

Dig it! A Practical Toolkit

How local governments can support community gardens



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Executive Summary

This report is divided into three sections. The first section (chapters 1-5) provides an introduction to community gardens and offers some background information designed to help local governments understand the benefits and challenges of community gardens. Section two (chapters 6-7) provides some practical tools and templates that can be used or adapted by local governments. Section three (chapter 8, and three appendices) summarizes the report, makes recommendations for further work, and offers a variety of resources related to community gardening.

Section 1: Background

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to community gardens and highlights the role of local government.

Chapter 2 is a brief glossary, offering descriptions of the many different types of community gardens.

Chapter 3 explores the critical process of engaging with the community to create a community garden and briefly characterizes several approaches which local governments can take.

Chapter 4 explores many of the diverse benefits that community gardens offer.

Chapter 5 details some of the historic challenges of creating and maintaining community gardens and offers tried and true actions and solutions.

Section 2: Strategies and Tools

Chapter 6 lays out *four key strategies* which local governments can follow to create a community garden or community garden program. Each strategy includes a variety of actions and tips which embody and illustrate the strategy.

Chapter 7 contains a number of practical tools for local governments, including: easy-to-use checklists and examples of regulatory and policy tools and bylaws used in jurisdictions both within and outside of BC.

Chapter 8 provides a summary and suggests potential areas for further research and action. In addition, several appendices are offered at the close of the report with links to further community garden resources.



Section 1: Context

Chapter 1: Why and how local governments would want to support Community Gardens

WHY WOULD LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WANT TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY GARDENS?

Quite simply, because of the benefits to both citizens and local governments. This report focuses on a wide spectrum of benefits to be gained from community gardens including: strengthening community food security in a world of escalating food costs, creating social cohesion, and other environmental and economic benefits.

The importance of community gardens increases in times of uncertainty. In an age of increasing globalization, climate chaos and peak oil, local governments can support community gardens as part of a range of strategies to build greater resilience and stability in their communities.

The *role of local governments* is fundamentally a supportive and enabling one.¹ Community gardens are successful because *local gardeners* are committed to making them so. When local governments open their doors and invite the community in, there is a great deal of community expertise and experience to be shared. Local governments do have a significant role to play in the process: by removing policy barriers; enacting supportive policies; providing support related to water access, land tenure, and composting; by signaling their support of community gardens in government communications; and by dedicating staff time to interact with community gardening groups.

A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

Community gardens have existed in some form for hundreds of years. One might even think of the commons of old England as early community gardens.

Since the 1700s in the UK, urban newcomers have used allotment gardens to grow food. A century later, gardens were expanded in response to widespread poverty and unemployment in large English cities.²

In North America, community gardens had their origins in the relief gardens of the Depression, and the Liberty and Victory Gardens of the two World Wars.

Objective: This toolkit is designed to support the development and maintenance of successful community gardens by providing local governments with:

- Practical information and strategies;
- Tools such as model by-laws and policies; and
- Background information on the benefits of community gardens and the challenges commonly faced in creating and maintaining community gardens

Definition: Community Gardens *Any piece of land gardened by a group of people. ... urban, suburban, or rural. It can grow flowers, vegetables or community. It can be one community plot, or can be many individual plots. It can be at a school, hospital, or in a neighborhood. It can also be a series of plots dedicated to "urban agriculture" where the produce is grown for a market.* (Source: American Community Gardening Association)



These were significant sources of food for urban and rural dwellers, helping to meet demand during hard times and free up resources and food supplies to feed the troops overseas.³

Community gardens began as a social movement to reclaim and green urban spaces during the 1960s and 1970s. These neighbourhood revitalization efforts have since blossomed into the modern community garden movement, with thousands of gardens in the US and Canada today.

THE BIG PICTURE

A growing number of local governments in Canada have identified community gardens as a way to help them create healthier, sustainable and more resilient communities. Because food and the food system are central to so many aspects of community life – health, the environment, the economy, culture, etc. – healthy communities must, by definition, encompass and support healthy, sustainable food systems.⁴ Today, community gardens supplement a food and agriculture system that is vulnerable to disruption in many ways. Here's how they can contribute to the creation and maintenance of a healthy, food-secure community:

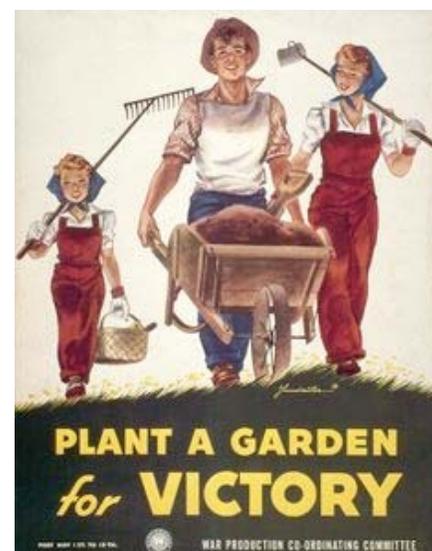
Community gardens provide **delicious, healthy, home-grown food**. Community gardens can be an important source of fresh produce, increasing dietary quality and food security. This is particularly important in low-income neighbourhoods and in areas with poor access to healthy foods.

Successful community gardens are an effective and unique **opportunity for skill development**. They can teach social skills such as cooperation and negotiation, while offering opportunities to learn about food production, develop job skills, increase agricultural literacy, generate food-related businesses, and create links to nearby restaurants, soup kitchens, and food-related micro-enterprises.⁵

Community gardening **builds community** by cultivating a sense of commitment and ownership towards the neighbourhood, community, and larger food system. Gardens offer opportunities to re-connect with nature, boost municipal green space, and decrease the energy intensity of food production and distribution.

Finally, community gardens can be a part of a larger climate action plan which communities employ to **decrease greenhouse gas emissions**. Gardens can reduce emissions by decreasing the fossil-fuel intensity of food production and distribution, and by decreasing the percentage of organic matter which is channelled into waste streams.

Community gardens maximize their potential when they are part of an integrated set of activities and programs. Integrating community gardens with things like pedestrian pathways, recreation areas, and designated greenways can aid in the effort to promote local food security and build healthy, resilient communities.



Chapter 2: A Guide to the Different Types of Community Gardens

WHAT EXACTLY ARE COMMUNITY GARDENS?

Community gardens take different shapes and forms, depending on the needs and desires of the community. But most have these common features:

- Community gardens occupy both public and privately-owned land, but are managed publicly, by a coalition of community members and organizations or government agencies.
- Community gardens may focus on community development, beautification, food production, ornamental plants, education, or therapeutic purposes.
- Community gardens are publicly accessible.

FINDING A GOOD FIT WITH THE COMMUNITY

There are many different types of community gardens, all of which can be supported by comprehensive community garden programs. The choice of which type of community garden to support will depend on the conditions and needs of the community. The type of community garden will influence how it is sited, designed, serviced, and used. Below we list several types of community gardens. The individual headings are not meant to indicate that the garden types are mutually exclusive. Many community gardens contain characteristics associated with more than one type.

- **Allotment gardens** – publicly owned plots of land leased to individuals, popular in many European countries. Allotments are protected by law in the UK, where local governments are required to provide and promote them.⁶
- **Community shared gardens** – collectively-run gardens with communal plots in which garden members share in the growing and harvesting of food. Some gardens, such as Strathcona Community Garden in Vancouver, include a commons area in addition to individual plots. Others, such as the Urban Aboriginal Community Kitchen Garden at UBC Farm (see sidebar), are wholly communal.
- **Backyard gardens** – privately owned land on residential properties. May be shared with or leased to community members.⁷
- **Temporary gardens** – community gardens set up on land sited for future development. Property developers may invest substantial sums to allow community gardens on vacant lots for a fixed or open term until building commences.⁸

⁶ This is generally true for community gardens in BC as well, though they are not usually referred to as allotment gardens in this province.

Quote: A community garden is a garden where people share the basic resources of land water and sunlight!
(Source: The Garden City Handbook, Emily MacNair, Polis Project on Ecological Governance, University of Victoria, B.C., Canada, 2002.)

Case study: The Urban Aboriginal Community Kitchen Garden at UBC Farm

is a wholly collective garden. Participants plant food which is harvested and consumed by the community of gardeners. Gardeners participate in the collective experience by working in the garden, showing support by singing for the gardeners, or helping cook the food.



- **Healing gardens** – gardens with a therapeutic intention. Popular in the UK among groups working with asylum seekers and terminally ill patients.
- **Community orchards** – fruit trees managed collectively in a similar manner to community gardens. Some community gardens have a small orchard on-site (e.g. Strathcona garden in Vancouver).
- **Victory gardens** – throwback to the patriotic gardens of World Wars I and II. Recently reborn on the front lawn of San Francisco City Hall for the 2008 season and the Slow Food Nation event. They carry a political message to promote food security and local food production.
- **Institutional gardens** – community gardens at schools, hospitals, prisons, or seniors' homes. May focus on food provision, education, training, therapeutic value, or combinations of these goals.

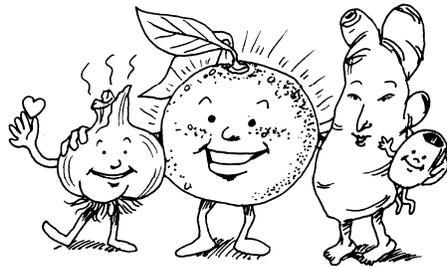


Chapter 3: From the Ground Up- Co-Creation and Partnership

Local governments play an important role in creating and promoting community gardens as their fundamental perspective is to foster the development of healthy communities. With community gardens, this role is actualized through establishing partnerships with local residents and community groups. These partnerships can then foster the development of community gardens, and address challenges to their successful creation and maintenance.

While there is no established formula for creating successful community gardens: generally, vibrant and lasting gardens emerge from a community vision. Once initiated, other partners jump in to help realize the vision (see sidebar). **Local governments** might provide expertise and support in planning and design, access to land, tax relief, and, in some cases, provide materials, insurance and other resources. **Residents** help plan, build, and maintain the garden. **Organizations** aid with coordination and administration, while establishing and ensuring good governance, and fundraising. These players bring together the key ingredients to create and sustain a garden: vision, cooperation, expertise, resources, and elbow grease!

A community garden that is developed by the community and supported by its local government is much more likely to meet a community's needs. Genuine partnerships are more likely to create gardens that fit into broad planning and policy frameworks for food secure communities, while addressing the unique strengths and diverse needs of the neighbourhoods and communities they serve. This partnering approach generates greater resident buy-in, sense of ownership and responsibility. Also, **by mobilizing a much wider array of resources, there is a potential to lower government expenditures and ensure ongoing stability.**



Working in partnership provides a forum to enable the contribution of the strengths of the participants.

The process of generating strategies to develop community gardens is an opportunity. To maximize the benefits and best utilize local resources local governments can ask the following kinds of questions:

Case Study: Municipal Partnership in Garden Development - Burquitlam Community Garden

In Coquitlam, local residents recognized a need for a community garden in their neighbourhood. Through the Burquitlam Residents Association, the group approached the City about creating a community garden.

The municipality was open to the idea and to supporting the group. A garden was planned in a lot owned by the Coquitlam Leisure and Parks Services in the Burquitlam area.

The allocation of plots and maintenance of the garden will be managed initially by the Burquitlam Residents Association, who will be replaced eventually by local volunteers.

Understanding that the creation of community gardens is as much a process as a product is key to realizing their full potential.



What can local governments bring to the partnership?

- Planning expertise
- Design and drafting of plans
- Land (provisional and long-term)
- Materials and supplies (soil, sand, woodchips, tools)
- Water access: meter, reduced water rates, irrigation supplies
- Horticultural expertise in Parks Departments
- Perimeter maintenance

What can residents bring?

- Vision and passion
- Expertise
- Resources
- Elbow grease

What can organizations bring?

- Coordination and administrative support
- Insuranceⁱⁱ
- Consistency and stability
- Skills at ensuring democratic access and governance
- Linkages to other supportive organizations
- Fundraising

What can the private sector contribute?

- A wide range of expertise and resources
- Financial backing
- Donations of equipment, land and in-kind resources. For example, land has been provided by private individuals in Prince George, Revelstoke, and Oliver, while garden tools and/or supplies have been donated by local businesses in Vancouver, Powell River, and Revelstoke.

ⁱⁱ In some cases, governments may provide the insurance.



Chapter 4: Benefits of Community Gardens

Community gardens are places to grow food and ornamental plants, but they can also be public spaces in a vibrant community. As well as providing food, both for individual gardeners and charitable food organizations, community gardens provide the opportunity for food and environmental education, entrepreneurship, and climate change mitigation activities. What's more, community gardens often become important centres for community capacity building, health promotion, and neighbourhood development.

SAVING MONEY: REDUCING DEMANDS ON INFRASTRUCTURE

Waste management occupies a significant portion of any local government's budget. A successful network of community gardens can reduce waste streams. A focus on organic production and composting can divert significant quantities of organics (up to 40%)⁹ from the waste stream and convert them to rich soil.¹⁰ In addition, permeable land reduces water runoff, reducing the demands for wastewater treatment and on storm sewer systems.¹¹

SMALL INVESTMENT: BIG RETURNS

A small investment in community gardening can bring sizeable returns to a local community. Unlike parks and other municipal public spaces, community gardens are generally volunteer-managed and maintained. This presents an opportunity to expand green space without increasing local maintenance or parks budgets.¹²

The vegetation in community gardens contributes to better air and water quality, helps reduce runoff and erosion, and creates beneficial microclimates.¹³ Green spaces cool their surroundings by reflecting solar radiation, while plants absorb carbon dioxide, a major greenhouse gas.¹⁴ Green spaces also provide much needed habitat for small wildlife. A well-planned region might integrate community gardens with existing green belts or greenways for parks, walking and cycling trails, and space for small wildlife habitat.

DOLLARS AND SENSE: COMMUNITY GARDENS AS AN ENGINE FOR COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

While not a major focus for most community gardens, there are clear opportunities for gardens to contribute to micro-economies within the larger community. Gardeners can earn extra money by selling their surplus crop or operating small value-added businesses.¹⁵ Well-managed community gardens can form the basis of small community supported agriculture (CSA) schemes, distributing fresh produce to residents and new income to gardeners. Parcels of land too small for other uses can produce surprising amounts of food.¹⁶ Small



Community composting. Photo: Hartley Rosen

Quote: Cathleen Kneen, Food Secure Canada

Ottawa City Council [recently voted] to maintain the \$75,000 in funding for equipment and training for community gardens in the City Budget ... [T]he most persuasive arguments were the positive effect of community gardens on neighbouring property values, and the reports from gardeners, including youth, that their consumption of fruits and vegetables increased as a result of their experience with the garden beyond what they produced themselves (with obvious positive health effects).

Fact: Garden productivity. A 3 X 6 metre garden plot can yield 32 kilograms of vegetables or 38 kilograms of fruit per year (references in Hohenschau, 2005, see endnote 25). Per capita annual consumption of vegetables and fruit is estimated at, respectively, 87 and 12 kilograms.



businesses can hire local people to support gardeners with services such as garden planning and design, building raised beds, providing tools and seeds, or selling food to local restaurants or institutions.¹⁷ The neighbourhood revitalization that can accompany successful community gardens improves the overall climate for small local businesses.

PUBLIC REALM DESIGN: CREATING GREAT GATHERING PLACES

Community gardens are public spaces. But, unlike parks and some other public spaces, they attract people with a common purpose, and encourage conversation and social interaction between strangers. They provide a place for public meetings and get-togethers, a space where people naturally like to gather.¹⁸

BUILDING FOOD SECURITY: GROWING FOOD AND BETTER DIETS

Community gardens have many purposes, and many kinds of impact. They can contribute to the food supply and the overall health of the community. As demand for food grows, various forms of urban agricultureⁱⁱⁱ may supplement produce from traditional agricultural sources.

Although food production may not be the primary reason to support community gardening, it can be particularly important in communities with limited access to an affordable variety of fresh produce¹⁹, for lower income areas, and during times of economic crisis.

Community gardeners consistently report consuming more fresh vegetables, eating more organic foods, and lowering their food bills.²⁰ Some gardens donate surplus produce to community-based food programs, while others are directly connected to community kitchens or food banks.^{iv}

Most British Columbians have access to approximately three days worth of fresh food at any given time. Productive community gardens can help provide a secure source of local food which contributes to a portion of food requirements. Small community plots can produce large quantities of food, as illustrated by early 20th century Victory gardens, and can be a good insurance policy against changes to our food supply.

ⁱⁱⁱ Urban agriculture can be defined as "the practice of cultivating, processing and distributing food in, or around ... a village, town or city," and includes city farms, community gardens, and greenhouses. (Bailkey, M. and J. Nasr. *From Brownfields to Greenfields: Producing Food in North American Cities*. Community Food Security News. Fall 1999/Winter 2000:6.)

^{iv} Although this contributes to emergency food programs, it should be noted that this does not legitimize charity as a desired or effective means for achieving food security.

Case Study: Need for community gardens in Portland. The demand for community garden plots in Portland, OR has increased since food prices have risen in recent months. Garden managers across the US have reported increased demand for plots as people search for lower cost ways to meet their food needs (See Gomstyn, 2008 reference in endnote 16).

Fact: *Although food production may not be the primary reason to support community gardening, it can be particularly important in communities with limited access to an affordable variety of fresh produceⁱ, for lower income areas, and during times of economic crisis.*

Fact: Provincial support for community gardens -- The BC Agriculture Plan states that: *[a]ll British Columbians should have access to safe, locally produced food... We will also work with community and farm groups and local governments to help facilitate projects that will strengthen the systems in place within the community to bring locally produced food products to market. This will include the development of community gardens and bringing small agricultural lots into production in both urban and rural areas.*

Fact: Distance that food travels. The average meal in BC travels hundreds or thousands of kilometres from field to plate. The average distance from a community garden to plate is about 3 blocks.



INCREASE AWARENESS OF LOCAL FOOD CYCLES

Local food and seasonal eating are important parts of a healthy, sustainable diet. By participating in the entire food cycle -- from seed to table and back to the land as compost -- community gardeners learn about food production.²¹ They experience the seasonality of local food first hand, and modify their eating habits towards what is ripe and available locally. When it's growing in your garden, you know it's in season!

RESILIENCY WITH CLIMATE CHANGE: LOCAL FOOD AS PART OF THE BIG PICTURE

Growing your own food is about as local as you can get. The BC Agriculture Plan promotes reducing the food miles in BC diets in order to improve health and combat climate change. Food from community gardens has not been transported long distances by air, ship, or truck; its short life cycle minimizes the use of fossil fuels.²² Produce is often carried home by foot or bicycle.²³ Moreover, it is not processed or packaged, thus decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and excessive resource use. Managed well, gardening improves local ecological resources.

By supporting community gardening, local governments can actively support efforts to reduce greenhouse gases and meet commitments laid out in Bill 27 (*Local Government (Green Communities) Statutes Amendment Act, 2008*)²⁴ and the UBCM/Provincial *Climate Action Charter*.²⁵

BIODIVERSITY IN OUR SETTLEMENT AREAS

Community gardens multiply both the ecological and human diversity of communities. People come to tend their gardens or simply enjoy the space, gathering local people from all walks of life, all ages, and all cultural backgrounds in an informal, social environment.²⁶ People talk to people they would normally have few opportunities to interact with, initiating new forms of dialogue and strengthening the social fabric of a community.

Community gardens don't just attract people; they also attract birds, bees and other pollinators, small wildlife, and migratory species.²⁷ A summer walk through any community garden in BC will reveal a huge diversity of plant species. In addition, because most community gardens use organic methods,²⁸ the soil and compost piles support a wealth of beneficial bacterial and insect species, including earthworms and other creatures that nourish the soil and contribute to plant health.

GARDENING FOR ALL AGES

Physical activity and mental health are among the most common reasons for participating in community gardening.²⁹ With aging Baby Boomers representing an increasing part of the overall population gardening is emerging as a popular way to maintain physical activity levels. Gardening is a valuable form of low



Kids in the Garden. Photo: David Tracey

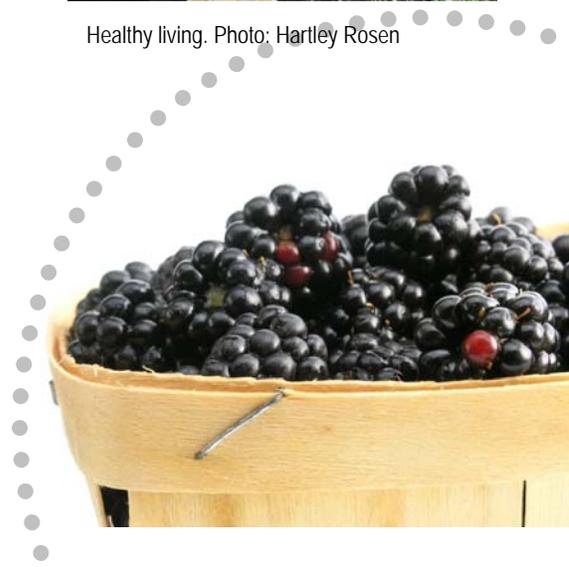
Fact: Community gardens contribute to physical activity.

ActNowBC! suggests incorporating family-oriented and fun physical activity into your day (<http://www.actnowbc.ca>).

Canada's Physical Activity Guide recommends gardening as a fun pathway to a more active and healthy lifestyle (<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/paguide/index.html>).



Healthy living. Photo: Hartley Rosen



impact physical activity.³⁰ Building beds, planting, weeding, harvesting, spreading compost, even walking to the garden, all deliver on our daily need for physical activity.³¹ Raised beds ensure accessibility for the aging and people with specific physical challenges. However, gardening is not restricted to one age group!

Less visible but no less important are the impacts on mental health.³² Many gardeners find that working in a garden provides stress relief.³³ Gardens specifically designed for therapeutic purposes are becoming increasingly common³⁴ and research has demonstrated that gardens can improve physical health indicators such as blood pressure.³⁵ In fact, community gardens have successfully been used to reduce violence and recidivism among prison populations.³⁶

SKILL BUILDING: COMMUNITY GARDENS AS A TEACHING AND LEARNING TOOL

Community gardens offer unique venues for training and skills development for immigrants, the underemployed, and at-risk youth.³⁷ They are perfect sites to experiment and innovate with new green technologies.³⁸ Many gardens offer low-cost or free workshops for members. These could be expanded and opened to the wider community. Some community gardens are already popular demonstration sites, such as Maple Community Garden at City Farmer in Vancouver.

School garden projects link students, teachers, parents, and the wider community in shared learning. Gardens on school property are living sites that facilitate teaching about everything from biology, physics, math and nutrition to environmental awareness.³⁹

NEIGHBOURHOOD REVITALIZATION: REDESIGN AND ENGAGEMENT FOR VITAL NEIGHBOURHOODS

Community gardens can be a cost effective way to spruce up empty lots, neglected spaces, or underutilized parks. Community gardens populate a space with people as well as plants, a change which can reduce public safety costs.

Community gardens are a relatively simple and cost effective way to revitalize neighbourhoods. Many US studies have demonstrated the positive effects of community gardens on surrounding neighbourhoods. **A study in upstate New York found that neighbourhoods near community gardens undertook more beautification efforts, planted more trees, and had more crime watch programs.** Properties neighbouring the garden were better-maintained.⁴⁰ Successful community gardens inspire a sense of pride and empowerment for neighbourhood residents. Attention from the press and general public can lead to positive spinoff effects in surrounding areas, including, in some cases, rising property values and increased property tax revenue.⁴¹

^v The risk here is that gentrification can push out lower-income residents who have worked hard to improve their neighbourhoods.



Garden workshop. Photo: Hartley Rosen

Case study: Green space increases health. A recent study in the UK found that living near green space is associated with longer life and better self-rated health status. The positive effect on health was particularly strong for people living in urban or low-income areas. The quality of green space was especially important. In low-income suburban neighbourhoods where "green space" was inaccessible or aesthetically poor, green space seemed to have a detrimental effect on health (see Mitchell and Popham 2007, end note 45). Vibrant community gardens are a way to ensure high quality, usable green space in a community with a minimal outlay of government resources.



Chapter 5: Challenges

Creating a community garden site or program requires the formation of collaborative relationships and the mobilization of resources. These processes carry their own challenges.

This chapter outlines some of the common challenges to establishing and maintaining community gardens. Virtually all of the perceived barriers listed can be overcome with good planning. We know of no community gardens that local governments have helped to create that have had to be closed down, once established. Many of the planning strategies and tools detailed in Chapters 6 and 7 can be used to overcome these challenges and create a successful community garden program.

Challenges and actions for successful community gardens

CHALLENGE	ACTION
<p>Building political and/or community support: Often the most pervasive challenge to the creation of community gardens.</p>	<p>Education and communication is the best approach. How this takes place will depend on the unique situation of each community. Some possible actions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place ads in local papers and on the radio to inform locals about any potential changes and opportunities for input. • Hold an Open House where people can talk about their concerns and ideas. • Invite community gardening groups to come and present to Council (there is a lot of expertise out there and you will want to take advantage of it!).
<p>Start-up and maintenance costs: These can be substantial for local governments with small or non-existent discretionary budgets.</p>	<p>The City of Kitchener has a community garden policy that provides funding.</p> <p>The City of Waterloo offers a <i>Partners in Parks</i> program. TD Bank's Friends of the Environment offers funding to community gardens.⁴²</p>
<p>Water: Access to potable water may be difficult or unavailable. Grey water may not be perceived as acceptable.</p>	<p>Water hook-ups can cost several thousands of dollars. Some governments cover the cost, others cost-share, while some require the community to raise the money required for assured water access.</p>

Case study: Fort St. James – Partnerships overcome barriers to land access

Gardeners in downtown Fort St. James faced a common challenge: they could not find a site for their community garden.

Our main barrier was access to land, said Kandace Kerr, a garden organizer. We need a site in the centre of town, but no local landowners were willing to donate or sell space or allow us to use their land. I approached the local Parks Canada historic site, and to my delight they not only said yes, but have been very enthusiastic in their support!

Gardeners have embraced the heritage aspects of the Parks Canada site, and are currently researching heritage varieties and gardening methods.

Recently, a local credit union approached the group with an offer to provide additional land, and supply electricity and water for more gardens and greenhouses.



Challenges and actions for successful community gardens

CHALLENGE	ACTION
<p>Legal barriers and liability issues: With regard to issues such as personal injury, theft, or property damage, local governments choose their risk tolerance along a continuum from willingness to assume all risk and liability to redirecting risk and liability.</p>	<p>To reduce some of the administrative and financial barriers, local governments may cover community gardens under their own insurance.</p> <p>Others require community gardens to obtain their own insurance – available from BC Sport Insurance (See Chapter 7 – <i>Legal Tools</i>).</p>
<p>Accessing appropriate land: There may be a perceived lack of access to land for community gardens, or an absence of available and appropriate sites.</p>	<p>Not all land is appropriate for use for community gardens. However, often the challenges associated with a site (poor soil quality, transportation options, zoning etc) are fairly easily overcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including community gardens in OCPs will further support availability and access. • Create an inventory of underutilized land. • Contact schools, hospitals, churches, housing authorities and other land-holding institutions to find out about opportunities. • Offer incentives to developers to provide land for community gardens. • Review transportation options including bus stops, pedestrian and bicycle paths. • Raised beds and composting can alleviate soil issues. <p>The BC provincial government has historically provided Crown land to local governments, public agencies and community organizations to support public purposes. Where possible, this land has been provided at less than market value through a Crown Grant or Nominal Rent Tenure.⁴³</p>
<p>Management and longevity of community gardens: Concerns may arise that, if community gardens are managed by non-government groups,</p>	<p>Develop a working agreement with the organization managing the community garden which outlines the rights and responsibilities of each party (see</p>

Case Study: Financial and maintenance solutions - Queensway Garden, Prince George

The Queensway Garden in Prince George is an example of a private-community partnership. The land is “donated” by private citizens, who are active members of the garden planning committee. There is good support from community businesses that help with materials for in-garden projects.

All partners sign a partnership agreement at the beginning of the season to co-manage the garden. Agency partners invest in the project with staff time and in-kind contributions to administrative tasks. Fees from private rental plots sustain the small financial needs of the project.

With an operating budget of about \$300 a year, secure funding, and admin/coordination taken care of by agency partners, the garden is an example of financial sustainability.



Challenges and actions for successful community gardens

CHALLENGE	ACTION
they may not have the competence or long-term stability to maintain them appropriately.	Chapter 7). In addition, it is advisable to work with stakeholders to jointly produce a garden handbook that includes enforceable rules (see Chapter 7, <i>Checklist 2: Digging In</i>).
Standards for appearance and tidiness: Differing standards may cause disagreements, tensions, or conflicts between gardeners, and between gardeners and local governments.	Prepare clear guidelines for maintenance and upkeep. These guidelines should be agreed upon by the organization managing the community garden and the local government. Establish a workable mechanism to deal with conflicts.
Neighbourhood resistance / opposition: concerns about smells, pests, unsightliness, noise, traffic, and vandalism.	Request that community garden advocates speak with neighbours about their concerns, both before the garden is created, and at regular intervals thereafter. (Also, see sidebar on page 20 regarding reduced levels of crime around community gardens.)
Land tenure: A land lease agreement may be viewed as desirable but challenging.	Design a lease that deals with perceived challenges. A Lease Agreement can be used to define important terms and conditions, including the rental amount, the rental period, and the rights and obligations of both the local government and community organization managing the garden. The agreement should also include provisions for grant, rent, covenants, alterations by tenant, damage and destruction, and other eventualities. ⁴⁴ There are many examples of leases that could be used as models. Land trusts are another solution. ⁴⁵



Section 2: Strategies & Tools

There are always significant and varied demands on local government resources. Therefore, it is important that this toolkit provide practical strategies and tools for local governments which will help facilitate the process while minimizing the demand on scarce resources. Local governments should keep in mind that, in many cases, community groups have a great deal of experience and expertise which can be tapped into.

This section contains strategies which local governments can use in helping to create a community garden or a community garden program, as well as checklists to smooth the process of starting a community garden or community garden program. Other tools in this section include sample communications tools, model policies and by-laws, and regulatory tools.

Chapter 6: Local Government Strategies for a successful Community Garden Program

Successful community gardens are typically well-planned and involve stakeholders from the outset. This chapter builds on the benefits and challenges outlined in earlier chapters by proposing four key strategies towards the creation of a successful community garden program:

- Strategy 1: Link community gardens with other municipal programs and services.
- Strategy 2: Engage with the community
- Strategy 3: Policies to support community gardening
- Strategy 4: Internal education / Building local government support

Each strategy is accompanied with related goals and objectives, and ideas for implementation are offered.

STRATEGY 1: LINK COMMUNITY GARDENS WITH OTHER MUNICIPAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Goal: *Link community gardens to existing sustainability and community health initiatives to leverage momentum for a local government-supported community garden program.*

Objectives

1. **Strategically integrate community gardens into town services**, for example by layering community gardens into existing transport or housing strategies.
2. **Use community gardens to help meet greenhouse gas emission reduction targets:** Consider community gardens as part of a community wide greenhouse gas emission reduction strategy. Food from community gardens does not require extensive packaging and does not travel very far!
3. **Include community gardens in healthy communities programs:** Consider community garden programs as part of any healthy community initiative, involving everything from education about healthy diets to creating places for people to gather and socialize. Consider linking community kitchens with community gardens to build stronger community food systems and increase access to locally grown and safely prepared food.⁴⁶

Ideas for linking community gardens with other local government programs and services

Effective linkages maximize payback on invested time and resources. Further ideas for linking community gardens with other local government initiatives include:

- Tie community gardens into planning processes, including those for housing and transportation, agricultural area plans, greenways and park master plans.
- Hire a summer intern to conduct a community land survey, identifying lands which could be used for community gardens and other urban agriculture initiatives.
- Consider edible landscaping in public space and landscape design.
- Consider community gardens as components of an emergency preparedness strategy.
- Find out if others (First Nations, NGOs, health authorities, local business, other levels of government) are interested in developing community gardens and what partnership opportunities might exist.
- Review health and recreation programs to identify natural linkages to community garden activities (daycare, preschool programs, seniors' social activities), and to encourage programming that works in concert with the garden, e.g., cooking classes and gardening workshops. Scale-up could include production of foods for children's snack programs, birthday parties, and food services. Fresh food markets could be tied to health and recreation facilities as part of the BC-wide Healthier Choices initiative.

Reminder: *Local governments with stretched resources don't have to do it all themselves! When local governments open their doors and invite the community in, there is a great deal of community expertise and experience to be shared.*



The DIGA garden at Maple Community Garden in Vancouver uses raised beds and adapted tools to increase the accessibility of gardening activities.



STRATEGY 2: ENGAGE WITH THE COMMUNITY

Goal: *Connect to and collaborate with existing community initiatives and champions in order to help create a shared local vision of community gardening.*

Objectives:

1. **Collaboration:** community garden initiatives are driven by local knowledge and energy. Support existing initiatives to meet local goals for a community garden program. Work with local advisory councils which focus on food policy, social planning, parks and recreation, and related issues.
2. **Co-design the process with the community:** Co-create policy and action with community representatives to build trust and ensure buy-in. Involve both end-users and detractors.
3. **Work with champions:** Identify those who have, can, or will organize and plan community gardens locally – community garden organizations, program coordinators, social service advocates, teachers, and citizens.
4. **Target a diverse group:** Engage with a cross-section of participants from the government, private and non-profit sectors -- developers, designers, planners, engineers, First Nations, local businesses, master gardeners, students, youth, local chefs, and farmers. Promote wide-ranging participation by using a variety of engagement channels, ranging from on-line software to community feasts.
5. **Build mutual trust and respect:** In all government / community collaborations, ensure that community partners are up-to-date on all government goals, policies, strategies, and planning which could impact the project. (Note that in larger municipalities, a side benefit may be to inform departments of previously unknown policies and programmes in other departments).
6. **Think long term -- act short term:** Have a dual focus: Emphasize strong community relationships to support long-term management and stewardship, while focusing on immediate steps to create, enhance and support community gardens.

Ideas for getting started

Where possible, layer community involvement into existing public processes and/or community events.

- *Community visioning processes* craft statements that weave together food security, local food systems, and community gardening, and shape a community-generated mandate for action.
- *Workshops with champions* co-develop and advance plans to create and maintain community gardens.



Open house at Strathcona Community Garden, Vancouver. Photo: David Tracey

Case study: Seattle P-Patch Gardens

The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods' P-Patch Program, in conjunction with the not-for-profit P-Patch Trust, provides organic community garden space for residents of 70 Seattle neighbourhoods. Community gardens and a variety of other programs serve all citizens of Seattle, with an emphasis on low-income and immigrant populations and youth. The community gardens offer 2500 plots, which serve more than 6000 urban gardeners on 23 acres of land.

P-Patch community gardeners supply 7 to 10 tons of produce to Seattle food banks each year. Supporting a strong environmental ethic, the P-Patch Program allows organic gardening only, and requires 8 hours of annual volunteer work in P-Patch's allotment gardens.
<http://www.seattle.gov/Neighborhoods/ppatch/>



- *Community feasts and forums* celebrate and share local foods, and provide festive and creative settings to discuss community gardening.
- *Facebook ads and other social networking tools and groups* target youth and create a support network for community gardens.
- *Community garden tours* introduce staff and elected officials to existing community gardens and may stimulate strategies to improve sites.
- *Government volunteerism* (staff volunteering in the community as part of the regular workday) supports existing community gardens and creates a bridge to the community through participation.
- *Existing community activities* such as farmers markets bring people together with a focus on fresh local foods. Farmers markets build relationships between buyers and producers, and facilitate networking between residents, farmers, and non-profit organizations. Information tables can promote awareness of community gardens, survey the community on community gardens issues, and identify volunteers.
- A *community food charter* articulates a vision for a sustainable community food system. When adopted by Council, charters help provide staff and elected officials with a mandate to undertake community garden initiatives. Vancouver, Victoria, and Kaslo have food charters; Nanaimo and other local governments in BC are developing food charters.^{vi}



Beekeeping in the garden. Photo: Linda Geggie

STRATEGY 3: POLICIES TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY GARDENS

Goal: *Develop local government policy to support community gardening, and integrate community gardens into existing policy.*

Objectives:

1. **Empower decision makers by developing policy options to support community gardens:** Use existing policy tools such as Official Community Plans to signal support for community gardens and commit resources to their creation and management.
2. **Develop policy to meet multiple sustainability goals:** Use community goals and policy documents related to greenhouse gas reduction, healthy communities, food security, and enhancing the public realm to embed support for community gardens in local policy.

^{vi} The Kaslo Food Charter is available at <http://nklcss.org/foodcharter.pdf>; the Vancouver Food Charter at <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/foodpolicy/policy/charter.htm>, and the Capital Region District Food Charter at: http://www.crd.bc.ca/rte/documents/CRFAIR_Capital_Region_Food_Charter.pdf



3. **Identify and resolve policy barriers and inconsistencies:** Ensure that existing policy documents allow for and are consistent with permitting community gardens as a desired use in appropriate areas.
4. **Work with the community:** Develop a governance policy that commits local government to collaborating with the community.
5. **Collaborate with other jurisdictions:** Partner with neighbourhood houses, community centres, regional districts, First Nations, the province, and federal authorities to finance, plan, and implement community gardens.
6. **Take advantage of new development and retrofits:** Consider community garden space as a community amenity to be negotiated in the development approval process for new multi-family buildings. Help developers understand your requirements by providing design guidelines and checklists (See Appendix A).

Policy ideas to support community gardens

Ensure that community gardens are a permitted use in a range of spaces, and support community gardens through pro-active policy. Integrate policy to support community gardens with existing policy documents by reviewing:

- OCP policy
- land use by-laws
- food and agricultural area plans
- road and building standards
- park master plans
- healthy living strategies
- sustainability resolutions/strategies
- climate change strategies
- neighbourhood plans, and
- downtown revitalization plans (see *Policy Tools* in Chapter 7 for examples of these policy documents)

Ideas for getting started

- Form a food policy or food and agriculture advisory group in your area if one does not exist, in order to provide information to Council on agriculture and food issues.
- Leverage development investment by negotiating community gardens as part of amenity packages for new development (see Chapter 7, *Checklist #3*).
- Ensure that corporate and operating budgets account for financing a community garden program.
- Use student interns to work on various policy-related projects. For example, contact course coordinators to use law students for by-law review, landscape architecture projects for design, and UBC Land, Food and Community students for various projects.



STRATEGY 4: INTERNAL EDUCATION / BUILDING LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Goal: *Generate interest and build knowledge about community gardens among staff and elected officials.*

Objectives:

1. **Create an enjoyable learning environment:** Learning about community gardens should be enjoyable for staff and elected officials. Gardening and celebrating fresh local food are fun and appealing; site visits bring a creative touch to planning, engagement and implementation.
2. **Foster interdepartmental collaboration:** Effective interdepartmental collaboration involves identifying common goals and strategies. Connect departments concerned with planning, engineering, finance, and parks through events and educational programs. In smaller governments, encourage dialogue with staff and elected officials.
3. **Leverage community garden initiatives via other planning processes:** Integrate community garden initiatives with master planning for parks, public realm improvements, agricultural plans, neighbourhood plans, downtown revitalization, and targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions. Remember that planning should support the community's current interests and existing garden initiatives.
4. **Establish a go-to person:** Establish a community garden champion / contact person in the organization, as a resource for internal staff and elected officials as well as the community. Ideally, this person would have an interest in and passion for community gardening. Build this role into a job description.
5. **Communicating/celebrating success:** Publicize your support for community gardens. Communications from local governments can increase the profile of community gardens, inform residents about local government actions, inspire others to get involved, provide information, and link interested parties to resources and organizations who are working on community gardens.
6. **Small grants** Establish a Seed Grant or Matching Fund to support community gardens. Small amounts of funding to seed garden development or to support garden upgrades demonstrate government commitment and help groups leverage other resources.

Ideas for internal education and building support

There are many ways to develop internal education programs, host events, and build support for community gardens:

- Cater community garden events with local seasonal produce prepared by neighbourhood entrepreneurs.



- Invite community leaders to talk to staff and elected officials at lunch & learns. Discuss the leaders' organizations, their upcoming events, and their challenges.
- Invite growers / farmers for luncheon discussions – connect urban and rural people.
- Schedule formal workshops that bring the community together with local government and other stakeholders. Focus on single topics such as creating a vision, design strategies for community gardens, or setting up a kitchen garden for cafeterias in civic facilities.
- Tie community gardens to greenhouse gas emission reduction programs.
- Use advisory councils for up-to-date information on what is happening in the community and beyond.
- Provide speaking points and other tools to help elected officials understand, talk about, and promote community gardens.
- Lead by example: Plant an edible garden on town/city hall land (see San Francisco's experience at <http://www.sfvictorygardens.org/cityhall.html>).



Chapter 7: Tools and Templates to develop and support Community Gardens

This chapter provides practical tools for local governments and the community groups they work with. There are two checklists:

- The first outlines six steps for getting started on a community garden or community garden program.
- The second outlines 10 critical steps to cover when developing a specific community garden, emphasizing the role that local governments can play in the process.

Other tools in this chapter include sample communication tools to help build understanding and support for gardens, and regulatory tools, which deal with issues of land use tenure, gardeners' insurance, and agreements between local governments and gardening groups. The final part of the chapter offers examples of policies and by-laws, taken largely from large and small BC communities. These are provided as potential templates for developing local policy support for community gardens.

CHECKLIST #1: GETTING STARTED

1. Determine community interest level and current activities

- How much interest do residents have in community gardens?
- Who is already working on community gardens?
- What is the history and current status of community gardens in your jurisdiction?

2. Assess local government interest

- What is the level of understanding of community gardens among Council and staff?
- Where is their interest and what is their focus -- revitalization, food security, beautification, climate change?
- What type of role does local government want to play? For example, do they want to actively help develop community gardens or simply remove barriers to their creation?
- What current and pressing local needs could be supported by a community garden program?
- What concerns do local governments have with regard to community gardens?

3. Scan/review local government policy and practice

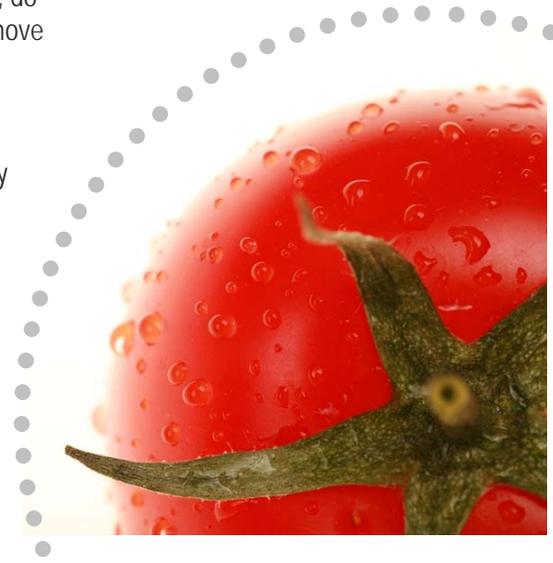
- What in-house expertise and resources are available?

Case Study: City Resolution to support CG in Portland. Portland Parks & Recreation's Community Gardens Program was initiated in 1975 and currently supports several types of community gardening programs. In 2004 the City passed Resolution #36272 which committed the City to continuing to support community gardens, and to creating additional gardens by on City-owned lands.

This Resolution directed the City to conduct an inventory of their properties, to determine suitable sites for gardens or for future agricultural use.

To undertake this work, *the Diggable Cities project* was launched. Graduate students from Portland State University collaborated with the City to inventory public lands.

The findings and inventory were reported back to the City in June 2005. As a follow up, the Portland Food Policy Council formed an Urban Agriculture Subcommittee to work with the City to explore the impediments to community gardens and other urban agricultural uses on city-owned properties and to develop a management plan for use of these lands. For more information on the inventory and project see www.diggablecity.org



- What has the local government already done to support community gardens? (Check, for example, with the Parks Department).
- Note existing strategies and initiatives that are naturally aligned with community gardens (affordable housing, food security, transportation and greenways, economic development).

4. Build understanding and a case

- Find champions/resource people -- councillors, staff, and individuals inside and outside government.
- Based on steps 1 and 2, work with champions to develop a case for local community gardens (see Chapter 4 on *Benefits* and *Communication tools* below).
- Bring ideas forward to Council.

5. Build support, momentum and a vehicle

- Continue to work alongside your champion(s).
- See if staff are interested in establishing a community gardens subcommittee. This committee could be in one department or, preferably, cut across a number of departments.
- Engage residents, participants and other stakeholders in determining priorities for creating community gardens or community garden programs.

6. Next steps

- Conduct a survey to better understand the current situation. How many gardens are there -- waiting lists, areas with active interest in establishing gardens, etc?
- Survey and map potential sites, vacant lands, unique places, schools and community centres.
- Work with the community to provide recommendations to local government for community garden policies and implementation plans.
- Build an array of partnerships and resources to move the process forward.
- See Chapter 7, Checklist #2: "Digging In" -- *10 Steps to Starting a Community Garden*

CHECKLIST #2 - DIGGING IN: 10 STEPS TO STARTING A COMMUNITY GARDEN

This fact sheet provides information on how to start a community garden. It is adapted from the American Community Garden Association's *Starting a Community Garden Guide* (<http://www.communitygarden.org>), and emphasizes the roles that local governments can play in the process.^{vii} It is not meant to be a complete list and

^{vii} The Community Gardening Network of Ottawa has also produced a 47-page guide for community members getting started on a community garden. http://www.spcottawa.on.ca/ofsc/en/community_garden_network.asp



the steps do not necessarily occur in sequence; rather, it offers ideas to be used as a resource for developing individual gardens.

The key role for local government staff is *supporting* the community process, as the community of gardeners and organizations takes the lead in creating and maintaining the garden. This approach will help to build greater community ownership and stewardship of the garden over the short- and long-term.

1. ORGANIZE A MEETING OF INTERESTED PEOPLE

Bring together the key people who are interested in a garden in order to determine if a garden is needed and, if so, what type of garden is wanted, and who it will serve. Invite neighbours, tenants, community organizations, gardening groups, and other interested persons. If the project is meant to benefit a particular group or neighbourhood, it is essential that this group be involved in all phases of development.

Local government role: Participate in the meeting, offer space for the meeting, and help to get the word out. It is important to ensure that community members take the lead in facilitating the meeting. Their buy-in and ownership is critical from the outset.

2. FORM A PLANNING COMMITTEE

Individuals, groups and supporting partners come together to discuss the development of the garden. Select a well-organized leadership team, and create communications protocols and a central contact number. Make a list of things to be done and consider forming committees in areas such as funding and resource development, youth activities, construction, and communication

Local government role: Provide staff time to participate, a staff person who acts as a liaison and contact point with the city, attend planning meetings, offer meeting space, and provide information on how local government can support the development process.

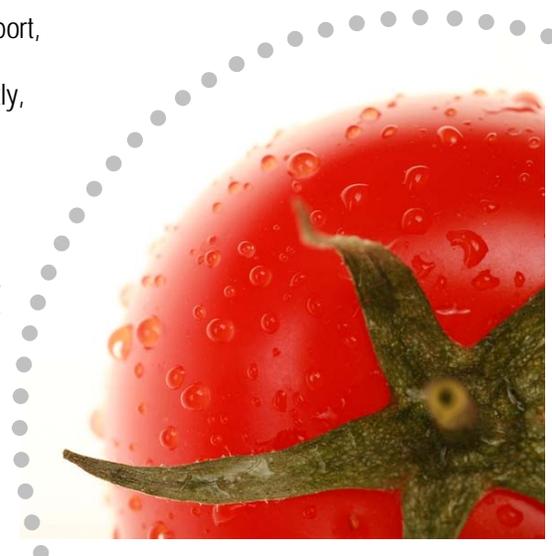
3. IDENTIFY RESOURCES AND APPROACH SPONSORS

A wide range of resources are available in the community and private sector. Contributions of land, tools, seeds, fencing, soil amendments, and finances are all vital. Churches, schools, citizen groups, private businesses, and local parks and recreation departments are potential supporters. Recognition of sponsors is important. Keep a list of sponsors and ensure that transactions are transparent.

Local government role: Local governments can provide expertise, planning support, public consultation support, links to supportive organizations, and seed funds for garden supplies, tools, and materials such as soil, woodchips, etc. Most importantly, they can provide access to land for both provisional (short-term) and long-term gardens.

4. CHOOSE AND SECURE A GARDEN SITE

There are many considerations when choosing a site: soil, sun, slope, water, size, location, ease of access, parking, and proximity to the areas where gardeners live and/or work. Gaining access to a site may require you to: generate support,



document garden plans, anticipate landowners' questions and concerns, approach the landowner, meet with appropriate staff, advisory committees and council, and negotiate the terms of the lease. It is important to continue to communicate with neighbours, seek their input, and work together to overcome concerns.

Local government role: Conduct an inventory of land in the local jurisdiction for potential garden sites. Include parkland, easements, land around facilities, and vacant local government-owned lots. The BC Government has historically provided Crown land to local governments to support public purposes. Where possible, this land has been provided at less than market value through a Crown Grant or Nominal Rent Tenure (see Chapter 5).

5. PREPARE AND DEVELOP THE SITE

In most cases, the site will need considerable preparation before planting. This stage of the process provides an opportunity to engage with a wide range of community members. Volunteers will be critical. After site clean-up, users and those with relevant experience will need to develop a garden design. Locations must be chosen for tool storage, bulletin boards, and signage. Decisions must be made on a variety of issues: How will plots be laid out? Will there be a gathering area? A children's garden? Where will compost be stored? Organize work parties and start the work.

Local government role: Municipal staff can provide expertise in garden design, access to water, materials and resources, and horticultural expertise. Seed funding for garden start up can help kick start gardens and leverage other resources.

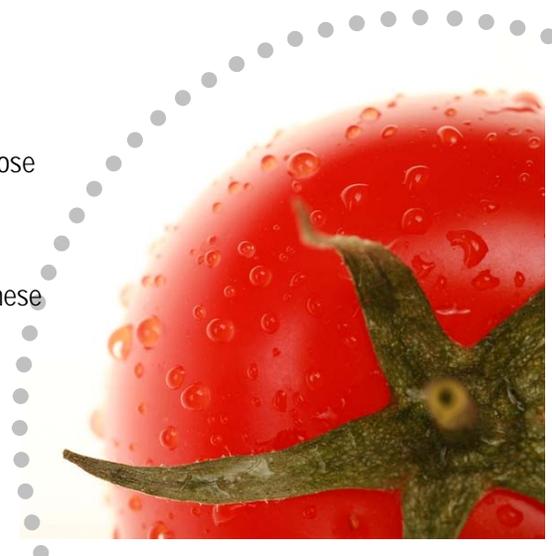
6. CREATE THE GARDEN GUIDELINES AND WRITE DOWN THE RULES

Members and partners must decide how they want to manage the garden. When gardeners develop the guidelines themselves, they will know what is expected and be more likely to follow the rules. Guidance will be required on: conditions for membership, plot assignments, fees, cooperative obligations (e.g., turning in soil at the beginning of the season, composting), meetings and communications, shared tools and equipment, and maintenance responsibilities. Develop a set of written rules which gardeners and guests are expected to uphold, with clear agreed-upon consequences for non-compliance.

Local government role: Local governments can offer support to organizations that help gardener groups undertake this process. They may also have staff with experience in this area. Gardens have a much better chance of success if these types of details are discussed and agreed upon in advance.

7. SET UP A NEW GARDENING ORGANIZATION OR WORK WITH AN ESTABLISHED ENTITY

Many garden groups are organized very informally. However, because gardening groups often enter into leasing agreements and hold insurance, many groups choose to form a gardening organization or are supported by an umbrella organization. A formal structure helps to ensure that gardens are accessible to all and that activities are transparent. Good choices include environmental or community development groups, neighbourhood associations, and religious organizations. These groups will have a legal identity, board of directors, an accountant and insurance.



Most organizations will require a clear picture of garden activities, details on how decisions are made, codes of conduct, and provisions for safety. Agreements must be made concerning communication, recognition, accounting, and ownership of tools, buildings and fixtures.

Local government role: Staff with experience and understanding of this process can be a real asset. It is useful to provide information pertinent to the choice between partnering with established organizations and creating a new organization. In some cases, local governments will choose to cover community gardening activities under their own insurance policies. This is a great support for small gardening groups, and in areas where no organizations provide this type of support.

8. MANAGE YOUR COMMUNITY GARDEN

It is important that community garden groups make agreements about procedures for the ongoing maintenance of the garden, including which areas of the garden are assigned to groups and which will be used by individuals. Written rules spell out exactly what is expected of gardeners, and make it much easier to avoid problems, and to deal with them when they do arise.

Local government role: While garden groups usually conduct the majority of garden maintenance, in some cases local governments can support ongoing operations and maintenance by supplying water and materials and maintaining pathways or the perimeter of the garden.

9. HELP MEMBERS KEEP IN TOUCH WITH EACH OTHER AND THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY

Good communication ensures a strong community garden with actively participating members. Help tools include: a rainproof bulletin board with garden info and contact numbers, garden signage, a newsletter, an email list serve, and a phone tree.

Local government role: Designate one staff person to be the point person for communications, to distribute information to staff and Council, and to communicate with gardeners as needed.

10. CELEBRATE!

Make sure to celebrate your successes. Bring together all partners and individuals to recognize their efforts and contributions. These types of gatherings show everyone who is involved, encourage people to get to know each other through positive experiences, and help build the relationships necessary to work through any problems that arise.

Local government role: Join in! Communicate successes to the appropriate staff and Council. Nominate community leaders for citizenship awards.



POLICY TOOLS FOR COMMUNITY GARDENS

Local government policies can indicate a range of commitments to community gardens: from high-level resolutions that support gardens in principle to specific policies which designate land for community gardens, regulate development, and allocate resources for gardens. Community gardens can also be integrated into many types of planning processes, including official community plans, park master plans, neighbourhood plans, and downtown revitalization plans.

With legislation which requires local government to set greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, policies and actions in OCPs and Regional Growth Strategies community garden policy development may be expedited.

The following table showcases examples of policy language used by other local governments. The table is organized by:

- Policy type: for example, OCP, LAPs;
- Intent: purpose of the policy;
- Policy: the actual wording and/or excerpts from longer policies and;
- Reference: The name of the local government and a URL.



Policy tools for community gardens

Policy Type	Intent	Policy	Reference
Council resolution	Signal that Council intends to support community gardens	<i>The City recognizes community gardening as a valuable activity that can contribute to community development, environmental awareness, positive social interaction and community education. The City will collaborate with the Kamloops Food Policy Council in assisting the development of community gardens [Resolution continues to outline Development of Community Gardens and Parkland Use]</i>	Kamloops (1996)
	Encourage community gardening in all areas of the jurisdiction	<i>In 1999, the City of Toronto adopted the Community Garden Action Plan, which commits the City to have a community garden in each of its 44 wards by 2005.</i>	Toronto ⁴⁷
Official Community Plans	Support community gardening as part of the overall vision for the town or city	<i>[...] Residents enjoy food security through the safeguarding of agricultural land and the promotion of community gardens and urban farming. The community's heritage is valued and promoted [...] (District of Saanich OCP 2008- Excerpt from vision statement)</i>	District of Saanich ⁴⁸
	Allocate public land to community gardens	<i>Where appropriate, offer [local government] owned land as new community garden sites, such as undeveloped parcels, closed road rights of way, marginal park land and along Greenways as part of a Green Streets Program (City of Victoria Community Gardens Program 2005)</i>	Victoria ⁴⁹
	Integrate community gardens into existing land use by-laws	<i>To encourage and support community gardens as important land uses that promote social and environmental sustainability, build communities and provide local food sources. (Regina Development Plan Bylaw No. 2006-64)</i>	Regina ⁵⁰
	Incorporate community gardens into parks and open space	<i>Community gardens are specified as a permitted use in Public Land Co-operative farming and community gardens shall be encouraged.</i>	Hornby Island ⁵¹
	Incorporate community gardens into parks and open space	<i>Support community ownership of our parks and open space system through community gardens and stewardship programs, where appropriate. (OCP)</i>	Port Coquitlam ⁵²
	Establish support for community gardens	<i>The utilization of land for community gardens, market gardens and nurseries that facilitate the growth, sale and consumption of local produce are supported.(OCP)</i>	Lake Windermere, ⁵³ (East Kootenay Regional District)
	Incorporate community gardens into revitalization projects	<i>That the City shall continue to pursue the social and physical revitalization of residential neighbourhoods with improvements to community facilities,</i>	Regina ⁵⁴

Policy tools for community gardens

		<i>support for community associations and neighbourhood initiatives such as community gardens ...</i>	
	Use vacant local government-owned land for temporary community gardens.	<i>That community gardens be considered as short-term options for vacant and surplus City property.</i>	Regina ⁵⁵
	Encourage school community gardens	<i>Through the [community] schools, area residents gain encouragement and support to work on a variety of initiatives, including focused needs assessments, community newsletters, community gardens, seminars, parent/tot and youth drop-in programs.</i>	Burnaby ⁵⁶
	Encourage community gardens in corridors	<i>Public parks and open spaces in the form of urban plazas, community gardens, and landscaped boulevards and open spaces are encouraged in Corridors. (in OCP)</i>	Nanaimo ⁵⁷
	Undertake an inventory in order to determine the best locations for community gardens	<i>Inventory existing municipally owned land and determine if such lands may be appropriate for community gardens. Further in the review of multifamily development applications, consider the appropriateness of incorporating garden plots for residents.</i>	Summerland ⁵⁸
	Establish covenants on public land to encourage community gardening	<i>Council will support the efforts of community organisations in acquiring lands or negotiating Conservation Covenants on private lands for the purpose of protecting lands of natural environmental, habitat, historical, open space or scientific value, including existing farmland that could be converted to community gardens, or demonstration farms for educational, recreational and tourism uses. (In OCP)</i>	Terrace ⁵⁹
	Support community gardening	<i>Support and encourage efforts by community organizations to partner in the maintenance or management of public owned spaces including parks, and future facilities such as community gardens, heritage sites etc. (In OCP)</i>	Ellison ⁶⁰ (Regional District of Central Okanagan)
	Create partnerships for community gardens and provide appropriate insurance	<i>Support and encourage efforts by community organizations to partner in the maintenance or management of public owned spaces including parks, Highway 97 boulevards, foreshore, and future facilities such as community gardens, heritage sites etc. Explore mechanisms for providing group insurance coverage to groups involved in partnership agreements. (In Westside OCP)</i>	Westside ⁶¹ (Regional District of Central Okanagan)
	Encourage community gardens in private developments	<i>The City will encourage the creation and integration of green spaces in private developments e.g. community gardens and green roofs.(Draft</i>	Port Moody ⁶²

Policy tools for community gardens

		policy for OCP update, 2008)	
Set up an advisory council	Provide council with an advisory body that is a bridge between the community and decision makers and has expertise in food systems. (It is recommended that a small portion of staff time be dedicated to going to meetings, attending events, etc.)	<i>Support the creation of a Council advisory body that is focused on community health, food security, and community gardening</i>	Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Kamloops, etc.
Adopt a food charter	Indicate Council support for community gardens in principle	<i>Council adopts the food charter</i>	Vancouver, Kaslo, Central Saanich, etc.
Land inventory	Determine what lands within regional/town/city boundaries can be used for community gardens	<i>Undertake an inventory of all lands within the local government boundary to identify lands that can be made available for community gardens, as well as other community uses)</i>	Vancouver
Zoning by-laws	Permit community gardens in all zoning areas	<i>Community gardens are permitted in all zones in the District of Lake Country. (In Zoning by-laws)</i>	District of Lake Country ⁶³
Park Master Plans	Allow and plan for community gardens in public parks	<i>7.4.2 Strategic Intent - Over the next five years many more community garden areas should be developed in both communities. While the main venue for the gardens should be in community level recreation parks, there is some potential to locate them in neighbourhood park/school sites to encourage resident and school children partnerships which also helps to serve the "integration of the generations" objective. 7.4.3 Recommendations • Designate areas within parks to be used as community gardens, and develop the sites in partnership with local groups and individuals (In Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Culture)</i>	Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows ⁶⁴
Agricultural Area Plans	Consider community gardens on agricultural lands	<i>Encourage farmers to diversify their agricultural operations, by [...] encouraging partnerships between farmers and [...] others to carefully locate and manage allotment gardens (community gardens) on agricultural lands. (Agricultural Viability Strategy, 2003)</i>	Richmond BC ⁶⁵
	Document support for an urban food system and align regional context statements with	<i>Advance a low carbon future for the region ... Municipalities will ... Develop Regional Context Statements that identify policies and actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions both through corporate operations and</i>	Metro Vancouver ⁶⁶

Policy tools for community gardens			
	greenhouse gas reduction targets	<i>community wide initiatives which could include ...promotion of urban agriculture, community gardens, street greening and green roofs; (Metro Vancouver's Growth Strategy – Preliminary Draft)</i>	
	Support food self-reliance	<i>Food security has been identified as an important issue by the community. Initiatives to alleviate the threats to food security, such as farmers markets and community gardens, will be promoted within the City of Nelson. There is a movement toward food self-reliance and Nelson is home to several community food groups and initiatives designed to foster local food security. (From OCP)</i>	Nelson ⁶⁷
Downtown revitalization plans and other strategies	Encourage community gardens in downtown planning	<i>Include a provision for a community garden in the residential site planning. (In Design Guidelines – Healthy Buildings, Health Landscapes and Practices)</i>	City of Langley ⁶⁸
	Community gardens part of the "public infrastructure"	<i>The District will encourage new development in growth centres by: Giving higher priority to improved public infrastructure (sidewalks, parks, open spaces, street trees, community gardens, etc.) in these areas. (In OCP)</i>	North Cowichan ⁶⁹
	Provide incentives for community gardens and urban agriculture	<i>Policy Direction - Food Systems Strategy – Key Tasks and Catalyst Projects - Urban agriculture – Promote and provide spaces for urban agriculture, building upon Sooke's three existing community gardens. For example, offer incentives to developers who incorporate edible landscaping (e.g. fruit trees), extensive green roofs and other forms of urban agriculture into their developments. Community gardens can provide opportunities for residents of multi-family units where space is limited, and home gardening should also be encouraged and supported. (Sooke Sustainable Development Strategy)</i>	Sooke ⁷⁰
Sustainability strategies	Establish community gardens	<i>Establish community gardens. Work towards establishing a network of community gardens, ideally in proximity to the stock of apartment units where people do not have their own plot. For starters, consider three community gardens - one in the vicinity of the former Chinese Gardens, one in the vicinity of the apartments in the downtown area, and one adjacent to the proposed composting facility. City to acquire or dedicate land for this purpose or seek a landowner to grant use of the land as a community garden.(Strategic Sustainability Plan)</i>	Rosland ⁷¹

REGULATORY TOOLS

LAND TENURE OPTIONS

Finding and retaining land for community gardens is one of the greatest challenges facing gardeners.^{viii} In both rural and urban areas, pressure for development and competing interests for land can pose a challenge.

Community gardens can be created on private lands, or on a wide range of public lands. Because community gardens require a considerable amount of time and effort to establish, and can become the “heart” of a neighbourhood, long-term land tenure is optimal. Ideally, leases should be longer than 10 years (though leases of five years or less are not uncommon). Most community gardens lease land, with leases arranged between the landowner and the community gardening group.

Private land

Different kinds of landowners – individuals, religious organizations, private businesses, etc – provide space for community gardens. For example, a gardening group in Kamloops found a home on agricultural land owned by a local farmer. In Victoria, St. Vincent De Paul of the Catholic Diocese has for many years leased land to LifeCycles for “Our Backyard” Community Garden. **Tax incentives for landowners are one way that local governments can encourage this practice.**

Public land

Community gardens are often situated on public lands. Crown corporations, school districts and local governments have all supported community gardens on their properties. Often, these gardens are developed when a group is looking for land and identifies a viable site on public lands. In other instances, community gardens are part of larger strategies such as city green space or greenway networks. Increasingly, schoolyards, hospitals and health facilities are also becoming homes for community gardens.

Because Parks and Recreation Departments see community gardens as a good fit with their mandate to promote healthy lifestyles, many community gardens are developed in conjunction with these facilities. For most gardeners, a garden in a park is a very positive option: park gardens are generally protected from development, have ready access to water, and may have access to compost and other materials. Park locations also enable gardeners to enjoy nearby park amenities such as public washrooms and playgrounds.

A Parks Department can manage a community garden program itself (as in Montreal and Toronto), or develop a leasing arrangement with a gardening group. Costs to local governments can be small relative to the benefits. The garden may even save the city money if gardeners tend neglected areas, or

Fact: Land tenure for community gardens needs to be improved. In 1996, a survey conducted by the American Community Gardening Association showed that stable land tenure was a serious challenge across North America, with only 5% of over 6000 community gardens having permanent garden sites.

^{viii} The information in this discussion is adapted from *How to Create and Protect Community Gardens in Greater Victoria, Part III: Land Tenure Options*, by Emily MacNair. Polis Project on Ecological Governance, 2002.



areas that add to the seasonal workload of maintenance staff. Keep in mind that land use arrangements may affect municipal staff and unions. Working conditions, contracts and agreements must be taken into consideration, and accommodation or negotiation undertaken where necessary.

In some cases, local governments which invest in community gardens to meet health, recreation, climate change mitigation or other related goals, may acquire new parklands, which are then used for community gardens (see City of Victoria sidebar).

Increasing the security of tenure for community gardens:

Too many gardens end in heartbreak when leases expire or are terminated, and the garden must be dismantled. The types of land use arrangements highlighted below can increase the chances of stable tenure.

Land trusts

Community gardens can find permanent homes on land purchased or donated, then placed in a land trust. Land trusts are generally managed by non-profit organizations with a mandate to protect land from development. Although the majority of land trusts are associated with larger wild spaces, they can be a tool for preserving green space in cities, a practice common in the United States and gaining interest in BC. For example, the Philadelphia Neighbourhood Garden Association holds title to 22 community gardens. In Victoria, The Land Conservancy protects Abkhazi gardens in perpetuity.

Conservation covenants

A conservation covenant is a legal agreement which ensures that a piece of land will continue to be used in a specified way, or be protected from development, in perpetuity. The covenant is registered on the land title, and is maintained if the land changes ownership. In exchange for this land use guarantee, the owner receives a tax break. Local governments may grant covenants on publicly-owned land for specific uses, including community gardening. In some cases, local governments may hold joint covenants with organizations.

Policy and planning tools

Local governments can use policy and planning tools to support the use of land for community gardens (see Chapter 7 -- *Policy Tools*). Community gardens can be integrated into Official Community Plans, and be encouraged through zoning. Community gardens may also be negotiated as an amenity during a re-zoning and/or density bonusing provision as per the Local Government Act.

AGREEMENTS AND INSURANCE

As mentioned elsewhere in the report, it is highly recommended that community gardens develop written agreements between landowners and the gardening organization, whether the landowner is a private citizen, an organization or a local government. Liability insurance may be required when dealing with local governments, and it is wise to closely consider the potential benefits.

Case study: The City of Victoria manages a Parks and Greenways Acquisition Fund, a reserve fund that dedicates financial resources to the purchase of land for parks and greenways. Ten percent of future land sales will be funnelled to the Acquisition Fund, and a portion of this fund can be allocated to purchasing land for community gardens.



Agreements and Insurance: policies and examples for community gardens

POLICY TYPE	INTENT	POLICY	EXAMPLES
Agreements between gardeners and local government or landowner	Ensure high standards (of maintenance, etc.) and sustainability of gardens	Put in place contracts, memoranda of agreements, or letters of agreement regarding: land leases and tenure, garden governance, insurance, user fees and standards of maintenance.	<p>Saanich has a comprehensive Community Gardens Policy which includes background, policy definition, goals, a description of the ways in which Saanich supports community gardens, conditions of use, and guidelines for selecting new sites and retaining existing sites.⁷²</p> <p>Central Okanagan Community Gardens partnered with the City of Kelowna Parks Department to create community gardens and assist in developing policy to support them.⁷³</p> <p>The City of Toronto Department of Parks and Recreation has developed an application process and an implementation process for gardening groups that wish to use land in public parks. The processes have a strong focus on community involvement and research.⁷⁴</p>
Insurance	Financial protection for the landowner against lawsuits. Most gardens carry insurance to protect the sponsoring organization or because some other entity, for example a local government, requires coverage in order for the garden to exist. ⁷⁵	Ensure insurance coverage. Local governments can include community gardens in their own policy, the community group may cover their own insurance, or there can be a combination of approaches.	<p>The City of Ottawa pays the insurance for the Nepean Allotment Garden Association's community garden.⁷⁶</p> <p>In March 2006, the City of New York extended municipal liability protection to community gardeners on city-owned land, thereby no longer requiring garden organizations to pay for private insurance policies.⁷⁷</p>

COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Effective communication plays an important role in both educating local government staff and elected officials, and raising public awareness. Communications from local governments also signal support for community



gardens and the organizations that support them, are critical in building a higher profile for gardens as well as attracting further funding. In this section, we offer a sample briefing paper for communication with staff and elected officials. This tool contains information which is covered elsewhere in the report; it is offered here as an example or template, to be adapted for use by local governments.

SAMPLE Briefing Paper

Community gardens and potential role for local governments

Start with a brief two or three sentence introduction to the issue. Example: There is an opportunity to revitalize underutilized municipal land as community garden space. This could contribute to greater food security in the region.

WHAT ARE COMMUNITY GARDENS?

This is the background section which provides, in two brief paragraphs at most, background information on community gardens. This could include any information on existing gardens in the community.

The American Community Gardening Association defines a community garden as:

"Any piece of land gardened by a group of people. ... urban, suburban, or rural. It can grow flowers, vegetables or community. It can be one community plot, or can be many individual plots. It can be at a school, hospital, or in a neighbourhood. It can also be a series of plots dedicated to "urban agriculture" where the produce is grown for a market."

Community gardens take many shapes and sizes, and include the growing and harvesting of vegetables, fruit, flowers, and the raising of small livestock, both for personal and commercial purposes. Most people think of community gardens as common or individual garden plots, but there are community gardens in backyards, on rooftops, balconies, boulevards, and in greenhouses. Gardens are located on vacant land, in parks, alongside schools, churches, recreation and health facilities, and elsewhere.

HOW CAN COMMUNITY GARDENS BENEFIT OUR COMMUNITY?

This section discusses, in a maximum of three to four paragraphs, the reasons for taking action: community pressure to act, food security, revitalization, greenhouse gas emission reductions, etc. It also presents expected benefits, which could be drawn from the benefits section of this Toolkit or taken from local organizations willing to share more site or locally specific information.

RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION

This section outlines the proposed course of action and describes both positive and negative impacts. It is appropriate to include positive and negative information on the potential impact of not taking action. You may also want to include more detailed information on the stages of planning and implementation.

Most importantly, be clear what you are asking for and keep it brief!

Fact: A Briefing Paper can be used to communicate to staff and elected officials about community gardens. In 2007, a version of this briefing paper, accompanied by a Power Point presentation, was used to provide background information on the benefits of urban agriculture to staff and Council of the City of Victoria. This work resulted in the adoption of a Resolution on urban agriculture, soon after.

Appendices to the briefing paper might include:

- 1. Examples of local governments and other organizations who have developed community garden or urban agriculture strategies:*
- 2. A detailed synopsis of community garden activities in the local area*



Section 3: Conclusion and Appendices

Chapter 8: Conclusions

Community gardens are an effective way for local governments to engage with the expertise and experience in the community to meet social, environmental, and food security goals. Jurisdictions across BC and throughout North America are embracing and supporting community gardens for a variety of locally relevant reasons, ranging from concern for global climate change to local considerations such as providing green space for gardening enthusiasts. Local governments are introducing by-laws and policies that promote community gardens, partnering with gardening groups and actively supporting their resource needs, and publicizing the benefits of community gardens in government communications.

The role of local governments vis-à-vis community gardens is essentially an enabling and supportive one. Partnering with community organizations in the creation and ongoing success of community gardens, and taking advantage of their experience, is an efficient and effective means to meet community needs.

- This toolkit has provided background information which can help to educate both local government staff and elected officials, while building the case for supporting community gardens. It offers communication tools for internal education and raising public awareness. It illustrates how many commonly perceived barriers to community garden programs have been overcome in jurisdictions with successful programs. Section Two offers a wide range of practical tools, such as model policies and land use options, which BC local governments can adapt to their own needs and geographies.

It should be remembered that community gardens are one action among many which are needed to create a just and sustainable food system. Urban and peri-urban^{ix} agriculture policy and practice encompasses a wide range of strategies

Top three things that a local government can do to support community gardens:

1. Provide support and resources for community groups to organize and develop gardens
2. Provide access to land
3. Build connectivity and resilience through linking community gardens to health, recreation, social, environmental and economic strategies and beyond

^{ix} Peri-urban refers to the peripheral areas surrounding an urban town or city, usually within 75-100 kilometres.



and actions. This report details how local governments can improve the health and well-being of their citizens with community gardening programs that help meet social, environmental and food security goals.



Appendices

Appendix A: Design Guidelines for Community Gardens

Goal: *Build and maintain community gardens as functional, lasting, and enjoyable places to garden and gather.*

Community gardens take all sorts of shapes and forms, as indicated in Chapter 2. The design guidelines below offer general principles for building and maintaining community gardens. More specific guidance on “structural design requirements” can be found below. But first, the essential elements of a well-designed community garden are outlined.

Guiding principles for designing community gardens

Celebrate food: Build outdoor facilities for food preparation and outdoor eating that enable people to socialize and celebrate food. Consider including an outdoor clay oven for community use. Such ovens are used to create pizza, bread, and other baked goods.

Productive landscape: Whenever possible, choose landscape plants that produce food or herbs. Edible flowers add a pleasing aesthetic.

Appearance: Design community gardens to be attractive and easily maintained, especially in highly visible spaces.

Showcase: Use community demonstration gardens to profile urban agriculture practices. Where possible, site gardens in communal spaces (e.g., courtyards and rooftops).

Think like a gardener: Design community gardens from the perspective of a user (e.g., think about wheelbarrow turning radii and loading zones.)

Ecological health: Maintain community gardens with plant and soil health in mind. Incorporate wildlife habitat where possible, and promote the use of natural building materials, fertilization, and pest control.

Inclusiveness: Design for all mobility levels.

Safety: Ensure safety for all ages by pro-actively addressing potential hazards.

Eyes on the garden: Ensure whenever possible that sites are highly visible, especially from multi-family or community buildings.

Connect to green space: Locate community gardens near trail systems and / or park areas, whenever possible.

Long-term stability: Ensure that community gardens have long-term leases, where possible, to ensure stability for gardeners. This provides the



Typical community garden layout.

security required for gardeners to work towards a successful garden. Explore alternative land tenure models such as land trusts or cooperatively-owned land (See *Legal tools* in Chapter 7).

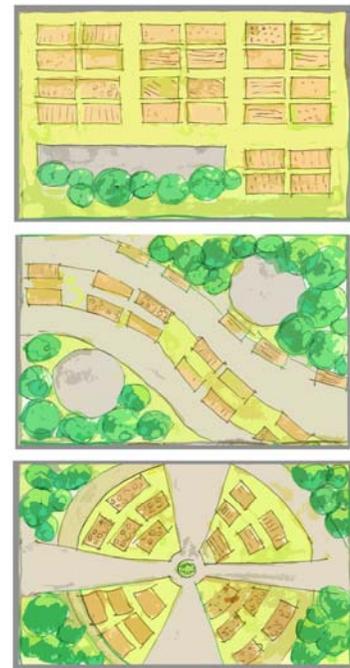
Design for energy efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability:

Place most-used functions close by and less-used functions in further reaches of the garden. For example, place information kiosks at entrances, compost bins at the extremities, often-harvested plants near edges, and fruit trees furthest away.

Siting & Orientation: Where to locate new Community Gardens

Exact locations will emerge from community input and need. Siting considerations include:

- Orient community gardens to maximize solar exposure and minimize shade and wind exposure throughout the year (e.g. against a wall, south-facing).
- Situate community gardens within a 5-10 minute walk from residential areas and / or near transit stops whenever possible, and explore transit options.
- Site community gardens near other community land uses, especially high pedestrian traffic areas such as parks, community centres, schools, and town squares, and near amenities such as schools, seniors' living, cafes, and restaurants. This will maximize participation and integration into the community. High exposure and visibility will also assist in long-term management and reduce vandalism.
- Maximize the efficiency of existing infrastructure, especially water systems, by locating community gardens in serviced areas, or in areas where services can be reasonably supplied.
- Avoid areas with high vehicular traffic and/or contaminated soil. If soils are contaminated, ensure that old soil is either removed or capped with a non-permeable surface, utilize raised beds, and bring in clean soil.



Alternative garden layout

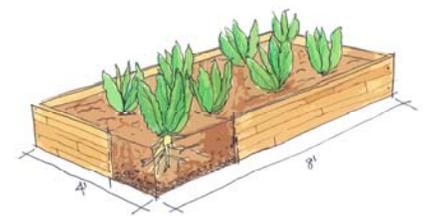


Two-foot reach for gardeners

Structural Design Requirements for Community Gardens

Many community gardens were created with little planning or design. Some lack access to water, composting facilities, tool storage, or universal accessibility, and require upgrading. When planning new community gardens, the following structural design requirements should be considered:

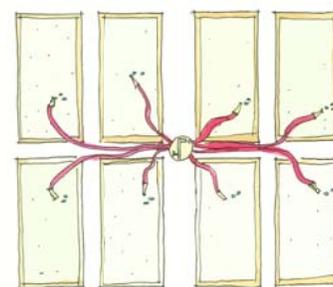
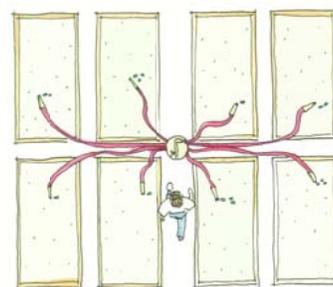
- **Gardens (in-ground and raised):** Raised beds are necessary when soil is contaminated or low quality. Beds should be a maximum of two feet wide to allow access from one side, and a maximum of four feet wide to allow access from two sides. Where space is limited, a minimum of 32 sq. ft. (4' X 8') is sufficient to grow a good range and quantity of produce. Stepping stones are not recommended. They compact the soil, and are not an efficient use of growing space. Wheelchair-accessible gardens should be 24" to 48" above grade. In-ground gardens should adhere to the same guidelines.
- **Soil:** Soil depth for in-ground and raised beds should be a minimum of 18" to ensure adequate substrate for plant growth. Soil composition



Standard 4' x 8' raised bed design

should be suited to climate (e.g., better-drained soils for wetter climates, more organic matter to retain soil moisture where summers are hot). If soil must be transferred to a site, test it for pH, nutrients, and contaminants. On-site composting provides regular soil amendments and builds soil quality. Many community gardens choose to use only organic amendments and eschew synthetic pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers for a variety of reasons, including food quality, environmental health, and the health of gardeners.^x

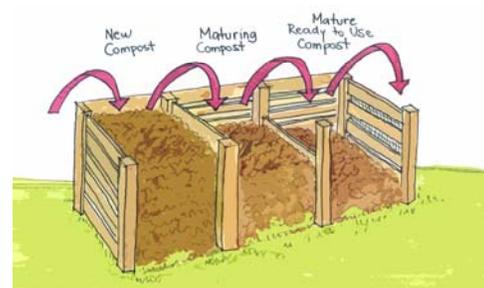
- **Water:** Access to water is essential. Providing hosebibs will ensure safe and easy watering of all areas of the garden. Numerous hosebibs are essential to avoid hoses being dragged over and across growing plants. A guideline for hosebib frequency is: one hosebib centred in eight 4' by 8' beds (see diagram). Rain barrels can collect rainwater to be stored in cisterns. Water is then pumped to hosebibs and used to decrease reliance on sources of potable water.
- **Easing movement in the garden:** Gardens should be designed for easy movement of soil, plants, tools and water. One-foot wide paths between beds and two-foot widths between bed clusters are a minimum to maneuver wheelbarrows or carry tools and buckets. Four-foot wide paths are required for full accessibility. Include space for vehicle access and loading areas to ease transfer of garden supplies. A small number of parking spots and a bike lock-up area should be made available.
- **Composting:** On-site composting is a key to managing gardens and creating nutrient-rich soils. The size of the composting system should be relative to the number and size of garden plots. One three-stage composter is generally required for every 10-15 standard-sized (4' X 8') garden beds, or every 320-480 square feet. The number of composters required will vary with the type of planting and style of garden management. For example, intensive growing and year-round gardening produce more organic waste and require more composting facilities.
- **Additional soil amendments:** Additional amendments may be required, above and beyond compost. Manure, worm castings, fish meal, seaweed and other supplements should be considered, as should nitrogen-fixing legumes grown as winter cover crops – a great way to build soil fertility. Synthetic or chemical amendments should be avoided.
- **Structures:** On-site structures include tool storage sheds, potting areas, greenhouses, benches, outdoor kitchen areas with sinks, BBQ pits, and harvest tables. These enhance the garden environment and



Hosebib frequency



Garden circulation and raised bed clusters



3-bin Compost system

^x At a minimum, the principles of Integrated Pest Management should be used to minimize the use of chemical inputs. Avoiding synthetic pesticides is particularly important in community garden settings, because most community gardeners are not trained in safe pesticide handling and use, and because community gardens are by definition situated in residential areas. The potential for residents (including children) and pets to be exposed to pesticides is higher than in regions which are specifically zoned for agriculture.

provide spaces for people to gather, garden and gab. Secure, dry tool storage is essential for keeping tools and other materials on-site.

- **Signage:** Weather-protected bulletin boards help gardeners manage the space. Signage for the garden itself eases way-finding and creates a special identity for the garden.
- **Fencing:** Fencing is not generally recommended, as a fence can send the message: "Private property... keep out!" However, low, permeable fences can exclude dogs and signal that the garden is a special place with specific rules. Green fences – edible shrubs and trees – are a friendly and attractive alternative to traditional fencing.
- **Special features:** Community gardens can be enhanced by installing special features – an espalier fruit tree orchard, beekeeping facilities, or permaculture demonstration plots. Feast tables and BBQ pits encourage social activity in the garden and add value to the space. Demonstrations of container gardening for patios and rooftops offer a valuable service in areas where housing reaches two storeys or more.



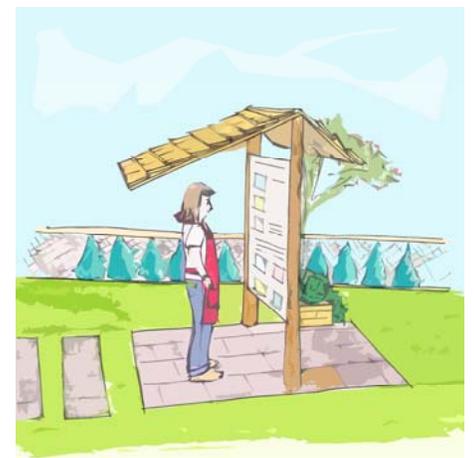
Tool shed and potting bench

Appendix B: Samples & Tips^{xi}

Guidelines and Rules for the Garden

Some rules may be more relevant to some kinds of community gardens than others. Pick and choose what best fits your situation.

- I will pay a fee of \$___ to help cover garden expenses.
- I will have something planted in the garden by (date) and keep it planted all summer long.
- If I must abandon my plot for any reason, I will notify the garden leaders.
- I will keep weeds down and maintain any areas immediately surrounding my plot.
- If my plot becomes unkempt, I understand I will be given (timeframe) notice to clean it up. If it is not cleaned up by that time, it will be re-assigned or tilled in.
- I will clean up trash and litter in the plot, and from adjacent pathways and fences.
- I will participate in the fall garden cleanup.
- I will plant tall crops only where they do not shade neighbouring plots.
- I will harvest only my own crops, unless given permission by another user.
- I will not use fertilizers or pesticides that will in any way affect other plots.



Weather proof garden signage

^{xi} See the City of San Francisco's Parks and Recreation website at http://www.parks.sfgov.org/site/recpark_page.asp?id=46469 for further examples of community garden policies and gardener-Parks Department agreements.

- I agree to provide (number) volunteer hours toward community gardening efforts (include a list of volunteer tasks which your garden needs).
- I will not bring pets to the garden.
- 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 THE OWNERS OF THE LAND FOR ANY LIABILITY, DAMAGE, LOSS OR CLAIM THAT OCCURS IN CONNECTION WITH USE OF THE GARDEN BY ME OR MY GUESTS.

Tips for creating better garden partnerships

- Good communication is key (stay away from acronyms and jargon).
- Identify who needs to be involved at the start; spend some time articulating each party's vision for the garden.
- Clarify roles in garden planning, development and maintenance.
- State what you can bring to the table.
- Be aware of and explain your limits.
- Make an action plan together. Where possible, include all parties in decision-making.
- Schedule meetings at times that are convenient for everyone.
- Make meetings accessible in a setting that is comfortable.
- Have fun!

Application Forms

Application forms can include any of the following information:

Name(s)

Address

Telephone number: Days _____ Evenings _____

Site Preference: 1. 2. 3. 4.

Size of plot (list choices available)

Season: Year round (must be maintained all year)

Short season (include dates)

Check the appropriate items:

- I am a senior citizen
- I am physically disabled
- This is my first year at this garden
- I would like a garden next to a friend, Name _____
- I have gardened here before and would like plot #____, if available
- I have gardened before at (where?), for (period of time)
- I would like to join the gardener mentor program as a learner or a mentor (circle one)

I understand and will abide by the Community Garden Guidelines

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Community Gardening Links

NAME	LOCATION	WEBSITE
American Community Gardening Association	Columbus, Ohio (US/Canada)	www.communitygarden.org
City Farmer	Vancouver	http://www.cityfarmer.org http://www.cityfarmer.info/
Committee on Community Gardens	Madison, WI	http://www.cityofmadison.com/residents/communitygardens/index.cfm
Community Food and Garden Network	Madison, WI	http://www.cacscw.org/gardens/cfgn/index.htm
Community Garden Program	Portland, OR	http://www.portlandonline.com/parks/index.cfm?c=39846
Edible Landscape	Montreal	http://www.mcgill.ca/mchq/pastproject/el/
Environmental Youth Alliance	Vancouver	http://www.eya.ca/index.php?id=2
Evergreen Foundation	Canada	http://www.evergreen.ca/en/cg/cg-resources.html
Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens	UK	http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/
FoodShare	Toronto	http://www.foodshare.net/garden02.htm
Friends of Portland Community Gardens	Portland, OR	http://www.friendspdxgardens.org/index.htm
Gateway Greening	St. Louis, MO	http://www.gatewaygreening.org/index.asp
Green Guerillas	New York City	http://www.greenguerillas.org/
Green Thumb	New York City	http://www.greenthumbnyc.org/
Growing Gardens	Portland, OR	http://www.growing-gardens.org/
Just Food	NY, NY	http://www.justfood.org/jf/
Lifecycles Project Society and Sharing Backyards Program	Victoria	www.lifecyclesproject.ca
Neighborhood Gardens Association	Philadelphia	http://www.ngalandtrust.org/
Philadelphia Green	Philadelphia	http://www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org/phlgreen/gardentenders.html
POLIS Project on Ecological Governance	BC	http://www.polisproject.org/researchareas/urbanustainability
P-Patch Community Gardens	Seattle, WA	http://www.cityofseattle.net/neighborhoods/patch/
Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture and Food Security	International (South)	http://www.ruaf.org/
Resource Centres	Global	http://www.ruaf.org/

NAME	LOCATION	WEBSITE
on Urban Agriculture and Food Security		
SARE – Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education	US	http://www.sare.org/
Seattle Tilth	Seattle	http://www.seattletilth.org/
Senate Department for Urban Development	Berlin, Germany	http://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/umwelt/stadtgruen/kleingaerten/index_en.shtml
SFGro	San Francisco	http://www.sfgro.org/index.php
The Diggable City	Portland	http://www.diggablecity.org/ http://www.portlandonline.com/osd/index.cfm?c=42793
The Food Project	Boston, MA	http://www.thefoodproject.org/
Trust for Public Land	San Francisco	http://www.tpl.org/

Appendix D: Community Gardens In BC⁷⁸

City	#community gardens	City	#community gardens	City	#community gardens
100 mile House	1	Houston	1	Port Edward	1
Abbotsford	1	Invermere	1	Port Moody	1
Agassiz	1	Kamloops	6	Prince George	2
Alkali Lake	1	Kaslo	1	Quesnel	1
Anahim Lake	1	Kelowna	4	Revelstoke	1
Avola	1	Kimberly	1	Richmond	5
Barriere	1	Ladysmith	2	Rutland	1
Bella Coola	3	Langley	3	Sechelt	1
Burnaby	4	Lone Butte	1	Smithers	1
Burns Lake	1	Mackenzie	1	Soda Creek	1
Canim Lake	1	Maple Ridge	5	Squamish	2
Canoe Creek	1	Matsqui	1	Surrey	4
Castlegar	1	Merritt	2	Terrace	1
Chase	2	Mission	1	Vancouver	33
Chemainus	1	Moberly Lake	1	Vanderhoof	1
Clearwater	1	Nakusp	1	Victoria	17
Colwood	1	Nanaimo	2	Wells	1
		New West		West Vancouver	2
Coquitlam	2	Westminster	2	Vancouver	2
Courtenay	1	North Saanich	1	Westbank	1
Cranbrook	2	North Vancouver	2	Whistler	1
Creston	2	Parksville	1	Williams Lake	3
Dawson Creek	1	Peachland	1	Winfield	1
Duncan	3	Pemberton	1	Xeni Gwet'in	1
Fernwood	1	Penticton	1		
Grasmere	1	Pitt Meadows	1		
Hazleton	2	Port Coquitlam	1		

Endnotes

- 1 For a short summary of local government support of community gardens in major Canadian cities as of 2004, including which municipal departments are involved in community garden activities, see www.edmonton.ca/OcctopusDocs/Public/Complete/Reports/CS/Elected-1995/2004-01-12/2004CSP007.doc.
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