanity ReStore

## Wood Chips

Tree removal companies will often drop off wood chips if they are removing trees in your neighborhood area. If you need wood chips, try calling these companies and ask if they are working in your area. Additionally, the City of Des Moines Park and Recreation Department delivers woodchips to community groups for use on public land during the spring and fall. These woodchips may be requested by contacting the Urban Garden Program Coordinator at 515-323-8907 in February for March or April delivery.

## Compost

Bulk quantities of compost are available for purchase from the Metro Compost Center on South East Harriet Street in Des Moines. Metro Waste Authority has information on compost sales for Central Iowa residents. To find out more visit: [http://www.mwatoday.com/mwa\\_com.html](http://www.mwatoday.com/mwa_com.html).

## Plants

You can sometimes get donated vegetable plants from garden centers especially after prime selling season. If you are looking for more plants, try calling garden centers and asking for donations.

## Community Services

The Community Services Division of the Des Moines Community Development Department provides free vegetable plants, seeds, and tilling services to people over the age of 60 or people who meet federal poverty income guidelines. For materials or more information, contact the City Action Center at 283-4500.

## Extra Tools for Workdays

The Tool Lending Library lends tools to members for a small membership fee. They have a variety of gardening tools available including rototillers, shredders, pruners, wheelbarrows, and shovels. The library is located at 1912 Sixth Avenue in Des Moines. They can be reached at 515-246-0010. Library hours are limited (currently 4-6 Monday through Friday), so call ahead. Gardens that are part of the Des Moines Community Gardening Coalition can receive free membership for use of gardening equipment.

## Garden Supply Wish List

*Some of the basic items you will need for your project.*

### Tools

Hand trowels  
Spading forks  
Hoes  
Shovels  
Spade  
Garden rake  
Wheel barrow  
Pruning shears

### Supplies

Compost  
Woodchips  
Tomato cages  
Hay bales  
Garden markers  
Gloves  
Tape measure  
Twine

### Construction

Cold frame  
Compost bin  
Bench  
Shed  
Trellis

### Irrigation

Garden hoses  
Soaker hoses  
Watering cans  
Water meter



## Soil Testing

If you are interested in the quality of your soil, you can take a soil test after the frost disappears in the spring. Your local extension office can provide you with bags and forms for submitting garden soil samples for testing. A test will tell you soil pH, organic material, and other information essential to garden success. This information can be used to determine what types of fertilizer you should be using and whether or not your soil is safe for vegetable production. To take an accurate soil test, remove a small sample extending from the surface to a depth of 6 inches in at least 10 or more places from each are up to 10 acres in size. Mix thoroughly and fill sample bag with soil. For more information on submitting a soil sample, call 263-2660.

## Des Moines Community Garden Coalition

The Parks Department can assist with project planning and coordination, help with site preparation and supplies, provide education on gardening, provide volunteer support and Americorps work crews, give advice on leadership and organization of a community garden, and provide publications such as *Sprouts*. Contact Urban Garden Program Coordinator at 323-8907 or TLDawson@dmgov.org for more information.

## Home Recycling Exchange

Home Recycling Exchange, located at 805 E. 14<sup>th</sup> Ct. 515-282-9296, is a not-for-profit project that serves as an area wide clearing house for donations of new and salvaged building materials. Its aim is to help improve the housing situation of the poorest homeowners in the city by providing them with access to low-cost building materials. Local non-profit groups involved with housing improvements and helping the needy also have access to the materials in the HRE Warehouse. While all homeowners can buy HRE products, a client with a copy of their qualifying intake from your agency can get materials for free or next to nothing. HRE is a good place to find low-cost building materials for garden projects.

## Habitat for Humanity ReStore

This company operates a retail location for surplus and salvaged building materials in partnership with Habitat for Humanity. To contact the ReStore, you can call 515-471-8686 or visit them at 2341 2<sup>nd</sup> Street (entrance is on Holcomb Ave.). Hours are as follows: Tuesday 1:30 – 3:30; Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday 1:30 – 6; and Saturday 8-3.



# Gardening with Children



Suggestions

Field Trips and Contacts

# Gardening with Children

When you talk to adult gardeners, many began the hobby as children, and then there are those who swear off gardening forever because of the chore it was when they were small. If you like to garden and would like to welcome children into your world of flowers and vegetables, there are some things to keep in mind while you explore together. According to the National Gardening Association's Parents Primer, if you want a child to love gardening, the best things you can do, in order of importance, are the following:

1. Show them how much you love gardening just by reveling in your own garden every day.
2. Surround them with great gardens. That doesn't mean a show place. It may mean a messy, riotously colored cottage garden; decorative little getaway; or colorful pots of flowers. (Remember that everything is bigger through kids' eyes.)
3. Give them good gardening experiences. These will be great memories in years to come."

Give children their own little space, even if it's just a pot on the patio. Having their own place to garden will give them pride of ownership. It is important to recognize that kids' gardening priorities are different than adults. You can help make a child's gardening experience a success by:

- Letting kids choose what to plant. Offer guidance and make sure there are some sure-success plants among their picks. But if they want broccoli, roses, and zinnias, why not?
- Relax your standards. Crooked rows or weeds as pets are fine.
- Transplanting and planting seeds is obviously fun, but so is pulling weeds and watering. Try to keep positive and have a good time, but recognize when they have had enough.
- Leave room for digging in the dirt. Looking for worms and creating bug houses with sticks is part of the adventure.
- Model the message that some insects are beneficial, and even destructive bugs are highly interesting. They may enjoy making a collection of squash bugs.
- It's okay to do behind-the-scenes maintenance of kids' gardens. Don't expect kids to do all the watering and pest patrol.

Excite their senses!

*Smell it!* Fragrant plants will forever bloom in a child's memory. Grow heliotrope, sweet peas, roses, peonies, and lilacs. Show them which plants to rub between their fingers and they'll never forget lavender, pineapple mint, lemon balm, rosemary, basil, and scented geraniums.

*Touch it!* Textured plants are irresistible. Fuzzy woolly thyme and lambs' ears, the prickly coneflower and strawflowers, Hen and chicks, and the delicate maidenhair fern and columbine

*Taste it!* Snacking while hanging out in the garden is great fun. Cherry tomatoes, Sugar Snap peas, mint, strawberries and edible flowers like pansies and nasturtiums are a treat.

*Watch it grow big!* Kids like extremes. Grow huge flowers and tiny vegetables: sunflowers and cherry tomatoes. If you have room, try 'Atlantic Giant' pumpkins and watermelons. Unique varieties of common vegetables are fun for adults as well as children: purple carrots or beans, white pumpkins, striped beets, rainbow chard, and 'Easter egg' radishes just to name a few.



### **Guidelines for gardening with children:**

- Keep it simple
- Keep an open mind
- Select appropriate plants
- Avoid discouragement
- Plan activities for immediate and delayed gratification
- Garden organically
- Excite the senses
- Avoid poisonous and sharp plants
- Encourage exploration
- Include wildlife and water features
- Maintain a patient and tolerant attitude
- Have fun!!!!

### **Fun Plants to Grow with Children:**

- Morning glories
- Pansies
- Johnny Jump Ups
- Nasturtiums
- Snapdragons
- Radishes
- Cleome
- Sunflowers
- Potatoes
- Strawflowers
- Zinnias
- Mexican hat
- Blanket flower
- Larkspur
- Herbs: mint (apple, chocolate), lemon grass, cilantro, basil, oregano
- Lambs ear
- Butterfly attracting plants: Monarda, butterfly weed, salvia, coneflowers, Liatris

### **Youth Gardening Web Sites**

- \* Composting in schools <http://www.cfe.cornell.edu/compost/schools.html>
- \* NGA Kid's Gardening <http://www.kidsgardening.com/>
- \* National Gardening Association <http://www.garden.org>
- \* Texas A&M Kindergarden Site <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/kindergarden/index.html>
- \* Texas A&M Nutrition in the Garden <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/nutrition/index/index.html>
- \* Maricopa County Community Gardens <http://ag.arizona.edu/maricopa/garden/html/youth/youth.htm>
- \* The Edible Schoolyard <http://www.edibleschoolyard.org/>



# Field Trip Ideas and Contacts

## **Public Gardens:**

### **Botanical Center**

Education Curator  
909 East River Drive, 50316  
323-8902, [www.botanicalcenter.com](http://www.botanicalcenter.com)  
Admission fees: \$2 students, \$4 adults,  
\$2 seniors.  
25% for groups. Guided tours available.

### **Iowa State University's Reiman Gardens**

1407 Elwood Drive, Ames 50011  
515-294-2710  
This five acre garden includes a butterfly garden, formal rose garden, herb garden, wetlands garden, children's garden and many plant collections. Guided tours are available.

### **Clare and Miles Mills Rose Garden**

Greenwood Park, near the Des Moines Art Center. Has over 2,500 roses. It is an All-American Selections rose garden. Free

### **Iowa Arboretum**

1875 Peach Ave., Madrid 50011  
515/795-3216  
Enjoy 378 acres of trees, shrubs, and flowers located in the heart of Boone County. Admission is \$2.00/adult, children under 12 are free. Group rates are available.

### **Master Gardener's Demonstration Garden**

92<sup>nd</sup> St. In Urbandale, near Valerius School  
Contact Polk County Extension at 263-2661.

### **Polk County Fair**

Marlys VonStein, Polk County Extension  
July, State Fair Grounds, Des Moines  
261-4209  
Admission is free, and Marlys VonStein can also organize free tours of the 4-H building, explaining the exhibits and tour the sheep barn. They usually have bucket calves, goats, sheep, rabbits, poultry, hogs and horses.

### **Water Works Park**

408 Fleur Dr., 50321,  
[www.dmww.com/park\\_main.asp](http://www.dmww.com/park_main.asp)  
1500 acres of open wooded areas. Arie den Boer Arboretum features 300 varieties of crab apple trees. Visiting during the last week of April or first week of May is sure to be spectacular.

### **Neil Smith National Wildlife Refuge**

Located near Prairie City, off of Hwy 163  
9981 Pacific Street, Prairie City 50288  
515-994-3400, [www.tallgrass.org](http://www.tallgrass.org)  
Over 5,000 acres of tallgrass prairie and native Midwest wildlife, the largest re-creation of tallgrass prairie ecosystem in the U.S. They have herds of buffalo, elk, pheasants, badgers, and white-tailed deer. The Prairie Learning Center offers interesting and explorative exhibits. Free admission.

## **Farms:**

### **LeVon Griffieon**

11655 NE 60<sup>th</sup>, Ankeny 50021  
515/964-0876  
Free tour of this family farm. They have a cow/calf operation and grow corn and soybeans.

### **Sunstead Farm**

Neil & Khanh Hamilton  
3176 Timber Ridge Trail, Waukee 50263  
515/987-2559  
Ten acre farm raising organic vegetables, berries, and fruit, over 10,000 Spring bulbs and other perennial flowers, lilies and gladiolas. They market to local restaurants.

### **Living History Farms**

2600 111<sup>th</sup> Street, exit 125 from I35/I80  
278-5286, [www.lhf.org](http://www.lhf.org)  
It is a 600-acre educational historical museum, open-air facility that tells the story of the changes in Midwestern agriculture and rural life.

## **Compost and Landfill Facilities:**

### **Metro Waste Authority**

521 East Locust, DSM 50309  
Mary Gillaspey  
323-6505, [mpg@metro-waste.com](mailto:mpg@metro-waste.com)  
Visit MWA's compost facility, landfill or hazardous waste collection center. Tours are free.

## **Food Pantries:**

Contact the Des Moines Area Religious Council at 277-6969 for a listing of food pantries in Des Moines.



# Fundraising



Local Grants

National Grants

Community Garden Fundraising Projects

# Local Grants for Community Greening Efforts

## **Outdoor Classroom Mini Grants: Iowa Conservation Education Council**

You can create an outdoor classroom at your school with funds from ICEC's EE Mini-grant Program. Thousands of dollars have been made available through initial funding with the REAP Conservation Education Program, and the Iowa Conservation Education Council. Grants will be distributed in \$300-500 amounts. Applications are due Jan 31 and March 1. Applications may be obtained by contacting Iowa Conservation Education Council: Margaret Sadeghpour-Kramer, Box 16, Martelle, IA 52305 or [mksandmk@aol.com](mailto:mksandmk@aol.com) and [margaretkramer@yahoo.com](mailto:margaretkramer@yahoo.com).

## **BASICS for Nutrition and Physical Activity Community: Based Nutrition Education Iowa Department of Public Health**

BASICS stands for Building and Strengthening Iowa Community Support for Nutrition and Physical Activity. BASICS incentive grants provide federal funding for community coalitions to expand nutrition and physical-activity education programs that serve limited resource audiences. The Iowa Nutrition Education Network, administered by the Iowa Department of Public Health, offers the grants. Contact Marilyn Jones at the Iowa Dept. of Public Health for information and an application. Call 800-532-1579 or Email [majones@idph.state.ia.us](mailto:majones@idph.state.ia.us). Please include mailing address, fax and telephone number. Applications are due each May.

## **Iowa Science Foundation: Iowa Academy of Science**

The Iowa Science Foundation (ISF) is a state-supported program administered by the Iowa Academy of Science for the purpose of furthering science in Iowa. To this end, the ISF provides small grants of up to \$5000 to support one-year projects proposed by individuals or organizations. [www.iren.net/ias/isf.htm](http://www.iren.net/ias/isf.htm)

## **Iowa Arts Council: Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs**

The Iowa Arts Council has a number of grant opportunities ranging from small grants (up to \$1500) to large cultural grants (up to \$25000). Grant areas include Artists in Schools/Community, Arts in Education, Mini-Grants, Operation Support Grants, Project Grants for Artists, Traditional Art Mini-Grants, and Project Grant for Organizations. Many of the mini grants are awarded monthly. [www.culturalaffairs.org/iac/](http://www.culturalaffairs.org/iac/)

## **"Iowa's Promise...Our Youth" Grant Program: Iowa Commission on Volunteer Services**

Applications due March 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

To encourage local youth groups in Iowa to partner with at least one other community group to plan and carry out a community service or community improvement project and submit a report at completion so other communities can replicate the project. Any combination of youth groups/community groups in Iowa can apply for grants up to \$250. This can be two or more youth groups (4-H clubs, Scouts, FFA, church groups, community groups, school groups) or one youth group and one adult group (church group, community group, school group). Partnerships may be two youth groups, youth and parents, youth and senior citizens, etc. If a youth group partners with an adult group, preference will be given to those grant applications indicating the youth group is taking the leadership role in the project. This is a grant provided by the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service and administered by Iowa State University Extension, 4-H Youth Development. For more information, contact: Sue Bogue (515-294-1533) or Wendy Brock (515-294-1607) at the State 4-H Office. Visit their website to download application information:

[www.state.ia.us/ided/crd/icvs/](http://www.state.ia.us/ided/crd/icvs/)

## **Home Depot**

Each Home Depot has funds set aside for community projects and many of them will send out a volunteer crew for work projects. Contact your local Home Depot store.

## **Keep Iowa Beautiful Funds**

Applications due December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year

The primary criteria for determining funding priorities is the anticipated long-term effectiveness of a project to clean up or prevent litter, improve waste management or recycling efforts, beautify a site, prevent illegal dumping or eliminate public nuisances. Projects are funded on a grant basis and no matching funds are required. However, the higher degree of match, the more likely a project will be approved. Applications for Keep Iowa Beautiful grants are attached or may be obtained on the DOT's Web site [www.dot.state.ia.us/forms/index.htm](http://www.dot.state.ia.us/forms/index.htm) <<http://www.dot.state.ia.us/forms/index.htm>> or by calling Kathy



Ridnour at 515-239-1713. A copy can also be found on the Keep Iowa Beautiful Web site at [keepiowabeautiful.com](http://keepiowabeautiful.com).

### ***Metro Waste Authority Grant Program***

The MWA Grant Program offers a reimbursement (up to \$2,500 per project) to schools, businesses, public and private groups/clubs, and neighborhood associations for projects with an environmental focus, from litter clean-ups to school recycling programs. Projects that qualify for funding include: Electronics recycling, anti-graffiti programs, efforts to oppose illegal dumping, community clean-ups, assistance with efforts to end open burning, assistance with disaster debris management, and watershed protection initiative. For more information on the grant program, visit [www.mwatoday.com/abo\\_grant.html](http://www.mwatoday.com/abo_grant.html). Groups interested in applying for funding should contact MWA at 244-0021 to receive an application or download the attached pre-approval form. Projects must take place in MWA's service area.

### ***Neighborhood Grants for Growth: sponsored by Making Connections / Annie E. Casey Foundation***

The goal of Neighborhood Grants for Growth is to support projects that enable people in our community to build relationships, increase civic participation, and strengthen resident leadership. They fund projects that are started and carried out by neighborhood residents, that bring people together and encourage communication, that provide creative solutions to community problems, and that improve the quality of life for families. You can download an application at [www.makingconnectionsdm.org](http://www.makingconnectionsdm.org) or contact Teva Dawson at 323-8907 or [tdawson@dmgov.org](mailto:tdawson@dmgov.org).

### ***Grants Central Station: sponsored by State of Iowa Information and Technology Department***

Grants Central Station includes a searchable Directory of Iowa Grant Programs and links to Federal grants and foundation funding. The site also contains information helpful to novice grant seekers, including grant writing resources, training, technical assistance, and upcoming workshops offered by state grant-making agencies. This is not a comprehensive listing but provides a useful starting point for grantseekers looking for additional resources. As Grants Central Station expands, users can apply for state grants through online applications. Use this site as an aid in exploring grant opportunities and developing proposals. [www.iagrants.org/](http://www.iagrants.org/)

## **National Grants for Community Greening Efforts**

### ***National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grants***

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation funds projects to conserve and restore fish, wildlife, and native plants through challenge grant programs, small grants programs and special grant programs. The Foundation awards grants to projects that address priority actions promoting fish and wildlife conservation and the habitats on which they depend, work proactively to involve other conservation and community interests, leverage Foundation-provided funding, and evaluate project outcomes. Federal, state, and local governments, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations are welcomed to apply for a general challenge grant throughout the year. Visit <http://www.nfwf.org/> for more information about the various grant programs.

### ***National Gardening Association: Youth Garden Grants, Healthy Sprouts Awards, & Dutch Bulb Awards***

The National Gardening Association awards 400 *Youth Garden Grants* to schools, neighborhood groups, community centers, camps, clubs, treatment facilities, and intergenerational programs throughout the United States.

Each grant consists of an assortment of quality tools, seeds, and garden products generously contributed by leading companies from the lawn and garden industry. *Healthy Sprouts Awards* support school garden programs that use the garden to teach about nutrition and the issue of hunger in the United States. Award recipients will receive a range of tools, seeds and garden products. Additionally, five of the 25 award winners will also receive \$500 cash and \$200 gift certificates to Gardener's Supply Company. *Dutch Bulb Awards*: Each year 500 schools are awarded with packages of 200 premium Dutch flower bulbs. Visit [www.kidsgardening.com](http://www.kidsgardening.com) to download an application for any of the 3 grants.



***Captain Planet Foundation***

Foundation funds projects that promote understanding of environmental issues. They focus on projects that has hands-on involvement and involves children and young adults (K-12). Grants awards range from \$250 to \$2500. [Captain Planet Foundation](#), 1 CNN Center 6 North, Atlanta, GA 30303 Email: [Captain.Planet.Foundation@turner.com](mailto:Captain.Planet.Foundation@turner.com), [www.captainplanetfdn.org](http://www.captainplanetfdn.org)



# Community Garden Fundraising Projects

## Cutting Garden

A garden of annuals, perennials, herbs and shrubs that hold up well when cut for arrangements.

### Advantages

- Most annual flower seeds are inexpensive to purchase and provide a lot of plants per seed packet
- Flowers add beauty to the garden and can even be grown within the vegetable garden
- They are as easy to grow as vegetables and require the same conditions, i.e. sunny location, average soil
- Perennials (including herbs) add permanent plantings to your garden
- Flowers are a valued and unique item at farmer's markets and can be sold at a good profit

### Disadvantages

- Eye-catching flowers may be tempting to vandals, causing a loss of profits
- If you don't sell all of the flowers, you can't eat them, as you can with vegetables
- Need to pay taxes on non-consumable items

### Resources

- ISU Extension Publications\* –NCR 556 Growing Perennials, PM 1295G Alternative Ag Enterprises-Herbaceous Perennials
- Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship\* has list of who to contact to sell at any Iowa farmer's market

## Unique Vegetables

Heirloom (vegetables that were grown in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries); vegetables not commonly sold at grocery stores (Mesclun lettuce mix); or specialty patches (pumpkin, gourds, strawberries, colored corn)

### Advantages

- Heirloom seed can be saved from year to year eliminating the need to buy new seeds every year
- Heirloom and unique vegetables are currently popular and would be very marketable at a farmer's market
- Heirlooms come in a wide range of colors, shapes and sizes i.e. striped tomatoes, purple beans
- Many heirlooms taste better
- Many heirlooms are more resistant to disease and pests, which reduces crop loss and is important for organic gardeners

### Disadvantages

- Heirloom and specialty seeds are more expensive than hybrid seeds
- Need an adventurous customer base or the ability to educate customers

### Resources

- Seed Savers Exchange  
R.R. 3, Box 239  
Decorah, IA 52101
- See Iowa Dept. of Agriculture and Land Stewardship website\*

## Garden Tours/Classes

Offer tours of the garden or classes and workshops in the garden.

### Advantages

- Inexpensive to run, so you keep most of your profits
- Using readily available knowledge base
- Promotes garden and opens up the possibility of people sponsoring or donating to the garden

### Disadvantages

- Advertising and printing costs
- Need to be able to market program

**Fruit and Nut Trees** – Trees or bushes that provide an edible crop of fruits or nuts.

**Advantages**

- Fruits and nuts are a unique item to sell at a farmer's market
- Trees are beautiful permanent plantings
- Pest or disease attacks on nut trees are rarely lethal
- Could be a u-pick operation to lower labor input

**Disadvantages**

- Start-up money is necessary
- Nuts have to be cured (dried) for 1-3 months after harvesting
- Trees have to be 3-7 years old before they start producing a crop
- Nut trees need only to be pruned regularly, but fruit trees require a commitment to pruning, monitoring and maintenance

**Resources**

- ISU Extension Publications\* – PM 175 Home Fruit Insect & Disease Management
- See Iowa Dept. of Agriculture and Land Stewardship website\*

**Value Added Garden Products** - Products such as salsa or crafts

**Advantages**

- Greater profits, items worth more than if the individual ingredients were sold separately.

**Disadvantages**

- Need special permits for selling
- Need space to make and store the products
- Labor-intensive

**Resources**

- Polk Co. Public Works Health Division, Inspector
- Iowa Department of Revenue
- San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners (S.L.U.G.) website—[www.slug-sf.org](http://www.slug-sf.org). or call 415-285-SLUG
- See Iowa Dept. of Agriculture and Land Stewardship website\*

**Honey** - Product of honeybees

**Advantages**

- Boosts garden production
- Only requires a few hours of labor per year
- Can get as much as 100-200 lbs. of honey per hive, but 50 lbs. is average

**Disadvantages**

- Start up costs
- You **will** get stung; avoid beekeeping if you are allergic to bee venom
- Requires some knowledge and regular upkeep
- Must check local zoning laws; bees' flyway must not interfere with livestock or people

**Resources**

- ISU Extension Publications\* - PM 1295P Beekeeping

Try selling the above products at farmer's markets, restaurants, stores and at the agency sponsoring the garden.

# Gardening Methods

Organic Gardening Basics



Sample Rules: Managing Your Community Garden

Square Foot Gardening

Companion Planting

Mulching

Composting

Gardening with Native Plants

Things to Do in Your Garden

Planting and Harvesting Times

# Organic Gardening Basics

(Information from Organicgardening.com)

## What does it mean to garden organically?

- Don't use synthetic fertilizers or pesticides on plants
- Think of your plants as part of a whole system within Nature that starts in the soil and includes the water supply, people, wildlife and even insects
- Work in harmony with natural systems
- Minimize and continually replenish any resources the garden consumes
- Regularly add organic matter (compost) to the soil
- Choose plants suited to the site

## How do I get healthy soil?

- Regularly replenish the nutrients your plants use
- Mix organic matter (preferably compost) into the soil whenever possible,
- Get a soil test -The results of your test will tell you the soil's pH and what nutrients are out of balance. See "Soil Testing" section of this publication.
- Ideal garden soil is dark-colored, smells kind of sweet, compresses into a loose lump in your hand when moist, and is full of earthworms.

## How can I control weeds without herbicides?

- Mulch: Blanket the ground around your plants with shredded leaves, straw, dry grass clippings, wood or bark chips, newspaper or other degradable material, and that layer of mulch will block light from reaching weeds and stop or slow their growth. (Mulch also conserves moisture and builds your soil as it decomposes.) See "Mulching" section of this publication.
- Buy a good hoe designed for weeding, such as a stirrup or diamond style hoe, which allows you to slice off weeds below the soil surface.
- Make sure that weeds do not go to flower. They make hundreds, if not thousands, of seeds per plant, each of which could become a weed next year.

## How can I manage insects without pesticides?

- Take some time to really watch what the insects are doing. Are they actually destroying the plant or just nibbling it a bit? Many plants can outgrow minor damage.
- Grow plants suited to the site and they'll be less stressed out.
- Don't let them be too wet, too dry or too shaded.
- Design a diverse garden, so that pests of a particular plant won't decimate an entire section of the garden.
- Encourage the natural predators of pest insects to hunt in your garden
- Grow plants with small blossoms like sweet alyssum and dill, which attract predatory insects who feed on flowers' nectar between attacks on pests.
- Try barriers such as row covers, netting and plant collars for prevention
- If you must take aggressive action, try *Bacillus thuringiensis*, a naturally occurring bacteria that you apply to your plants to disrupt the digestion of caterpillars and other leaf-eaters.
- Horticultural oils, insecticidal soaps and garlic and/or hot pepper sprays also work well against many pests.
- Try diluting Ivory Liquid dishwashing detergent with water to a 1 to 2% solution for a homemade soap spray
- Look for problems before they occur (check leaves for eggs and destroy them).



- Make successive sowings, so that plants are at different stages. When the insects attack one plant, another is just sprouting.
- Try making a baking soda spray (baking soda and water).

### **How can I control plant diseases without fungicides?**

- Choose varieties that resist them—look on the tags at the garden center or in catalog descriptions for mention of disease resistance.
- Be sure to put those plants in the conditions they thrive in, because a stressed-out plant is more susceptible to disease.
- Plan your garden with enough room to accommodate full-grown plants, because water evaporates more slowly and air doesn't circulate well among crowded plants.
- Water your garden beds deeply and then allow the top level of soil to dry out before watering again.
- If diseases do appear, remove afflicted leaves (or entire plants) from your garden as soon as possible.

## **Applicable ISU Publications**

Available at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/pubs/ga.htm>.

PM 666 Weed Management in the Home Garden [September 1996]

PM 683 Composting Yard Waste [March 1993]

RG 201 Integrated Pest Management for Vegetable Gardens [April 1999]

RG 206 Questions About Composting [Reprinted March 1997]

RG 207 Nonchemical Pest Control for the Home Lawn and Garden [September 1996]

RG 209 Organic Mulches for Gardens and Landscape Plantings [June 1997]

SUL 12 Using Mulches in Managed Landscapes [August 2001]

**Helpful Website: The Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) at [www.mosesorganic.org](http://www.mosesorganic.org)**

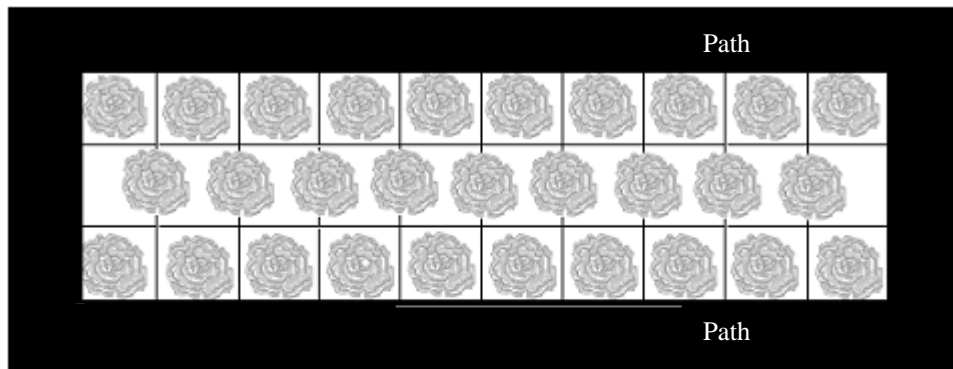
# Square Foot Gardening

When people think of a garden, they typically envision lots of straight rows of vegetables separated by wide paths. In that garden, however much of the space is wasted on those paths that often fill with weeds. An alternative planting method could help you increase yields and spend less time weeding. Mel Bartholomew details the concept of “square-foot gardening” in his book with the same title.

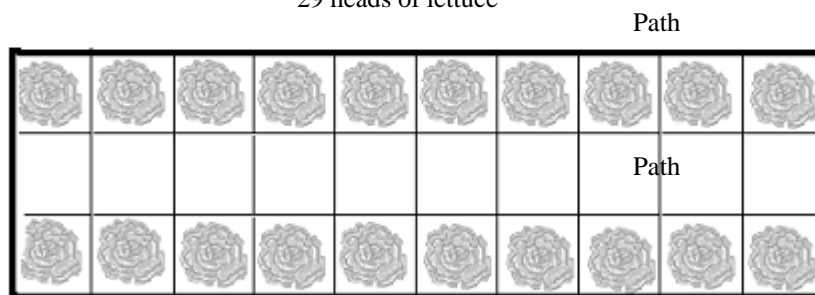
A square-foot garden ideally consists of a 3 by 3-foot raised bed filled with lots of organic matter. The bed area can then be divided into 9 square-foot sections in which crops are planted according to their mature size. However, the concept can be reconfigured to work in your community garden by creating the 3 x 3-foot areas divided by wood chip paths, or connected together to make 3-foot wide rows. What it all really boils down to is the square-foot space and how big the plant gets. For example, a single square foot can accommodate 1 corn plant or 4 heads of lettuce or 9 bush bean plants or 16 radishes. For larger crops, you can go outside the lines and accommodate a single tomato in a 3 by 3-foot space, or broccoli in a 2 by 2-foot space. Bartholomew’s books detail the proper spacing for many plants or you can visit the Square-Foot Gardening web site at [www.squarefootgardening.com](http://www.squarefootgardening.com) for more information.

Some benefits of using this system include: increasing yields in the same amount of garden space because it is better utilized; less weeding and watering because the proper spacing of plants creates a natural canopy which prohibits weed growth and holds moisture in the soil; water and nutrients are conserved by applying only to the areas that are planted; and succession planting is easier because you just have to fill in the empty square. Square-foot gardening is also an excellent way to apply math concepts in the school garden. Kids will enjoy seeing division, geometry, and measurement come to life in the garden.

Consider using this system if you have minimal space to work with or want to maximize your yield from the space that you do have.



29 heads of lettuce



20 heads of lettuce



# Companion Planting

Some plants enhance each other's growth when planted near each other while other plants actually interact antagonistically. Knowing these relationships can help you to design a garden with enhanced productivity. You can even learn to select for certain "weeds" that might help the growth of desirable plants. A variety of resources on this topic are available. For a start, try *How to Grow More Vegetables* by John Jeavons.

## Mulching

Garden work such as weeding and watering can be a relaxing task, however most people prefer to spend their garden time harvesting and enjoying the beauty. If you are one who doesn't see much relaxation in weeding and watering, you can do some things to cut down on those chores. By following the square-foot gardening method, you will be a step ahead, by only needing to weed the paths and water the plants. Another thing you can do is apply mulch to your garden. By mulching around shrubs and trees, flower beds and the vegetable garden, you can save labor and help nurture your plants by limiting drought and weed stress.

The main reasons to mulch include:

- Retain soil moisture
- Keep down weeds
- Add organic matter to the soil as the mulch breaks down over time
- Keep dirt from splashing on vegetables and flowers
- Prevent freezing and thawing in winter which is especially harsh on strawberries and perennials
- Keep potato tubers, carrot shoulders and onion bulbs covered to prevent development of green color and off flavors

There are many kinds of mulch materials to choose from. When deciding which one to apply, consider what kind of plants you are mulching and the availability and cost of the mulch material. Although rocks are considered mulch, you would not want to put them around tomatoes, but they would be proper around a shrub border. The cheapest, most readily available mulch materials that work well in all garden settings are shredded leaves (pile them up and run a mower over them a few times), shredded bark, wood chips, grass clippings (if they don't contain chemicals), hay, straw, and compost. The City's free compost works well. You can pick up more on Harriet St., east off of SE 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Bring a shovel and take it home in a bag or bucket. It's open all the time. Black plastic has also become a popular mulch used around tomatoes, peppers, and melons. It not only reduces weeds, but helps to keep the soil warmer around the plants. You can buy it by the roll in garden centers or catalogs.

Mulching your garden is the most time-saving thing that you can do and your plants will be healthier too. Be sure to lay the mulch down on soil that has already been weeded and to apply a 2"-3" layer. You will be happy you did.

### Mulch choices at a glance

#### Annual flower beds

Cocoa-bean hulls (costly)  
Grass clippings (free)  
Leaves (shred first)  
Pine needles (may make soil acidic)

#### Perennial flower beds

Bark (breaks down slowly, attractive)  
Cocoa-bean hulls  
Pine needles  
Wood chips

#### Raspberries

Corncobs (break up, breaks down slowly)  
Grass clippings  
Leaves  
Sawdust (decomposes quickly, may intake nutrients)  
Wood chips

#### Roses

Bark  
Cocoa-bean hulls  
Wood chips

#### Strawberries

Straw

#### Trees and Shrubs

Bark  
Corncobs  
Leaves  
Pine needles  
Sawdust  
Wood chips

#### Vegetable gardens

Grass clippings  
Leaves  
Newspapers  
Pine needles  
Straw



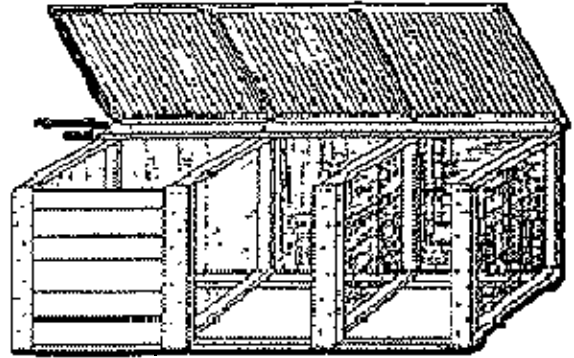
# Composting

## Here's what you need:

- Carbon-rich “brown” materials, like fall leaves, straw, dead flowers from your garden and shredded newspaper;
- Nitrogen-rich “green” materials, like grass clippings, plant-based kitchen waste (vegetable peelings and fruit rinds, but no meat scraps), or barnyard animal manure (even though its color is usually brown, it's full of nitrogen like the other “green” stuff);
- A shovelful or two of garden soil; and
- A site that's at least 3 feet long by 3 feet wide.

## Here's what to do:

- Start by spreading a several inch thick layer of coarse, dry brown stuff, like straw or cornstalks or leaves, where you want to build your pile.
- Top that with several inches of green stuff.
- Add a thin layer of soil.
- Add a layer of brown stuff.
- Moisten the three layers.
- Continue layering green stuff and brown stuff with a little soil mixed in until the pile is 3 feet high. (If it takes awhile before you have enough material to build the pile that high, don't worry—just keep adding to the pile until it gets to at least 3 feet high.)
- Every couple weeks, use a garden fork or shovel to turn the pile, moving the stuff at the center of the pile to the outside and working the stuff on the outside to the center of the pile. Keep the pile moist, but not soggy. When you first turn the pile, you may see steam rising from it. This is a sign that the pile is heating up as a result of the materials in it decomposing. If you turn the pile every couple weeks and keep it moist, you will see earthworms throughout the pile and the center of the pile turning into black, crumbly, sweet-smelling soil. When you have enough finished compost in the pile to use in your garden, shovel out the finished compost and start your next pile with any material that hasn't fully decomposed in the previous one. Do you need a compost bin to compost? No. If the pile is at least 3 by 3 by 3 feet, it will have enough mass to decompose in just a pile without a bin. Many gardeners buy or build compost bins, however, because they keep the pile neat. Some are designed to make turning the compost easier or protect it from soaking rains.



<http://mainegov-images.informe.org/spo/recycle/clipart/composting/3Bin.gif>

## Applicable ISU Publications

Available at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/pubs/ga.htm>.

PM 683 Composting Yard Waste [March 1993]

RG 206 Questions About Composting [Reprinted March 1997]

# Gardening with Native Plants

Gardening with native plants can provide many benefits. Generally, native gardens require less maintenance than non-native gardens due to the fact that native plants are well-adapted to the weather and soil conditions of Iowa. Native won't need watering (even during long, hot summers), but they can tolerate and even help absorb the rainfall we can receive. Additionally, native plants are perennial and will therefore not need to be planted year after year. Finally, native plants do not need to be fertilized or treated with herbicides and pesticides like many non-native plants. Though some weeds may make their way into your native garden, most will be able to be controlled through mulching and some regular hand weeding. Their reduced maintenance makes native gardens an environmentally friendly time-saving approach to beautifying your landscape.

Use the following tips to start planning your native garden:

- Pick a sunny place in your yard. (Note: Some native plants do grow in shade, but most prefer sun. If you only have shady spots, look for woodland plants.)
- Examine your soil to help you determine which plants you will need. If your soil is wet year-round, pick wetland plants to go in your space. If your soil is sometimes wet and sometimes dry, pick plants that grow in mesic soil. If your soil is always dry, pick plants that grow in xeric soil.
- For ornamental gardens, use shorter plants and add a variety of textures and colors.
- Use a mix including mostly forbs (flowering plants) and add grasses later. Forbs will be more "showy" and will make your garden look less "weedy" to the uneducated eye. Grasses are necessary to the establishment of your root base, but should be added in moderation.

When you get ready to plant your native garden, you can plant either seeds or plugs. For ornamental gardens, plugs are a better choice, because they will be easier to identify and weed around. Additionally, you can mulch around them to reduce weeds. If you are planting a large plot of natives, seed is a cheaper and easier option. If you plant your natives by seed, you will need to maintain your planting with a regiment of mowing (and maybe even burning) instead of hand weeding.

Planting a native garden is a beautiful way to make a contribution to the improvement of the environment. Use the resources listed here to start planning your native garden today!

# Things to Do in Your Garden

## January

Keep a gardener's calendar to remember good planting dates, when different insects became a problem or when and how much you harvested.

List who was involved, how, when and where. Include any photos, flyers & news clippings.

To better your gardening knowledge with little money, go to the Botanical Center or the library and pick up an arm full of books, videos and class schedules

Start seeds of basil, parsley, sage, or your favorite herbs in small pots. Place them in a sunny window and harvest as needed. The fresh herbs are more delicious and cheaper than store-bought.

Start a garden journal to track where and what you plant. Record your design & expenses.

Place cut Christmas tree branches over perennials susceptible to winter injury.

Check overwintering cannas, dahlias and gladioli. Remove any that are rotting.

Turn houseplants weekly to prevent uneven growth. Do not use softened water.

Keep adding kitchen scraps (no meat or dairy products though) and fireplace ashes to the compost pile. Give it a turn and see the steam, that means your pile is breaking down nicely. It may need a little extra water during a dry winter.

The Botanical Center offers free vegetable gardening classes. We are covering the basics and more advanced topics. You are required to register at least two community gardeners for the classes, but send more because it will be hands-on instruction with lots of fun!

## February

Start seeds of onions and leeks indoors at the beginning of the month. By mid-Feb, start seeds of cool-weather crops such as broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, Swiss chard and parsley indoors. Seedlings can be transplanted outdoors in early April.

Cold frames and floating row covers allow you to plant vegetables weeks earlier than usual. If you have a cold frame, plant radishes, spinach and lettuce in there this month.

Make new trellises, planters, cold frames, plant supports or any other outdoor structures for your garden. This is also a good time to repair broken tools from last year.

Save your ashes! Wood ashes can be added to your compost pile or to your beds in the spring.

Force branches of pussy willow, apple, plum, forsythia, redbud, or magnolia mid-February for indoor bloom. Prune off a branch and bring indoors in a vase of water.

Test left-over garden seed for germination by placing 10 seeds between moist paper towels or cover with a thin layer of soil. Keep seeds warm and moist. If less than 6 seeds germinate, then new seed should be purchased.

Where and what are you going to plant this year? Consider planting for continuous harvest, rotating where crops were planted last year to prevent disease, and shady areas of your garden. Graph your garden layout in order to get the proper plant spacing. Check out the computer program at the Botanical Center that helps in designing gardens.



# Things to Do in Your Garden

## March

Although you can get established seedlings later on, you can start onions, leeks, broccoli, cabbage & cauliflower from seed early in the month. Mid-month, start petunia, celosia, periwinkle, nicotiana, peppers, eggplant, and parsley from seed. At the end of the month plant tomato seeds.

If you have a cold frame or other season extending devices, plant lettuce, spinach, and radishes now for spring salads in a couple of months.

Prune fruit trees, raspberries, currants and gooseberries and grape vines this month.

Fertilize asparagus and rhubarb an organic or chemical fertilizer this month.

## April

In early April, start tomatoes and pepper plants indoors from seed and set out unprotected plants in mid-May. With season extending devices, put out tomatoes, peppers and other heat-loving plants mid-month.

Take a soil test after frost disappears. Your local extension office can provide you with bags and forms for submitting garden soil samples for testing. A test will tell you soil pH, organic material, and other information essential to garden success.

Plant seedlings of broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, leeks, chives, tarragon, parsley, sage, thyme, oregano, potatoes and onion sets outdoors in mid April.

## May

May 10 is the average last day of frost in Des Moines. Avoid planting warm season plants like tomatoes, peppers, basil and eggplant until that date or use season extending devices if planting earlier than May 10.

Allow foliage of spring-blooming bulbs to remain in place after flowers fade. Leaves manufacture the food reserves, which are stored in the bulb for the next year's blooms.

Make sure the perennial beds are very clearly marked so they are not tilled or buried with compost. Make sure all dead debris is cleaned out of your perennial bed.

Clean out birdhouses before the new tenants arrive later this Spring.

Dye eggs using plant materials like onion skins, beets, coffee, carrot tops, tea, calendula petals, cabbage leaves, spinach, or turmeric. Be experimental. Bring two cups of water to a boil, add plant materials plus one tablespoon of vinegar, and simmer the mixture for at least 10 minutes. Add hard-boiled eggs and check them periodically for deepness of color. You may also boil the eggs in the water when you add the other ingredients, increase cooking time to 15-20 minutes. Check out [kidsgardening.com](http://kidsgardening.com) for more tips on dying with plants.

Plant directly in the soil, seeds of peas, carrots, lettuce, spinach, radishes, turnips, beets, greens, endive, Swiss chard, and other cool-loving crops. Plant radishes, lettuce and spinach every 2 weeks until hot weather strikes in June.

Dig new gardens when weather permits. Be careful about digging and working the soil when it's wet. You will end up with large clods that dry into rock-hard clumps.

Pick rhubarb! Select thick, brightly colored green or red stalks in the center of the plant. Pull and snap the stalks below the ground. Discard leaves; they contain poisonous compounds and should not be consumed. Stalks can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. Stop harvesting in mid June

All types of vegetable plants and flowers can be planted outdoors this month. Plant something new this year!

Pinch chrysanthemums and annual flowers such as petunias, snapdragons and marigolds to keep them compact and well-branched.



# Things to Do in Your Garden

Plant beans and sweet corn every two weeks to extend the season of harvest.

Thin seedlings of earlier planted crops such as carrots, beets, lettuce and spinach. Add the thinnings of these baby vegetables to a salad.

Post your sign. Naming the space can reduce vandalism and create a sense of ownership.

## June

Lettuce, radish and spinach will bolt (send up a long seed stalk) this month. When it bolts, the leaves become bitter, so pull plants and compost. Plant another crop in its place. Stop cutting asparagus and rhubarb.

Another planting of squash, sweet corn, beans and cucumbers can be made. In the latter part of June, start seeds of broccoli and cauliflower in a small bed. The transplants will then be planted in mid July for fall harvest.

## July

Now that the hectic period of planting is over, it's a good time to make a log and a map of what you've planted. And then keep records of how various things did in each location. It will help next year, especially in remembering where to rotate crops next year.

Keep an eye on pest problems, especially cabbage loopers on broccoli and cabbage, flea beetles on eggplant, tomatoes, potatoes or peppers, bean beetles, squash bugs and cucumber beetles. All of these can be controlled with homemade or purchased insecticidal soap. Spray plants thoroughly in the morning or late afternoon when the insects are most active.

Weed your garden diligently. It's far easier to control weeds when they're small and sparse.

Plant a 2<sup>nd</sup> crop of beets, radishes, chard, snap beans, summer squash, cucumbers. Keep the

## August

Plant a second crop of radishes, beets, peas, lettuce, spinach, kale, parsley, mustard greens, turnips, rutabagas and other cool weather crops early this month. Keep the seeds well watered in the hot weather.

Harvest onions after the tops yellow and fall over, then cure them in a warm, dry, well-

Place cages or stakes around tomatoes at planting time. They will grow quickly and you will not disturb the root system as much if done then. Cages are stronger and less work to maintain.

Assign specific people specific jobs to take care of areas that are shared such as a communal herb garden or pathways, etc.

All gardens in plot based community gardens should be planted by early June. Re-assign plots that have yet to be tended. Warn gardeners that have plots that become excessively weedy.

seeds and young seedlings watered. Replant areas where spring crops have been harvested and removed.

Keep up on harvesting . Leaving mature fruits on the plant signals it to stop production and can attract four-spotted sap beetles. Remove plants from the garden when they are through producing.

Plants bloom in order to set seed and reproduce. So remove spent flowers from marigolds, dahlias, zinnias, geraniums, and petunias. Plants will continue to branch out and produce more flowers.

Now is a good time to call area greenhouses and garden centers for plant and seed donations. It's ok to plant those bargain plants, just keep them well watered because their roots will be smaller.

ventilated area. The necks should be free of moisture when fully cured after about a week.

Pick beans, tomatoes, peppers, and squash often to encourage the plant to keep producing. Allow some peppers to remain on the plant later this month so that they will turn yellow or red, making them sweeter.



# Things to Do in Your Garden

## September

Plant spring-flowering bulbs, such as tulips and daffodils, beginning in late September. Planting them too early may cause them to sprout top-growth. However, plant them at least four to six weeks before the ground freezes for good root formation.

Dig and store tender flowers for winter storage. Gladiolus corms should be dug when leaves begin turning yellow. Caladiums, geraniums, and tuberous begonias should be lifted before killing frost. Dig canna and dahlia bulbs after heavy frost. For all, brush dirt off, allow to air dry, then pack in dry peat moss or vermiculite, and store in a cool location, like a basement.

Plant, transplant or divide peonies, daylilies, iris and phlox.

Harvest crops such as tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, melons and sweet potatoes before frost, or cover plants with newspaper, blankets, garden cloth, (not plastic) to protect them from light frost.

Remove plant debris from the garden to protect next year's planting from disease and insect build-up. Compost plant refuse and shredded leaves. Do not compost heavily-diseased plants, throw them away instead.

Sow a cover crop such as buckwheat, winter rye, hairy vetch or oats to add nutrients to the soil and prevent soil erosion over the winter.

## October

Store leftover garden seed in its packets in tightly sealed glass jar in a refrigerator.

Add organics such as compost, manure, and shredded leaves or grow a cover crop as an organic fertilizer. You need to add nutrients back to the soil each year.

Leave perennials alone until spring, providing a food and shelter source for animals and birds, as well as winter interest. If you would rather clean up the garden now, cut down stems after the first frost. Cut peonies to the ground now.

Expect the first frost in the first two weeks of October. Tender plants can be protected from the first few frosts with sheets or blankets. If you don't protect them, harvest all the warm season crops now.

To extend the harvest season for lettuce, spinach, greens and other cool-loving crops, cover in early Oct. with cold frames or other season-extending devices.

Make sure all tools are cleaned and inventoried. Make a list of what tools you need for next year. For tips and aid in cleaning and sharpening your tools contact the Tool Lending Library at 244-8665.

Plant spring-flowering bulbs and garlic all month. Try a new bulb that you have not grown before. Remember, it is ok to plant them underneath deciduous trees because they will bloom before the tree leaves-out in the spring.

Remove plant debris from the garden to protect next year's planting from insect and disease build-up. Compost plant refuse, but discard heavily diseased or infected plant material.



# Things to Do in Your Garden

## November

A cover crop of winter rye and buckwheat can still be planted if it's done as early in the month as possible

Have you planted your spring-flowering bulbs? If not, do this before the ground freezes. Pot paperwhites and narcissus for forcing indoors.

Mulch perennials and strawberries after the ground freezes. Shred your leaves and garden debris to use as mulch. Apply 6-8 inches deep.

## December

If possible, turn your pile. You may see steam, which indicates it is still hot and decomposing. Bring kitchen waste and ashes from your fireplace to the pile.

Design your greenspace for year-round color and interest. Evaluate your winter aesthetics. Does your community garden need an evergreen hedge or some tall prairie grasses that could double for a living fence? Benches, arbors and art in the garden can be nice focal points with a layer of snow. Some varieties of shrubs and crabapple trees with their fruits will provide color and food for wild birds.

Continue to remove weeds from the garden. They will be there in the spring if you leave them or seeds left will produce more weeds next year. Place all weeds, leaves and dead, annual and perennial foliage in the compost pile. Turn and water the compost pile to keep it working.

Repair and clean garden tools with 3 in 1 oil to prevent rust. Drain and bring in all of your garden hoses.

This is a good time to make repairs to tools, compost bins, fencing, water systems, benches, and so on.

Keep watering newly planted trees and perennials from this fall's Perennial Divide until ground freezes. The plants may not have leaves, but the roots need water to get well established.

Mulch orchard trees, shrubs, roses and other perennials once the ground has frozen. Pile shredded leaves, compost, wood chips or other natural mulch 2 inches high to prevent plants from "heaving" when ground freezes and thaws. Snow is also a good insulator for plants.

