

# GROWING

## *A Healthier Community* *Creating Your Own Community Garden Program*



HUB CITY FARMERS' MARKET / SPARTANBURG NUTRITION COUNCIL



# Community Garden Manual

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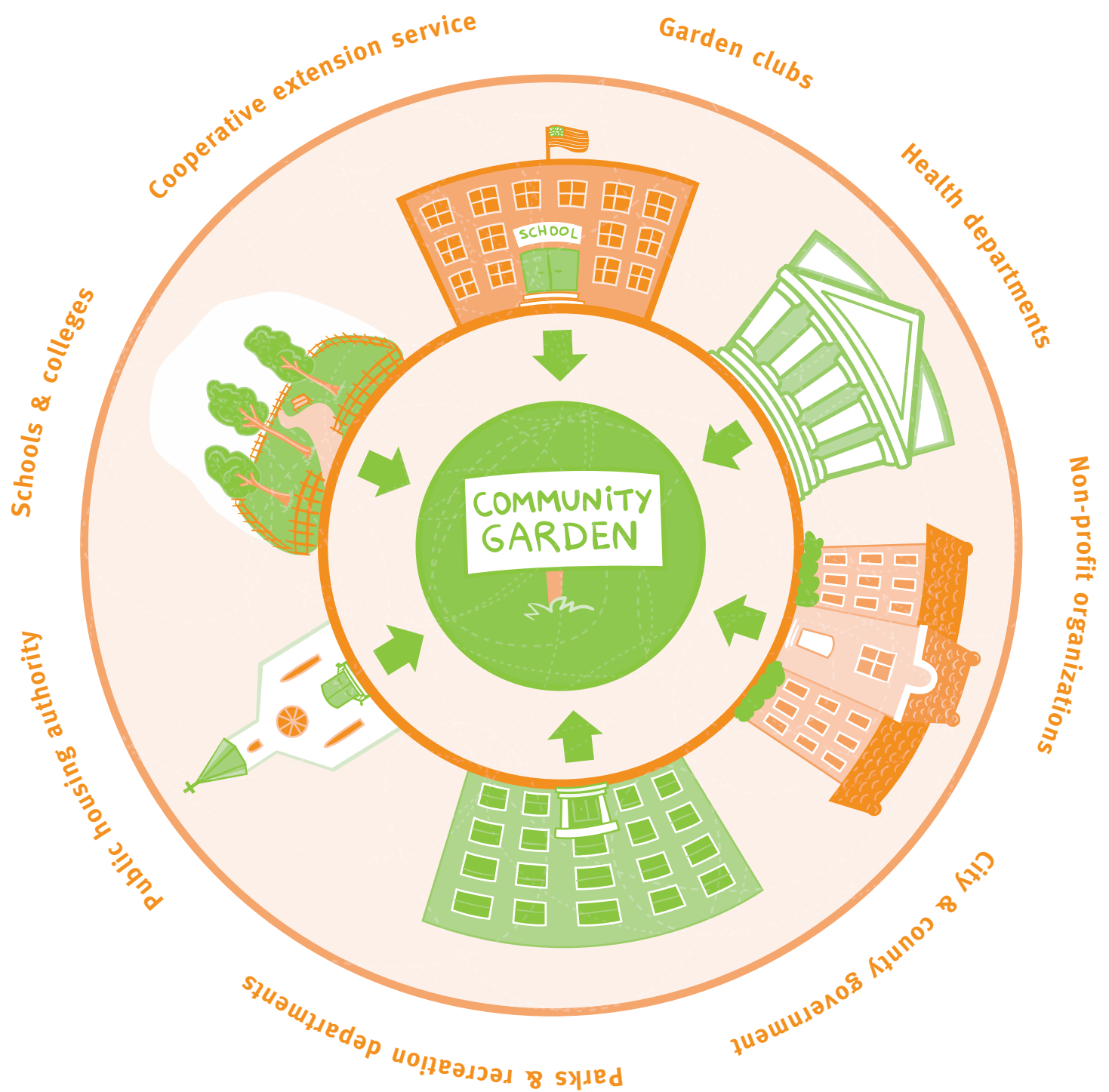


# Building Support

A WIDE RANGE OF PARTNERS CAN HELP IN CREATING A COMMUNITY GARDEN PROGRAM, AND BROAD COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND SUPPORT CAN HELP ENSURE THE PROJECT'S SUCCESS.

## RECRUITING PARTNERS

One of the first efforts of the lead organization and program managers should be to recruit community partners. Potential partners to consider include:



## SAMPLE LETTER

At the brainstorming session, begin by introducing yourself and your organization. Share a brief presentation that shows examples of successful gardens and additional information. Open the meeting for discussion to find out how each group can participate and contribute. Although you will want to have an idea of how each group can be involved so that you can lead a structured meeting, let the group discuss their ideas. It may work one way in one community, but completely differently in another.

Here's a sample letter to send to partners to encourage them to attend.

To \_\_\_\_\_:

The **INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME** is embarking on an exciting new initiative called the Community Garden Program, and we need your help!

The Community Garden Program is designed to increase the demand and availability of healthy foods, while encouraging physical activity. It offers a chance for community organizations such as schools, neighborhoods and churches to plan, plant and harvest fruit and vegetable gardens.

The program provides training, technical assistance and a variety of resources to the participants. There also are several activities and events that engage the community and empower participants to make additional changes to their environments.

Please join us for a brainstorming session on **INSERT DATE, TIME and LOCATION**. We welcome you to be a part of this collaborative community effort to help **INSERT** grow healthy!

Best regards,

**YOUR NAME, ORGANIZATION**



## GETTING THE WORD OUT

IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO SHARE YOUR GOALS AND THE PROGRESS OF YOUR WORK WITH THE COMMUNITY. THIS CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED IN A NUMBER OF WAYS.



### *Create simple messages about the project*

Start by developing a few statements that summarize the work you are doing. These statements should be brief and to-the-point, so they can be easily used for speaking to the press or to partners, and on printed materials.

#### **Here's an example of a statement that describes your project:**

Grow Healthy! The community garden program works to increase the demand and availability of healthy foods. The program helps community organizations plan, plant and harvest fresh fruits and vegetables. Participants receive training, assistance and the opportunity to implement a variety of activities.



### *Contact the local media*

A press release can be helpful, but personal contact with the media following the press release often increases your chances of getting attention. Approach all outlets of the local media. While local news stations and newspapers are most popular, local magazines and radio stations are also good outlets for your promotion.



### *Create an ad campaign*

There are many ways to get the word out about the community gardens project:

- Design posters and brochures to place in local hot spots such as neighborhood parks, schools, libraries, etc.
- Create a short documentary or news-style story about the program and put it on the free local access cable channel.
- Take out ads in local newspapers or on public transit if local media coverage is not ample.
- Consider mailing out postcards or email announcements.



### *Make contacts*

Attend community meetings to speak about and spread awareness of the program. City councils, school boards and PTAs are great venues for making people aware of your project. Many of the people at these meetings are in position to directly affect your results by either taking on a garden or helping to fund your program.

Get in touch with community outreach and other non-profit organizations to see if they would be interested in helping. The YMCA, Girl Scouts, local garden clubs, churches – many groups may be willing to participate as an opportunity for people of all ages to benefit from the community garden program.

Get in touch with local or regional gardening experts such as the Master Gardeners, and see if they will volunteer time to the project for gardening demonstrations and expert advice. Having an expert will help new participants avoid anxiety about not knowing how to garden.



# Organizing the Community

EACH GROUP PARTICIPATING IN YOUR PROGRAM NEEDS TO THINK THROUGH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS. GET TO KNOW YOUR PARTICIPANTS AND BE PREPARED TO HELP EACH SITE MAKE DECISIONS ON THESE TOPICS.

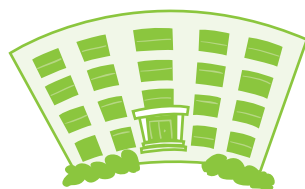
## MISSION AND PURPOSE

Although the primary purpose for the community garden is to help children and families eat healthier and engage in daily physical activity, each garden group must determine secondary goals. These goals may include beautification, social interaction, community development, etc.

## BUILDING SUPPORT

In addition to efforts of the lead organization, each garden needs to evaluate and build support for its site. Participants can begin by surveying the community or school involved in the garden, pass out flyers or call a meeting. If there is overall support, organize a planning meeting for potential community partners. Bring together a variety of individuals representing a cross-section of the community to brainstorm. Some key partners are:

- Garden clubs
- Schools & college
- Faith communities
- Nonprofits
- Local government
- Area businesses
- Housing organizations
- Neighborhood associations



area businesses



schools & colleges



local government

## GETTING THE JOB DONE

Each garden group should select a “plant manager” to serve as its primary representative and leader. The plant manager is responsible for serving as a liaison between the garden participants and the lead organization for the garden program. The plant manager oversees the garden’s resources, coordinates work days, organizes distribution of the harvest and handles required paperwork.

## PLANNING FOR A COMMUNITY GARDEN

Once a community garden group has been established and a plant manager selected, participants will need to create policies and document their decisions on a number of questions, including:

- What will be the regular meeting dates?
- Will participation in the garden be free or will it require dues or fees?
- What will be the garden work schedule?
- What materials will be needed? Which materials must be purchased and which can be obtained through donations?
- How will produce be distributed among participants, the community and food rescue?
- How will trash be removed from the garden site and who is responsible?
- What crops do the majority of participants want to grow?
- Will the garden will be organic (no pesticides or chemical fertilizers) or conventional?
- Determine a calendar or timeline for preparing the site, planning the garden layout, seed starting, planting, harvest and so forth.



## SITE SELECTION

The lead organization should conduct site visits to each community garden to help determine an optimal site for the garden plot. Both the lead organization and the participants should consider the following when choosing a site:

### What is the duration of sunlight?

A vegetable garden needs 6 hours of sun daily for fruiting crops such as corn, tomatoes, squash, peppers, etc. and 4 hours of sun daily for root and leafy crops such as greens, carrots and potatoes.

### Is the site level?

After a heavy rain, see how water flows on the land. A sloped plot will result in a washed out garden.

### Are there any underground utilities, sewage pipes, tanks, etc?

This is important to determine before digging. Contact the municipality or public works for assistance.

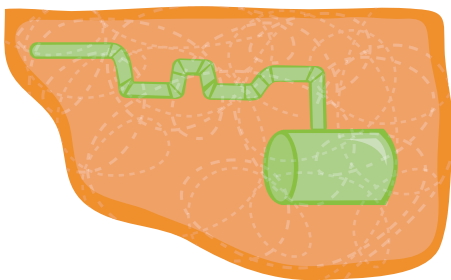
### What was the land used for in the past?

Determine if there could be contamination. If past uses cannot be determined, a soil test may be able to reveal the contents.

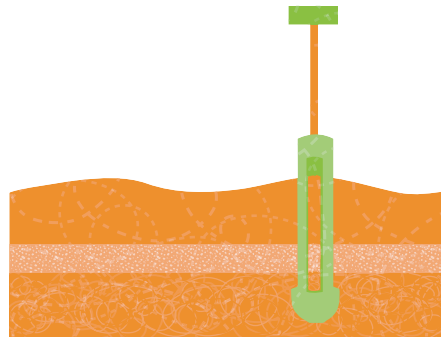
*duration of sunlight*



*is the site level*



*underground obstacles*



*soil testing*

# Selecting Participants

COMMUNITY GARDENS CAN BE ORGANIZED IN A VARIETY OF SETTINGS INCLUDING CHURCHES, NEIGHBORHOODS, SCHOOLS, AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS, COMMUNITY CENTERS AND MORE. THE LEAD ORGANIZATION WILL NEED TO ESTABLISH A PROCESS FOR DETERMINING COMMUNITY GARDEN PARTICIPANTS. HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTED REQUIREMENTS:

**Ask potential community garden groups to submit an application.** This will provide you with a foundation of information and it will also help the group think through its plans.

**Require each proposed garden site to submit the results of a soil test.** Soil tests can be conducted through your local cooperative extension service for a minimal fee. The results will tell the lead organization and the potential gardeners what the soil will need in order to grow healthy and productive plants and produce. Requiring a soil test can save everyone from a planting a garden that will not grow.

**Require at least 5 representatives of each garden to attend training.** Training can be extremely helpful. Involvement in the planning and education process will help develop commitment and give participants ownership in the garden.

**Ask potential participants to identify a water source.** An ample supply of water in close proximity to the garden is essential to a garden's success. The water supply must be planned for prior to participating in the Community Garden Program.

## Timeline and Procedure



BELOW IS A SUGGESTED TIMELINE TO HELP YOU PLAN AND IMPLEMENT YOUR GARDEN PROGRAM. IT ALSO OFFERS GUIDELINES FOR HOW TO PLAN FOR THE INVOLVEMENT OF YOUR PARTICIPANTS.

GARDEN PROGRAM	GARDEN PARTICIPANTS
<b>6 Months Prior to Planting:</b> Determine management Recruit partners and resources Stir interest	<b>6 Months Prior to Planting:</b> Show interest
<b>3 Months Prior:</b> Identify participants Hold training Conduct site visits Complete a pre-evaluation	<b>3 Months Prior:</b> Establish infrastructure Conduct a soil test Determine site Attend training
<b>1 Month Prior:</b> Begin promotion Publicize starting day	<b>1 Month Prior:</b> Amend soil Establish garden
<b>During Season:</b> Hold activities and events Develop communication forms	<b>During Season:</b> Hold activities and events
<b>Post Harvest:</b> Conduct post-evaluation Plan a harvest night	<b>Post Harvest:</b> Start post-harvest care

# Garden Training

## Layout and Design

The lead organization should help the participants determine how large the garden plot should be. A first time garden space may be planned at 250 square feet, which is manageable. A 400 square foot garden (20 x 20) requires a minimum of 30 minutes to get the garden started, then 30 minutes every 2-3 days.

## Building Your Garden

What kind of garden do you want to design? A traditional row garden has space between rows. This allows for growing a large variety of fruits and vegetables and harvesting a large quantity of produce. The traditional garden accommodates a greater number of people working and is flexible in its layout potential.

Its sandbox-like construction allows complete control of the soil since it sits on top of the ground. A raised bed can extend the growing season because the soil warms faster and cools slower. It typically requires less water and fertilizer and can yield a large harvest in a small space.

Whichever garden style you decide, design the garden as a meeting place that includes seating, shaded areas, tool storage, flowers (for pollinators) and a work bench. Participants should come together to draw up a diagram for the garden and decide on types of crops. Place the tall crops on the north side of the garden, so they will not shade the shorter vegetables. Document your garden layout annually, so you will know how to rotate your crops the following year.



# Buiding A Garden

## SITE PREPARATION

The design of the site and condition of the soil are critical ingredients to successful gardening. Soil is composed of minerals, sand, clay, loam, decaying organisms, living organisms, air and water. Plants grow stronger in good soil and are more resistant to disease.

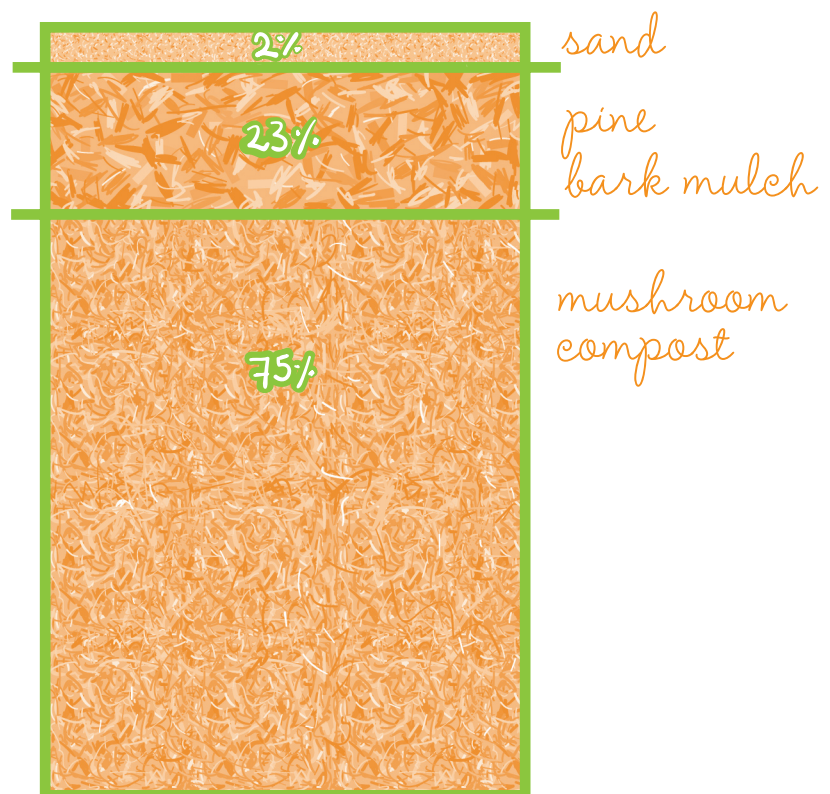
Start by cleaning all debris out of the garden. Remove weeds, grass and roots. Next, plow or till the soil. Once the soil is tilled, refer to your soil test results to determine what needs to be added. Be sure to allow at least two weeks for added material to work its way into the soil.

## COMPOSTING

Throughout the growing season, maintain a high content of organic matter up to 5 inches of matter such as leaves, straw, composted manure or compost. Organic matter holds water in soil, improves drainage, adds air space, improves soil structure, breaks down nutrients and provides food for earthworms and micro-organisms. There are several sources of organic matter in and around the home. For example, kitchen scraps and yard waste can be added to the compost. Do not add any organic matter that may contain disease or promote weed growth. Allow the garden to settle for a week before planting.

## SOIL MIXTURES

A variety of soil mixtures and conditioners are available commercially. However, it is simple to mix your own batch of premium garden soil in containers and raised beds. Combine 75% mushroom compost (wheat straw, peat moss, cottonseed meal, lime, cottonseed hulls, gypsum, corncobs, cocoa bean shells, chicken litter or horse stable bedding), 23% double-ground pine bark mulch soil conditioner and 2% sand.



## PLANTING

The time to plant your garden depends on where you live. Check your local university cooperative extension agency to determine your planting zone and get the planting charts for your area.

Calculate planting schedules by the suggested length of maturity on seed packs. Remember that planting instructions are based on row planting, not raised bed planting. When a crop matures, plant another that has time to mature within the season.

Create your planting design after checking with your local extension office for a list of plant compatibility. Certain types of plants do not grow well with others, whereas some benefit from the proximity of others. Group plants by length of growing period and plant tall to the north, shorter to the south.

## SAMPLE PLANTING CHART FOR COOL SEASON CROPS

Vegetable	Seed or Plant	Spacing (inches)	Planting Depth (inches)	Germinating Period Schedule (days)	Planting (dates)
Cabbage	Plant	6"	4-5"		8/30, 2/15
Collard	Plant	6"	4-5"		8/30, 2/15
Turnip	Seed	Sow	1/2"	5-10	9/15, 2/20
Kale Seed	Seed	Sow	1/2"	5-10	9/15, —
Onion	Bulb	3"	1 1/2"	5-10	10/30, 3/30
Lettuce	Plant/Seed	2" or Sow	3" or 1/4"	5-10	8/30, 3/15
Radish	Seed	3"	1/2"	5-10	9/30, 3/15
Spinach	Plant/Seed	3" or Sow	3" or 1/2"	5-10	9/30, 3/15

### SEEDS AND PLANTS

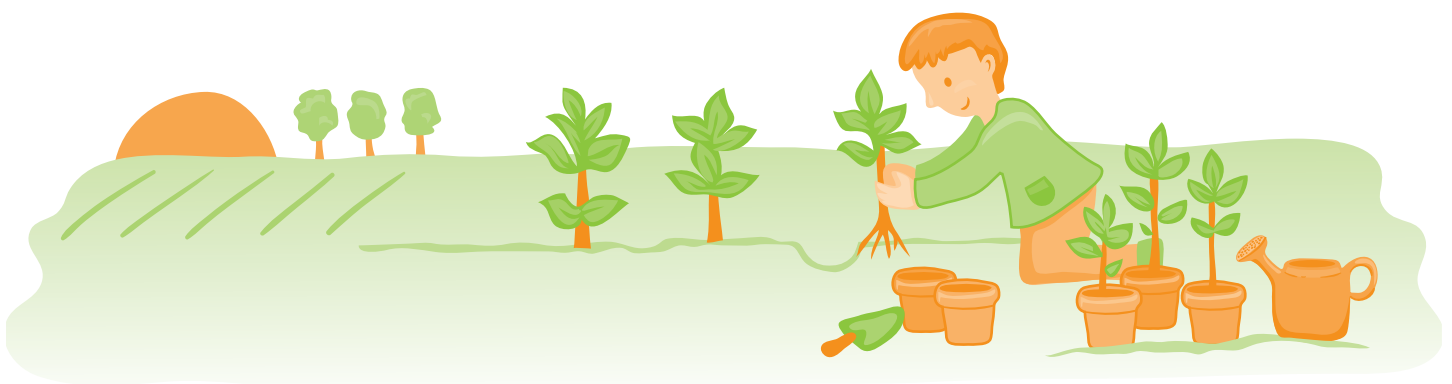
Quality seed and healthy plant selection can prevent future garden headaches. Select seed and plants from a reputable source. Shop for seeds at the start of the year (around January) and plants at the start of the season to ensure fresh seeds and a good selection.

When making your selections, consider plant maturity time. Look for a VFN number (verticillium wilt, fusarium and nematode disease resistance). Consider a crop's yield and the mature height of plants in relation to the space you have available. Some bush varieties offer higher yields with less space. Select dark green/stocky plants instead of leggy and blooming ones.

Seeds need moisture, light, humidity and warmth while plants need sunlight, carbon dioxide, water, nutrients and oxygen. Be sure to closely follow planting instructions on the packaging.

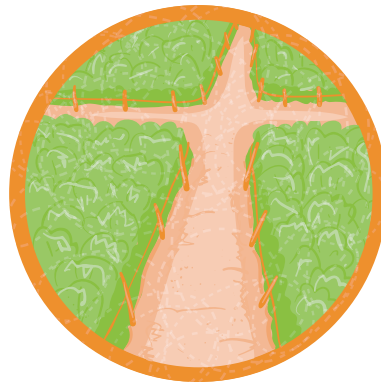
### TRANSPLANTING

A great way to get a head start is to begin seeds indoors and later transplate them to your garden. When transplanting seedlings you have started or plants from containers, check for healthy roots and to see if plants are free of disease and pestilence. Make sure to provide adequate water during transplanting. It is best to transplant in late afternoon or on a cloudy day. If you are transplanting tomatoes, eggplant and sweet potatoes, plant halfway up the stalk to prevent the plant from becoming leggy.





traditional row garden



square foot



vertical planting

## SPACING AND PLANTING METHODS

Be creative and efficient. Use a variety of methods to make the best of your garden space and accommodate your plant selections. Common methods of planting seeds include:

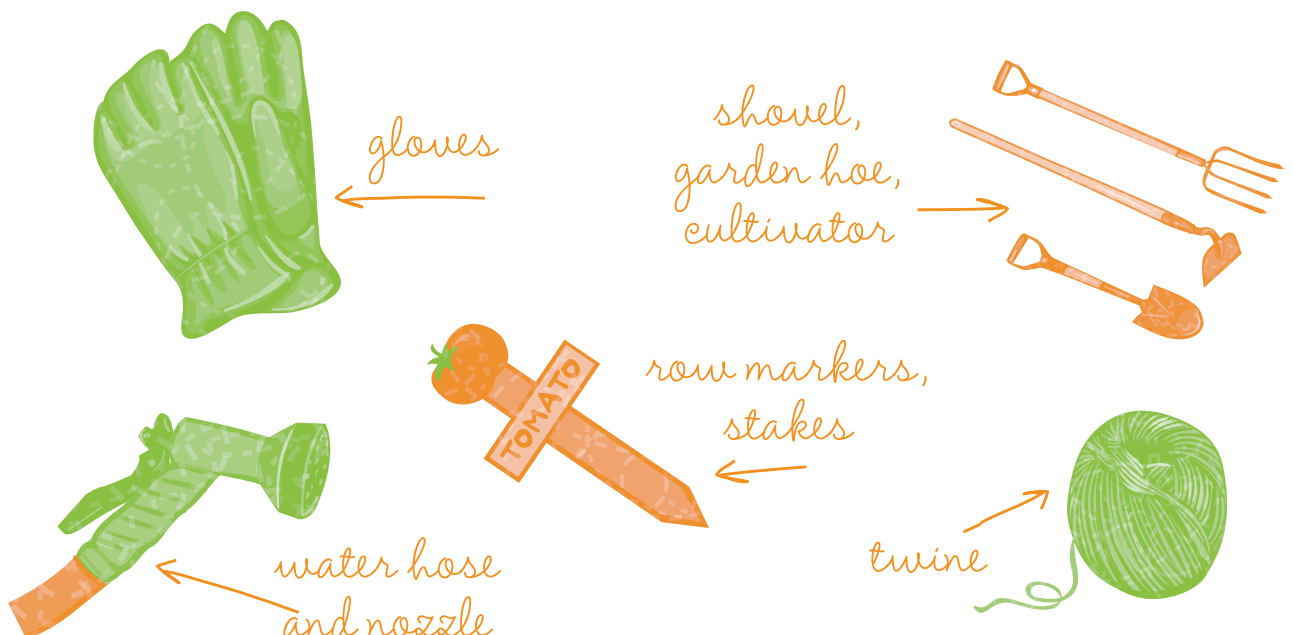
**Straight row planting:** Traditional rows or furrows that allow for pathways between the planted rows. This method makes it easy to get into the garden for cultivation, weeding and harvesting.

**Broadcasting:** Planting seeds in a band rather than a straight row. This method is particularly efficient when planting lettuces and other greens.

**Square foot:** The bed is sectioned off into square blocks using twine. One crop is planted in each block. Excellent method to use when working with kids.

**Vertical planting:** Using trellises to allow crops to climb.

## tools needed





# Caring for Your Garden

ONCE THE GARDEN IS PLANTED, IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN A CLEAN, EFFICIENT, HEALTHY, SAFE AND PRODUCTIVE GARDEN.



## WEEDS

Weeds compete for space, water, light and nutrients. They can also harbor insects and diseases. A small weed-free garden will produce more vegetables.

Develop a strategy to control weeds and grasses; regularly scheduled workdays help bring the group together to get the job done and are an excellent form of physical activity. Most gardens require about 90 minutes of maintenance per week. Pulling weeds is the most effective way to eliminate them. Avoid tilling under or cutting weeds. Develop a plan to control weeds during the garden's off season. A layer of untreated mulch/straw/grass clippings applied during the dormant season can help reduce weeds.



## IRRIGATION

Plants lose most of their yield potential due to over or under watering. Water the garden early in the day to limit evaporation. A good rule of thumb is to water a half inch to two inches of water per week. Place a rain gauge in the garden to measure the amount you have watered the garden. Check for dryness two inches below surface. Water close to the base of the plant (put the water near the roots). Consider soaker hoses and drip systems. Don't overwater; too much water can cause plants to rot.



## PEST CONTROL

Ninety-seven percent of insects are beneficial. Some pollinate the plants, while others help eliminate the bugs that harm the garden. Avoid chemical pest control. Pick off pests by hand; kids have an especially good time bug hunting. When inspecting for insects, turn leaves over. Pests tend to favor the underside of plant leaves. If you must use pesticides, follow directions carefully.



## FERTILIZER

Start with your soil test results, which will recommend types and amounts of inorganic (chemical) fertilizers needed. Consult with your local nurseryman regarding the type of fertilizer you need. Follow directions on the label when applying fertilizer.



## HARVEST

When it comes time to begin harvesting from your garden, remember to harvest early in the day before the sun's heat has warmed the produce. Harvest produce on a daily basis. Consider donating a portion of an abundant harvest to a local food rescue program or shelter.



## POST-HARVEST CARE

As you prepare your garden for planting, you must also prepare your garden for the dormant season. Removing debris, adding organic matter (untreated mulch, leaves, straw, compost), cleaning and storing tools and planting a cover-crop will ensure a healthy garden plot for next season.



# Veggie Harvest Guide – Basic Veggies



**Beans (Snap):** Harvest when the pods are close to being fully grown, but before the seeds begin to protrude. Only harvest beans when they are completely dry because wetness may spread bean bacterial blight, a disease that can deeply harm the plants.



**Beets:** If greens are desired, 4 to 6 inches is the proper length for the leaves to be harvested. 1 to 1.5 inches in diameter is the proper thickness for harvesting tops or small beets. 1.5 to 3 inches is the proper diameter for harvesting only the roots. If the beet is larger than 3 inches, it will become tough and stringy.



**Black-eyed Peas:** Harvest seeds when they are almost fully grown and vividly green they should be harvested. If dry seed is desired for cooking, harvest when the seeds are dry and completely developed.



**Broccoli:** Flower heads should be harvested when they are fully grown, but before the flower buds begin to bloom. Stalks should be severed 6 to 7 inches below the head.



**Cabbage:** The head is ready to be harvested when it is firm. Older leaves, stems and roots can be left behind to assist in the development of small peripheral heads, known as cabbage sprouts, deeper in the season.



**Carrots:** When the root is at least 1/2 inch in diameter harvesting is in order. Carrot tops are sometimes too weak to handle being pulled from the ground, so some digging may be necessary. For long-term storage of carrots, harvest immediately before the ground freezes.



**Cauliflower:** Flower heads should be harvested when they are 6 to 8 inches, but have not started to separate or discolor. To avoid discoloration and rough texture, loosely cover the heads when they are 3 to 4 inches across with the outer leaves of the plant.



**Chard:** Harvest new leaves at about an inch above soil level as they emerge early in the spring. Do not damage the terminal bud at the bottom center of the plant. Continue to harvest fresh leaves through the year.



**Collards:** Harvest by picking off 8 to 10 inch outer leaves. The plant will continue to produce from the inside-out throughout the season.



**Cucumbers:** Burpless cucumbers should be harvested when they are 10 to 12 inches in length. Cucumbers should be harvested for slicing when they are 6 to 9 inches long and vividly green and solid. When using cucumbers for pickles: Dill pickles – 3 to 4 inches; Sweet pickles – 1.5 to 2.5 inches. Cucumbers grow rapidly and should be checked frequently for size and harvesting.



**Eggplant:** Harvest when the eggplant's color is vivid, unyielding to the touch and 5 to 7 inches in length. Leave the green top attached to the fruit portion. If the fruit fades or browns, it is no longer good for eating and should be cut and discarded.



**Endive:** Harvest when the plant is 10 to 12 inches in diameter.



**Kale:** see Collards.

# Veggie Harvest Guide – Basic Veggies



**Lettuce:** If leaves are desired, then harvest when more mature, outer leaves are 4 to 6 inches in length. When harvesting leaves, pick from every other head to allow space for its neighbor to grow equally. If growing for heads, harvest when lettuce is solid and when seed stalks have not yet sprouted.



**Mustard:** see Collards. For a less intense taste and a softer texture, seed again in late summer.



**Okra:** Should be harvested when the pods are 3 to 4 inches in length, vividly green and tender to the touch. Use a knife or pruning shears so you don't harm the rest of the plant. The plant should be checked frequently for pods that are ready for harvesting (every other day at minimum).



**Peppers:** Harvest when the peppers are firm, of decent size and match the corresponding color of their variety. The pepper will break away easily from the plant when it is fully mature.



**Potatoes:** Tubers should be harvested when they are full-sized and solid. They can technically be picked any time, but should be picked between 1.5 to 2 inches in diameter. If harvesting for storage, potatoes should be pulled from the ground after the upper of the plant or vine has died. A digging tool will be necessary for harvesting as the potatoes will be 4 to 6 inches beneath the surface of the soil.



**Radicchio:** Harvest in autumn, preferably after the first frost, for optimum taste.



**Radishes:** 1 to 1.5 inches in diameter is the desired harvesting size. Use radishes quickly after pulling or they will develop a spongy texture.



**Spinach:** Bigger leaves should be harvested at 6 to 8 inches in length allowing the inner leaves to continue to grow. Picking of the leaves should continue until the plant is thin, at which time the entire plant can be harvested and eaten.



**Squash:** Summer squash — harvest when 6 to 8 inches in length or less than 2 inches in diameter. Winter Squash — should be fully-grown, and the skin solid and shiny. The squash should be cut from the vine and left with at least 2 inches of stem so they do not deteriorate too quickly.



**Sweet Potatoes:** Use spade or shovel to dig down to the tubers. Be conscious of the potato when harvesting so you do not damage it with your tools. Harvest near the end of autumn before it frosts. Cure sweet potatoes for two to three weeks by storing them in a cool and ventilated space.



**Tomatoes:** Harvesting should take place when the fruit has full color and the skin is firm. During especially hot summer days, the softening process will accelerate and the coloring will slow, decreasing quality. Harvest every other day or daily to monitor the ripeness of the tomatoes.



**Watermelon:** Watermelon is ready for harvesting when the small green stems near the top of the melon turn brown and wither. The skin should be dull and resistant to the penetration of a fingernail. The melon should be light in color where it touches the soil.

# Veggie Harvest Guide – Advanced Veggies



**Asparagus:** Harvest when the stalks are 6 to 8 inches in length and the tops are still closed. They should be severed at the ground line. Asparagus should not be harvested until the third year after planting.



**Brussels Sprouts:** Solid sprouts at the bottom of the plant are ready to be harvested. Continue to pick your way up the plant as the sprouts become solid. The sprouts should be harvested before the leaves yellow.



**Celery:** The stalks should be harvested when they grow to a height of 12 to 15 inches. When the plant is young, the lower greens may be picked for salads etc.



**Garlic:** When the tops start to wilt, the bulbs should be harvested.



**Gourds:** Harvest for eating when the gourds are 8 to 10 inches in length and still yield to a fingernail. When harvesting for decoration, wait until the gourd is fully mature and vividly colored. A fingernail should not leave a lasting scar on a mature gourd.



**Kohlrabi:** When the bulbs are a diameter of 1 to 3 inches they are ready for harvesting. Smaller bulbs have the most mild and desirable taste. The bulbs will become a tough and stringy texture when they are allowed to grow larger than 3 inches.



**Leeks:** Harvest when stalks grow to 1 to 1 1/2 inches in diameter and before the ground freezes.



**Onions:** Harvest green onions when they reach a height of 6 to 8 inches. Harvest mature onion bulbs when the stalks on top start to wilt, which shows that the nutrients are being redirected to the enlarging bulb. Pick the mature bulbs in the morning and allow them to dry throughout the day.



**Parsnips:** Harvest with a spade or digging tool when the root diameter has reached 1.5 to 2 inches or a root length of 8 to 12 inches. Harvest in late autumn or early spring before the plants have a chance to grow.



**Peas:** Collect peas when the pods have become fully grown but remain green. For edible pods, harvest when they grow to approximately 3 inches in length, and before the peas become too engorged. If only peas inside the pods are desired then allow them to grow to a healthy bulge in the pod before harvesting. Peas should be harvested regularly – every other day – or so for the best result.



**Pumpkins:** When the skin is hard and shiny, a fully grown pumpkin is ready to be harvested. The part of the pumpkin nearest the ground should be orange or off-white. When harvesting, use a knife or shears to cut the pumpkin from the vine. Leave 3 to 4 inches of “handle” on the pumpkin. Pumpkins missing their “handle” will not last as long as others.



**Rhubarb:** Rhubarb should not be picked during the first year of planting. Harvest stalks when a height of 8 to 15 inches is reached. The leaves should be removed from the stalks and thrown away as they contain acids that should not be eaten.



**Sweet Corn:** When the kernels become hearty, but still have creamy juices, then the corn is ready to be harvested. Pick about three weeks after the silk becomes apparent. Remove all stalks after all the ears have been collected.

# Garden Safety Training

WHEN WORKING IN THE GARDEN, TAKE BREAKS, DRINK PLENTY OF WATER AND KEEP YOUR SHOES TIED. COVER AND PROTECT CUTS. WASH ALL VEGETABLES AND FRUITS THOROUGHLY BEFORE EATING. LIFT PROPERLY. MAINTAIN A CLEAN AND ORDERLY WORK ENVIRONMENT.

## DRESS APPROPRIATELY

Be sure to cover up when working in the garden. Wear long sleeves, long pants and gloves. In warm weather, wear dark or sun-protective clothing. Wear UV-blocking sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat with a wide brim. Be sure to wear shoes that protect your entire foot. Do not wear sandals. After gardening, wash hands immediately and handle clothing carefully.

## USING CHEMICALS

Take special care when using chemicals and follow the instructions on the label. Wear long sleeves and long pants. Wear rubber gloves and protect your eyes with goggles. Clean your equipment after using chemicals. Check the weather. Do not spray on windy days. Wash hands and clothes immediately after use.

## PRACTICE SOUND JUDGMENT

Try to do the bulk of the gardening before 10:00 a.m. or after 3:00 p.m. to avoid midday heat and sun exposure. If gardening during midday, be sure to have access to water and shade and take breaks.

## WATCH FOR BUGS

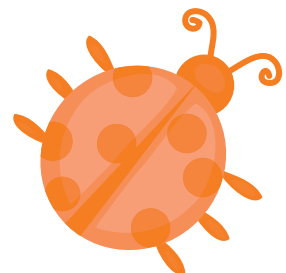
Bees, wasps, flies and mosquitoes may pollinate the garden, but they can also harm humans. If mosquitoes are prevalent, limit your exposure during dawn and dusk. Spray repellent containing Deet on your clothes and sparingly on exposed skin.

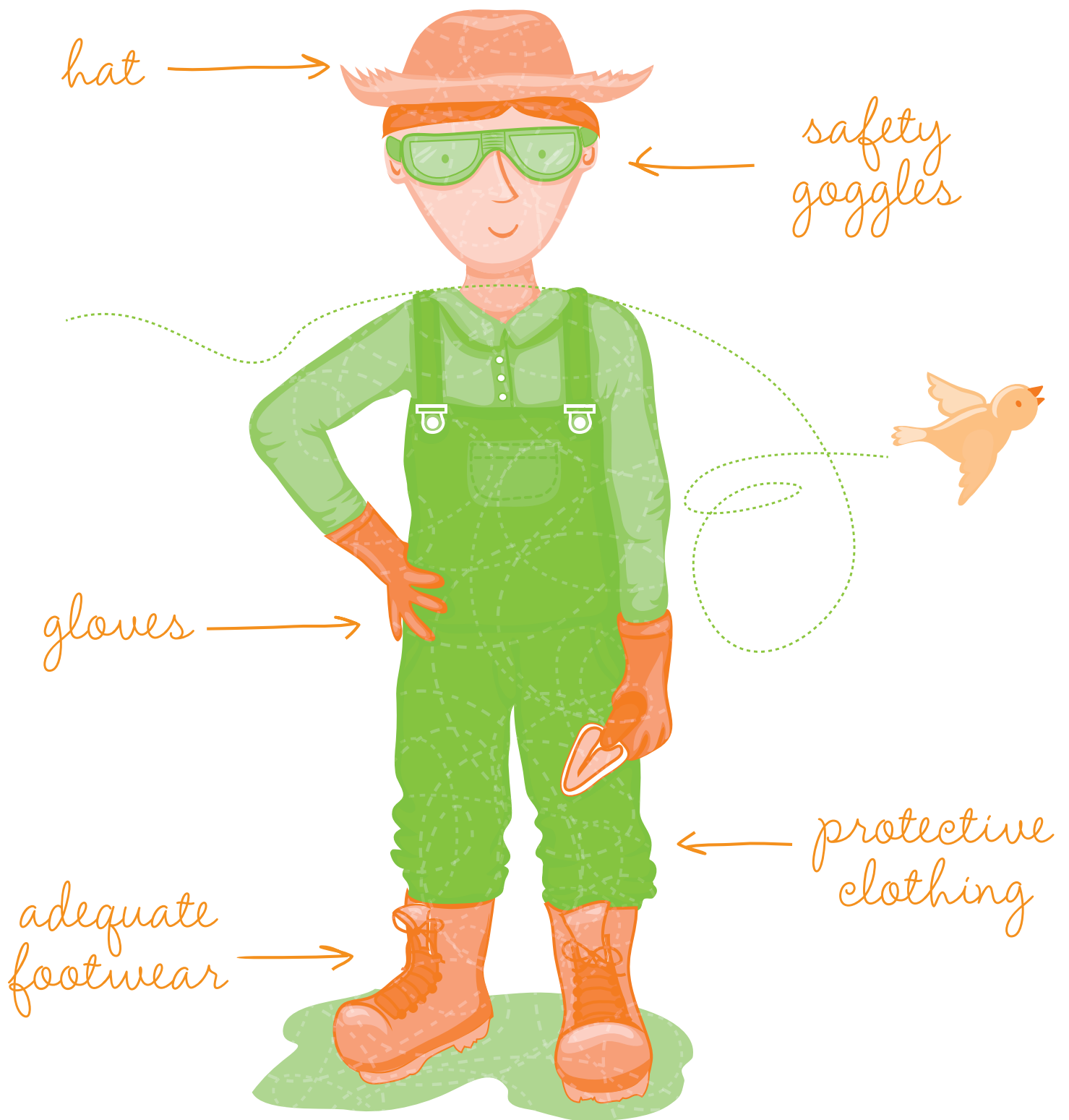
## SOIL AND DIRT

Soil contains bacteria and parasites. Keep your tetanus booster current, wear protective gloves, wash hands thoroughly after working in the garden and use tools rather than your hands to dig.

## TOOLS

Never leave tools lying around. Keep tools clean and sharp. A dirty tool can spread disease to other plants. Use power or gas operated tools carefully. Supervise and train children to use tools properly in the garden. Do not leave tools unattended. Store tools with the blade side down and standing up when possible.







# Grow Healthy With Physical Activity

GARDENING IS A RECOMMENDED FORM OF MODERATE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND CAN SERVE AS A HEALTHY OUTDOOR WORKOUT. CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING TIPS WHEN ENGAGING IN GARDENING ACTIVITIES:

- Start by walking to the garden or by taking a few laps around the garden area once you arrive.
- Warm up and stretch before working in the garden to avoid injury — particularly back injury.
- Spend at least half an hour in the garden, moving regularly.
- Vary your activities in the garden every 5 to 10 minutes.
- Bend your knees carefully, use long-handled tools and watch your posture.
- Change positions and stretch regularly if you are kneeling or sitting.

Stretching all of the key muscle groups may help prevent injury and make your garden workout more enjoyable. Use proper technique, hold each stretch for about 15 seconds and repeat each stretch 2 to 3 times for each muscle group. Remember that persons with arthritis, back or joint-related injuries or other health concerns should seek medical advice before starting an exercise or stretching program.





# Grow Healthy — Bring Active Living to Your Community

Active living refers to a lifestyle that incorporates physical activity into your daily routine. Communities across the country are making changes to create more opportunities for active living for all residents. These changes include implementing new policies that affect land use, transportation and zoning, as well as supporting the development of trails, parks and green space. Designing communities with bicycling and walking in mind leads to a more efficient transportation network, better air quality, healthier citizens and improvements to overall quality of life.

Community gardening encourages an active lifestyle and can stimulate a more activity-friendly community. Participating in a community garden program is one way to help children and families develop habits of walking and biking within the neighborhood – to and from nearby destinations, such as the garden.

To begin, you may want to seek help from a local traffic engineer, a pedestrian and bicycle coordinator or an advocacy group. Here are some questions to consider:

- What are the logical routes to reach your garden site?
- Are there alternative, safer routes for bicyclists and pedestrians?
- Is there nearby access to public transit?
- What is the perception of public safety?

**Once you've chosen the primary routes to your garden, evaluate each road with the following criteria:**

## **FOR WALKING:**

### **Check the sidewalks:**

- Are they wide enough for you to feel safe? The ideal width is 5 feet.
- Where are the sidewalks located? Are they on one or both sides of the road?
- Are there items hindering safe passage on the sidewalk such as poles, signs, etc.?

### **At crossings, check:**

- How many lanes of traffic need to be crossed?
- Are crosswalks, curb ramps and push button crossing signals present?
- Are trees, shrubs, poles, etc. blocking the view of a safe crossing?
- Are there right or left turn traffic signals or signs? This can impact when it is safe to cross.

## **FOR BICYCLING:**

### **Check the roads:**

- What is the average traffic speed? You may consider traffic calming strategies.
- Are there wide outside traffic lanes, a bike lane, trail or paved shoulder?
- Are nearby intersections bicycle-sensitive? Some traffic light sensors can be adjusted so that a bicycle triggers the light just as a car would trigger it.
- Is there parallel or diagonal parking along these roads?
- Are there many driveways or side streets approaching these roads? Be especially careful if there is limited sight distance for cars pulling out of those areas.

Once you have determined the safe and unsafe areas for bicyclists and pedestrians traveling to the garden, make recommendations for improvements. Immediate, cost-efficient improvements like relocating a trashcan on a sidewalk, requesting street sweeping for debris or increasing police monitoring of the area can go a long way in making your garden more accessible.

Consult your local traffic engineer, bicycle and pedestrian coordinator or advocacy group to determine more substantial changes that can be made. These individuals can evaluate the conditions surrounding your garden in more detail.

Some options to consider include: striped bicycle lanes (4- to 6-foot width), a bicycle/pedestrian shared-use path (10-foot width, offset from the road) and raised crosswalks. Roads scheduled to be repaved, resurfaced or widened often provide the most opportunity for making significant changes. If traffic speeds are high, consult with a professional about traffic calming strategies, such as an intersection roundabout, textured pavement, or narrowing travel lanes with center islands or curb extensions.

In some cases, it may be appropriate to present your findings and recommendations to local councils or commissions so that further action can be taken.

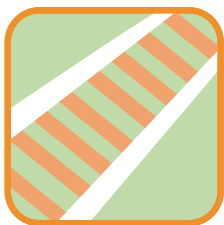
## SAFE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLING PRACTICES

### Walking Safety Tips When Traveling To & From Your Garden:

- Walk on a sidewalk when possible. When there is no sidewalk or path, walk toward oncoming traffic near the edge of the pavement.
- Wear white or reflective clothing at night so that motorists are more likely to see you.
- Watch for cars entering or exiting the road. Be cautious of cars backing out of driveways and parking lots. Remember, drivers pulling out of parking lots often will not see you approaching on their right.
- Press the pedestrian crossing signal button to cross an intersection. Wait for the pedestrian signal to display the “WALK” indicator before stepping off of a sidewalk.
- Cross at street corners in marked or unmarked crosswalks. If a mid-block crossing is present, cross with caution.
- Make eye contact with the driver of a stopped car while crossing in front of it to ensure the driver knows you are there.
- Move to a place where you can see and be seen when stepping off the sidewalk if your view of traffic is blocked by something, (e.g., outside edge of a parked car).

### Bicycling Safety Tips When Riding To & From Your Garden:

- Act like a car! While not every rider feels comfortable on the road at first, a bicycle is a vehicle on the road and traveling with traffic, as a car, is safest.
- Ride on the road in the same direction as traffic in the far right travel lane, leaving 2 to 3 feet between you and the edge of the pavement or curb.
- Follow all traffic signs, signals and rules when at an intersection. Ride in the right-most lane traveling in your direction (if you plan to go straight, do not stay in a right-turn only lane, carefully move into the lane that will allow you to go straight as you approach the intersection). When turning left at an intersection, use the left travel lane or left-turn only lane, when provided.
- Stay to the right if riding on a trail or shared-use path. Courteously pass walkers, joggers or other bicyclists by moving to the left of them and saying “On your left” as you approach.
- Always wear a helmet and ensure that children do, too. The helmet should fit tightly on your head and under your chin.
- Wear bright clothing and reflective vests, and use bike reflectors to make sure drivers can easily see you.
- Watch for debris and hazards in your path, even if you’re riding in a marked bike lane. Drainage grates, uneven asphalt and tire and metal scraps can be difficult to bike through or around. Remember that drivers will not notice these things as a hazard and so will not be expecting you to react.
- Use hand signals every time you turn or change lanes. You must communicate clearly with drivers, so they know what to expect.

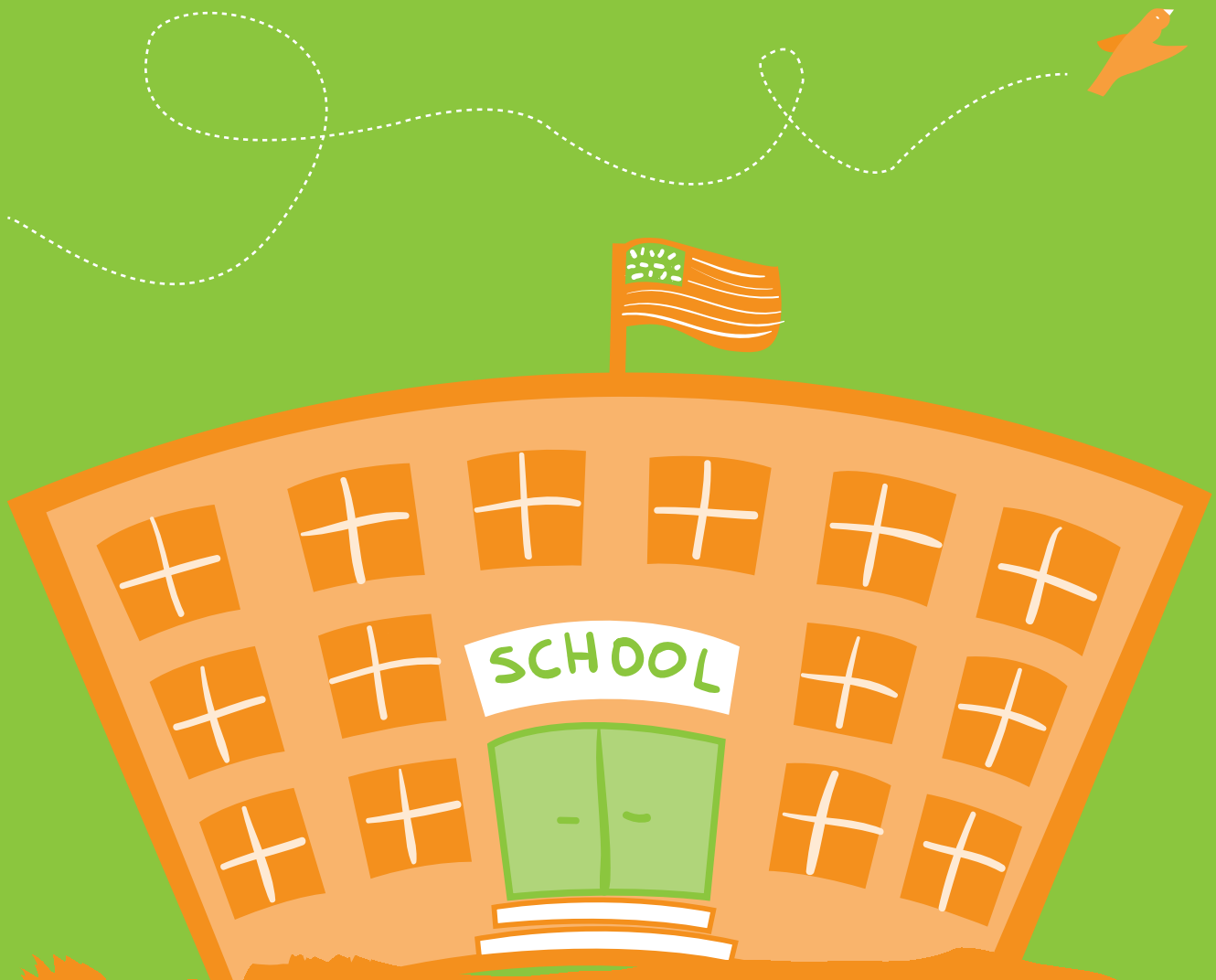


# Additional Activities

THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES AND TOOLS CAN SUPPORT YOUR EFFORTS AS YOU DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT YOUR COMMUNITY GARDEN PROGRAM. THE COMPONENTS ARE ORGANIZED INTO TWO CATEGORIES: 1) ACTIVITIES TARGETING SCHOOLS, CHILDCARE AND AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS; AND 2) ACTIVITIES DESIGNED FOR EVERY MEMBER OF YOUR COMMUNITY. BE CREATIVE AND ADAPT THESE SUGGESTIONS AND WORKSHEETS FOR YOUR SCHOOLS AND RESIDENTS!

## FOR SCHOOLS, CHILDCARE AND AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Three important areas to consider when involving schools in your community include forming a committee, assessing the food environment and creating a Healthy Choice of the Day program. On the following pages, you will find more information on each focus area, along with the tools and materials to help you get started.



## FORM A COMMITTEE

The committee can be a subcommittee of a pre-existing group or a new organization. Some steps to take:

- Nominate a nutrition champion to lead the committee.
- Invite parents, teachers, community representatives, business representatives, students and cafeteria staff to serve on the committee.
- Hold monthly meetings.
- Make healthy eating a priority by working together to organize events and awareness efforts and to encourage policy changes.

## POTENTIAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Area churches
- School nurses
- PTO/PTA members
- Parents
- Food service providers
- After-school program coordinators
- Government/Public service staff members
- Social service agencies/health professionals



## COMMITTEE SIZE

15 to 20 members is a comfortable number. Groups larger than 20 are more difficult to manage.

## TIPS

- Involve students by allowing them to take ownership in all projects.
- Include students on committee(s).
- Increase the demand for healthy choices via taste tests.
- Document all activities.
- Push for policy changes.
- Include local student bodies and teachers.
- Use a lot of visual communications.
- Spread ideas at “district summits.”
- Use every opportunity to pull community into the nutrition process.
- Communicate all change thoroughly to teachers and staff.
- Evaluate the system and activities frequently.
- Include nutrition in every activity involving food.

## CONDUCT A FOOD ASSESSMENT

The following pages offer three surveys that will help you assess the nutritional value of the school food environment. This will help you determine what to grow in your garden, help you justify the need for a garden program and give you a baseline of data for future comparison.

Three sample surveys follow: 1) a classroom survey for teachers regarding classroom food policies; 2) a school survey including questions about competitive food sales, fundraisers, special functions, after-school programs and vending machines; and 3) a student survey.

Each committee can decide who will fill out the surveys, how the student survey will be distributed and how the information will be collected.

# Classroom Survey

TEACHERS, PLEASE TAKE A MINUTE TO FILL OUT THE FOLLOWING SURVEY ABOUT FOOD IN THE CLASSROOM. SURVEY RESPONSES ARE CONFIDENTIAL.

**1. Do your students have snacks in the classroom?**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**2. If yes, who provides the snacks? (Check all that apply)**

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Parents \_\_\_\_\_

Other (Describe) \_\_\_\_\_

**3. If you provide snacks, do you provide them on a regular basis or as incentives or both?**

Regular basis \_\_\_\_\_ Incentive \_\_\_\_\_

What types of snacks do you provide?

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**4. If parents provide snacks, do they provide them on a regular basis or for special occasions or both?**

Regular basis \_\_\_\_\_ Incentive \_\_\_\_\_

What types of snacks do they provide?

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---

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# School Survey

SOURCE	FOOD	AVAILABILITY/FREQUENCY
Vending Machines		
Concession Store		
Cafeteria Á la Carte		
Fundraisers		
After-School Program		
Functions/Events		
Other		

# Student Survey

**Write the foods you see at school in these categories.**

CLASSROOM

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---

CAFETERIA

---

---

FOR SALE

---

---

AFTER-SCHOOL

---

---

HOLIDAYS

---

---

**Write the foods you would like to have at school to eat.**

CLASSROOM

---

---

CAFETERIA

---

---

FOR SALE

---

---

AFTER-SCHOOL

---

---

HOLIDAYS

---

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## HEALTHY CHOICE OF THE DAY

The Healthy Choice of the Day project (HCOD) is a simple, inexpensive, community-driven intervention to increase fruit and vegetable intake in schools. The healthy choice of the day is **always** a fruit or vegetable.

- Designate a side item from the cafeteria menu as the HCOD.
- Encourage kids to make healthy choices in the cafeteria.
- The class with the most students who choose and eat the HCOD wins. (Each committee can decide what award is appropriate. Some examples include a healthy pizza party, smoothie party, golden cafeteria tray award, etc.)
- Please read details below.

## SELECTING THE HEALTHY CHOICE OF THE DAY

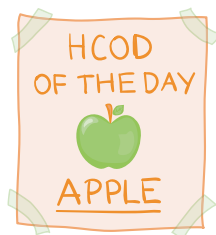
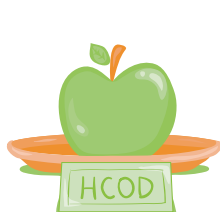
Decide who will determine the Healthy Choice of the Day. This can be the cafeteria staff, school nurse, or even students. The HCOD must be a fruit or a vegetable, and students must be allowed to choose the HCOD. They cannot be served the side without requesting it, per the Offer vs. Serve Project under the USDA School Lunch Program.

## COMMUNICATING AND RECORDING THE HEALTHY CHOICE OF THE DAY

- Highlight the Healthy Choice of the Day on the menu and distribute it in participating teachers' mailboxes. Post the HCOD in classrooms. Announce the Healthy Choice of the Day during the school announcements each morning.
- Participating classes will document the announced HCOD on a classroom healthy choice visual in the room.
- Document the HCOD on a visual located near the entrance to the lunchroom serving line.
- Have participating classes select a student "Taste Ambassador" for the week. Taste Ambassadors will document how many students in their classes chose and ate all of the HCOD and how many students are participating in the school lunch program, using the form provided.
- Submit the completed form each Friday after the lunch period. Display weekly results in the cafeteria.

## REWARDING THE HEALTHY CLASS OF THE MONTH

- After compiling weekly results, calculate monthly results and determine the **Healthy Class of the Month** and announce the class winners.
- Reward the winners with a small healthy snack party and a certificate, or post the class's picture on the school Web site.
- Consider giving a Healthy Class of the Year Award.



# Healthy Choice of the Day

(date) \_\_\_\_\_

Day	Healthy Choice of the Day	Number Eating All HCOD	Number Eating School Lunch	% Eating
M				
T				
W				
T				
F				
M				
T				
W				
T				
F				
M				
T				
W				
T				
F				
M				
T				
W				
T				
F				
M				
T				
W				
T				
F				

Teacher & Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Class Size: \_\_\_\_\_

## Healthy Choice of the Day Results

(date)

[illegible]

## TOTALS

Congratulations to \_\_\_\_\_ Class!

# For Everyone in the Community

This section provides materials for everyone in your community, including activities for those participating in your garden. Consider opening up the activities to the community to encourage participation, provide community outreach or share the garden experience with others.

These suggestions are designed to involve everyone from young children to teens, tweens and seniors — because everyone benefits from a community garden program.

## GARDEN JOURNAL OR SCRAPBOOK

Consider keeping a journal or scrapbook of the garden. Include pictures of the various stages of the garden. Record all gardening processes; what, when, how you planted and how much you harvested. It is also helpful for future gardening to keep notes on what worked best and what did not work.

## TASTE TESTING

Taste testing exposes participants to a variety of healthy foods. Taste testing results can help determine healthy snack options or fruits and vegetables that can be planted in the garden to eat later. Try the following taste tests:

**Healthy snacks:** Tell participants why these snacks are healthier than other choices, examples of where and when they can eat them (after school/work, athletic games, trips) and answer any questions they may have about availability and price points.

**Exotic fruits:** These fruits introduce participants to new things from around the world. Prepare for the taste test by gathering information on where the fruits come from, other common fruits they may be related to and uses of these fruits in other cultures.

**Dried fruits:** This is a fun activity that allows participants to see what fruits look like before and after they are dried. Talk to participants about the dehydration process. Many people feel that most dried fruits taste like candy.

**Smoothies:** Make the smoothies in front of the participants if possible. This will show them how few ingredients are in the smoothie and how easy and fun they are to make. Try a few different combinations or make parfaits.

**Veggies from the garden:** It is best if you are able to take participants out to the garden and pick the vegetables and then taste them. Or, perhaps have a taste test before planting the garden to help participants determine what they would like to plant.



# Fruit and Vegetable Tasting Survey

## FRUITS

### LIKE

### DON'T LIKE

Apple

☐☐

Grape

☐☐

Cantaloupe

☐☐

## VEGETABLES

### LIKE

### DON'T LIKE

Carrot

☐☐

Broccoli

☐☐

Cherry Tomato

☐☐

# Healthy Recipe Cook-Off

A COOK-OFF IS A GREAT WAY TO GET ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY INVOLVED. THE RECIPES ALSO PROVIDE MANY OPTIONS FOR HOW TO USE ALL THE PRODUCE FROM THE GARDEN! THE COOK-OFF CONSISTS OF:

- Child-parent team
- Generate a Healthy Recipe Cookbook from participants' recipes
- Judging and tasting
- Parent involvement
- New ideas for healthy foods

## HOW TO SPONSOR A HEALTHY RECIPE COOK-OFF:

### 1- Establish criteria for the participating recipes, such as:

- Main ingredient must be a fruit or vegetable
- Low in fat
- Low in sugar
- Low in salt
- Quick and easy prep time (example: less than 30 minutes)

### 2- Set up registration guidelines, such as:

- One adult & one child per recipe can register.
- Deadline for entry.
- Require the registration form to include the entire recipe.
- The adult, child and their prepared recipe must be present at the cook-off.
- The recipe must contain enough for 10 people.
- Each recipe and entry team will be assigned a number.

### Judges

Convene a panel of judges from the community. Dishes will be judged on taste and healthy content. A sample sheet for judges is included in this manual.

### Prizes

Award prizes for first, second and third places. Prizes can be acquired through donations for local businesses or purchased. Hold drawings for door prizes to encourage attendance.

### Cookbook

Create a cookbook for the community based on the recipes entered for the contest. Encourage all community members, school faculty, staff and friends to submit their favorites to be included as well. Make photocopies and distribute or sell as a fundraiser.

### Sample Cook-Off Agenda

- 6:30 p.m. Receive all dish entries
- 7:00 p.m. Judging begins
- 7:15 p.m. Judging completed
- 7:30 p.m. Testing for attendees
- 8:00 p.m. Drawings for prizes. Announce rest of winners and prizes awarded

# Healthy Recipe Cook-Off

## Judging Sheet

Recipe Number	Low Salt	Low Sugar	Main Ingredient Fruit/Veg	Taste	Low Fat	TOTAL POINTS
#1						<input type="text"/>
#2						<input type="text"/>
#3						<input type="text"/>
#4						<input type="text"/>
#5						<input type="text"/>
#6						<input type="text"/>
#7						<input type="text"/>
#8						<input type="text"/>
#9						<input type="text"/>
#10						<input type="text"/>
#11						<input type="text"/>
#12						<input type="text"/>
#13						<input type="text"/>
#14						<input type="text"/>

Rate the recipe between 1-10 for each column. Record total points.





**HUB CITY FARMERS' MARKET / SPARTANBURG NUTRITION COUNCIL**

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