



Ready, set, grow!

Your guide to starting a community garden.

Here's the scoop... community gardens help cities and towns grow. They strengthen social connections and encourage the entire community to work together. They can also provide access to fresh, healthy and affordable food for the whole community. Plus, people of all ages can help out!

You can start a community garden with your school, neighborhood, workplace, club, organization or any interested group! Get growing on your community garden by following these steps.

1. Organize a meeting.

Gather and discuss with members of the community about how a garden could benefit the area. Hold meetings to pitch ideas on what type of garden to develop (vegetable, flower, both, etc.) and form an action plan.

2. Identify resources.

Form local partnerships with businesses, schools, societies and individuals who can supply access to needed materials, tools, funding and assistance. You can also contact city planners to find possible sites for your garden.

3. Pick a location.

Community gardens can beautify vacant lots and public parks, as well as revitalize communities in industrial areas. Find out who owns the land and discuss a lease agreement. Whichever site you choose, be sure it has access to at least six hours of daily sunlight (for fruits and veggies) and easy access to water.

4. Design your garden.

Test the soil for possible pollutants, then find volunteers to gather materials and prepare the garden. Decide on a design and plot arrangement. Include footpaths between plots, and consider other factors like protection against animals, storage space for tools and even areas for children to get involved.

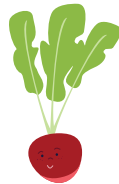
5. Plant away!

Make your garden more sustainable by using native plants, composting, mulching and water-efficient techniques. Welcome visitors and meet regularly with other partners of the garden to discuss changes that need to be made or feedback from neighbors. Don't forget to plan ahead for the next year too!

There's a variety of fruits and vegetables you can plant in your community garden. Below are just a few examples, along with the best times of the year to plant them.



Asparagus
Fall or Spring



Beet
March



Broccoli
March



Carrot
Feb. 15 to
March 10



Cauliflower
Feb. 15 to
March 10



Lettuce
Feb. 15 to
March 10



Onion
Feb. 15 to
March 10



Green Peas
Feb. 15 to
March 10



Spinach
Feb. 15 to
March 10



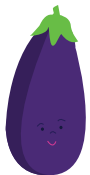
Turnip
Feb. 15 to
March 10



Cantaloupe
May 1-20



Cucumber
Feb. 15 to
March 10



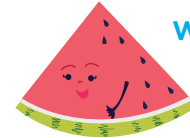
Eggplant
April 10-30



Pepper
April 10-30
or later



Tomato
April 10-30



Watermelon
May 1-20

Personal gardens.

Planting your own garden can be just as rewarding as starting a community one. Gardening can uplift your mood and reduce stress, plus it's a great way to get 30 minutes of physical activity. It's a rewarding hobby too... you get to eat the fresh, delicious fruits and vegetables that you plant. If you have extra, you can share your harvest with your friends, neighbors and coworkers.

Find more healthy tips at ShapeYourFutureOK.com.