



Organizing your Community Garden II

Making your garden happen –
garden elements, soil basics, seed
starting, selecting plant materials for
you garden, maintaining your garden,
composting and soil building.



Organizing Your Community Garden II

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Presentation Topics:

- Management of your garden
- Problem Solving
- Design Basics
- Community Resources

The Franklin Park Conservatory gratefully acknowledges the following for handouts and information:

- University of California Cooperative Extension, Los Angeles County



MANAGING THE COMMUNITY GARDEN

In order to offer a high quality community gardening program, good management techniques are essential.

The garden need regular maintenance, both physically (pulling weeds) and organizationally (enforcing rules). Careful planning will make this a much easier and effective task.

Management plan:

With the garden established, it is time to develop a modest management plan. The management plan need not be a formal, detailed document; its purpose should be to remind you of ongoing tasks. Keep it simple and brief.

The management plan identifies all those ongoing tasks and how they will be accomplished, such as:

- Organizational meetings to plan your activities
- Weed control
- Compost making and turning
- Tools and equipment maintenance
- Risk management
- Social activities
- Inducting new members to the garden
- Working with plot holders
- Starting new seeds

Figure out a general schedule for activities and plot this on a one-year timeline. Then decide how and by whom the tasks will be tackled.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Vandalism is a common fear among community gardeners; however, the fear tends to be much greater than the actual incidence.

Try these proven methods to deter vandalism:

- Make a sign for the garden. Let people know to whom the garden belongs and that it is a neighborhood project.
- Fences can be of almost any material. They serve as much to mark possession of a property as to prevent entry, since nothing short of razor-wire and landmines will keep a determined vandal from getting in. Short picket fences or turkey wire will keep out dogs and honest people.
- Create a shady meeting area in the garden and spend time there.
- Invite EVERYONE in the neighborhood to participate from the very beginning. Persons excluded from the garden are potential vandals.
- Plant raspberries, roses or other thorny plants along the fence as a barrier to fence climbers.
- Make friends with the neighbors whose windows overlook the garden. Trade them flowers and vegetables for a protective eye.
- Harvest all ripe fruit and vegetables on a daily basis. Red tomatoes falling from the vines invites trouble.
- Plant potatoes, other root crops or a less popular vegetable such as kohlrabi along the sidewalk or fence. Plant the purple varieties of cauliflower and beans or the white eggplant to confuse a vandal.
- Plant a 'vandal's garden' at the entrance. Mark it with a sign: 'If you must take food, please take from here'.

People Problems and Solutions

Most gardens can ill afford poor relations with neighbors, local politicians or potential sponsors. Angry neighbors and bad gardener pose problems for a community garden and usually the two are related. Neighbors complain to municipal governments about messy, unkempt gardens or rowdy behavior.

Therefore, choose bylaws carefully so you have procedure to follow when members fail to keep their plots clean and up to code. A well organized garden with strong leadership and committed members can overcome almost any obstacle.

SITE DESIGN

Elements of a Community Garden Design

Who will use the Garden?

- Children
 - Include smaller scale elements
- Adults
 - Include gather areas as well as more solitary spots
- Seniors
 - Select path material for easy footing
- Wildlife
 - Include plants for food, water and shelter

How will the Garden be utilized?

- Separate plots or communal?
- Play activities?
- Food production?
- Job training and job creation?
- Aesthetics?
- Celebration- worship, dining, music and dance?

What is your neighborhood?

- Play off features of surrounding architecture
- Utilize good views: screen bad ones
- Who are your neighbors

Children's Plots

Children included in the garden process become champions of the cause rather than vandals of the garden.

- Allocate some plots specifically for children
- A 'children garden' can help market your idea to local scout troops, day care centers, foster grandparent programs, church groups etc.
- Consider offering free small plots in the children's garden to children whose parents already have a plot in the garden.