

# LA CROSSE COMMUNITY GARDEN TOOLKIT



# INTRODUCTION

If you've found your way to this toolkit, you're likely thinking of starting a community garden in La Crosse. So, why garden? Why garden in community? Perhaps you've noticed a vacant lot in your neighborhood; perhaps you've felt a desire within yourself to better know your neighbors, to better know your community. Perhaps you desire to be more physically active, to eat more healthfully, or to be a better local steward of our shared environment. Here are a few excellent reasons to start a community garden in your neighborhood:

- Provide fresh, healthy, affordable food.
- Encourage physical activity for all age groups.
- Create a gathering space for the community and opportunities for mentoring between new and experienced gardeners.
- Provide a welcome space for participants to build self-confidence and personal skills.
- Enable participants to gain a better understanding of our food system.
- Improve our shared environment by creating or preserving green space and by encouraging people to act as local stewards.

Whatever your reasons, we're happy you're here, and we're happy to help. So let's get gardening!



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>GAUGING INTEREST/IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>XX</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>FORMING A GARDEN COMMITTEE</b>	<b>XX</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>SELECTING A SITE</b>	<b>XX</b>
	~Private Land: Getting It Right with the Landowner	
	~Public/Semi-Public Land: Getting It Right with the City	
<b>4.</b>	<b>SELECTING A MODEL</b>	<b>XX</b>
	~Allotment (Plot-Based) Community Gardens	
	~Collective Community Garden	
	~Food Forests	
	~School/Church Gardens	
	~Apartment Complex Gardening	
<b>5.</b>	<b>FUNDING</b>	<b>XX</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>FORMING PARTNERSHIPS/USING COMMUNITY RESOURCES</b>	<b>XX</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>BUILDING AND INSTALLING THE GARDEN</b>	<b>XX</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>SECURITY</b>	<b>XX</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>A REVIEW</b>	<b>XX</b>
	~Common Issues	
<b>10.</b>	<b>STARTING YOUR NEW COMMUNITY GARDEN!</b>	<b>XX</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>RESOURCES</b>	<b>XX</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>XX</b>
	<b>Appendix A:</b> Sample Agenda for Introductory Garden Meeting	
	<b>Appendix B:</b> Sample Flyer	
	<b>Appendix C:</b> Garden Committee Positions	
	<b>Appendix D:</b> Sample Lease Agreement with Hold Harmless Clause	
	<b>Appendix E:</b> Washburn Community Garden Conditional Use Permit Application	
	<b>Appendix F:</b> Sample Request for Monetary Donation	
	<b>Appendix G:</b> Sample Garden Wish List	
	<b>Appendix H:</b> Sample Garden Guidelines	
	<b>Appendix I:</b> Sample Gardener Registration Form	

# 1

## Gauging Interest/Identifying Potential Participants

In order to develop a successful community garden, you'll need to engage the community! A good first step is identifying who is in your neighborhood. Your neighbors, certainly—but also schools, libraries, churches, retirement communities, clubs and associations, businesses, etc. You'll want to let people know about your desire to start a community garden and gauge the level of interest, support, and commitment from potential participants. Some community organizations may already have a group of people who are interested in participating in a community garden—such as teachers at a local elementary school or members of a church, retirement community, garden club, or neighborhood association.

It's a good idea to hold an introductory garden meeting or two to discuss the potential of a community garden and to identify potential participants, volunteers, and garden committee members. At these meetings, discuss what kind of garden it will be, whom it will involve, and whom it will benefit. (Please see Appendix A: Sample Agenda for Introductory Garden Meeting.)

### IDEAS ON HOW TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

- Promote the garden to your friends and neighbors and ask them to spread the word.
- If you are a member of a community organization, promote the garden to fellow members and ask them to spread the word. If you are not, ask if you may promote the garden at a meeting.
- Promote the garden and spread the word about garden meetings by posting flyers in public locations and/or passing them out at well-attended community events (be sure to ask first, and include meeting times and contact info). (Please See Appendix B: Sample Flyer.)
- Place a notice about garden meetings in the community events section of the newspaper.
- Promote the garden using social media. Create a community garden Facebook page and friend anyone you think might be interested. Update the page regularly with information about meeting times, etc.

# 2

## Forming a Garden Committee

Once the community is engaged, it's a good idea to form a garden committee. Usually, after one or two introductory garden meetings, a group of people will emerge who are committed to the development of a community garden and have time to devote to it. This group is where you will likely find committee members and early volunteers. The garden committee should meet regularly throughout the year to make plans for, and decisions about, the garden. (Please See Appendix C: Garden Committee Positions.)

Some people will be interested in early volunteering opportunities or in participating in the garden once it's started (as gardeners or volunteers) but will not be interested in a committee position, and that's OK! It's important to match people with committee positions/volunteer opportunities that suit their level of interest, time commitment, and skills. It's also important to be flexible and to share responsibilities when the need arises—this will go a long way toward keeping people engaged and preventing volunteer burnout.

### WHY FORM A COMMITTEE?

Community gardens are as much about community as they are about gardening. You will be balancing the needs, wants, and expectations of many people—gardeners, volunteers, landowner(s), your city, etc. If you try to go it alone, sooner or later you will burn out. Having a garden committee in place—as well as creating good systems and processes for addressing issues that arise—is just as important to the growth of your garden as having good soil.

A few things to discuss at your first committee meeting(s):

- The garden's name.
- Opening garden bank account.
- Obtaining funding/fiscal sponsorship. (See Chapter 5, Funding.)
- A garden wish list. (See Chapter 5, Funding, and Appendix G: Garden Wish List.)
- Committee position responsibilities. (See Appendix C: Garden Committee Positions.)
- The decision-making process within the garden committee. (See Chapter 9, A Review.)

# 3

## Selecting a Site

Very often, the dream of a community garden begins with a site—a vacant lot in your neighborhood or the grounds of a local school, library, or church that is well suited to a garden. While there's nothing wrong with dreaming of a particular site, it's a good idea to have a few other potential sites in mind just in case your dream site falls through. Below is a list of things to consider when selecting a site.

### ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

- Does it get at least six hours of direct sunlight per day during the growing season?
- Is there access to water?
- Is the soil safe for gardening? Test the soil for contaminants. If the site is contaminated, raised beds and good soil will be required.
- Is the ground relatively flat? Will it require grading or terracing?
- Does the site need to be cleared?

### SPACE/ACCESSIBILITY/SAFETY CONCERNS

- Does it have enough space to accommodate the current number of gardeners while allowing for growth?
- Is it accessible to the people who will be using it? Gardeners should be able to walk or drive a short distance to the garden.
- Is there space for people to park?
- Can a truck gain access to it?
- Is it visible from the street or other pedestrian area? A visible site will be safer and attract more neighborhood support.

### OWNERSHIP/USABILITY CONCERNS

- Who owns the site? Is it public/semi-public or private land?
- What is the site being used for currently? Is a garden compatible with the site's current use(s)?
- Will the site be available for several years, at least?

## PRIVATE LAND: GETTING IT RIGHT WITH THE LANDOWNER

Perhaps it goes without saying, but if your desired site is on private land, you will need to obtain the landowner's permission before you start a community garden there! Having obtained permission, you will then need to protect both the gardeners' interests and the landowner's interests through a lease agreement. (Please See Appendix D: Sample Lease Agreement with Hold Harmless Clause.)

First and foremost, the landowner doesn't want to be held liable if a gardener is injured on her property. She also wants to make sure that her property will be well maintained and will not attract thieves, vandals, or people causing a nuisance. To these ends, the lease should include a "hold harmless" clause stating that if someone is injured on the property or causes an actionable nuisance (the property is no longer being maintained, has been vandalized, etc.), the owner will not be held liable. In other words, the garden group is responsible. Many landowners will require the garden group to obtain liability insurance as well. (Please see Chapter 9, A Review.)

A few other important provisions of the lease might include

- The length of your lease.
- The rent, if any.
- The process for terminating and renewing the lease.
- Who is responsible for paying utilities (water, etc.).
- Where on the property you are allowed to garden (especially if it is a portion of a larger lot).

Finally, a word about city ordinances. It's a good idea to meet with your city's planning and development department to discuss whether or not you need to apply for a permit. Anyone may grow a garden on their property, but when a project involves many people coming and going, the need for parking, signage, etc., it can quickly become a city issue.

## PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC LAND: GETTING IT RIGHT WITH THE CITY

If your site is on public land (a school, for example), you will need to obtain the permission of school administrators. (See Chapter 4, Selecting a Model: School/Church Gardens.) Having obtained permission, you will need to meet with your city's planning and development department to find out whether you need to apply for a conditional use permit.

In La Crosse, community gardens are allowed by right on land zoned Public/Semi-Public. This includes, but is not limited to, government offices and facilities and elementary, secondary, and post-secondary public and private educational facilities. You can find a full list here: [cityoflacrosse.org/index.aspx?NID=1374](http://cityoflacrosse.org/index.aspx?NID=1374).

Conditional use permit applications are available at City Hall in either the Planning and Development Department (3rd floor) or the City Clerk's office (2nd floor) or here: [cityoflacrosse.org/DocumentCenter/View/9026](http://cityoflacrosse.org/DocumentCenter/View/9026).

This process will be more or less the same whether your site is on school, library, or other public/semi-public land. (Please see Appendix E: Washburn Community Garden Conditional Use Permit Application.)



# 4

## Selecting a Model

When selecting a garden model, consider again whom the garden will involve and whom it will benefit. If you've already selected a site, or if you have a site in mind, consider which model will best suit the space.

- How many participants are there?
- What are their time-commitment expectations?
- How much experience do they have?
- How much space is available?
- Is the harvest for garden participants, or is it for donation?

Many community gardens combine models—either from the start or over time. For example, some plot-based community gardens have an area where plants that require a lot of space are grown collectively.

### ALLOTMENT (PLOT-BASED) COMMUNITY GARDENS

The allotment (plot-based) model is the most common. Each participant is assigned a plot and is responsible for planting, maintaining, and harvesting from his or her individual plot. This model may work well in gardens with many participants, as it requires a smaller degree of coordination/cooperative effort than some other models. Often, an annual membership fee is charged.

#### PROS

- Plot-based community gardens work well for participants who need the ability to garden on their own schedule.
- People tend to feel more responsible for something that is theirs—particularly when they have been charged for it.
- If an annual membership fee is charged, the garden group may put it toward the cost of garden maintenance, rent, paying for its share of the utilities, etc.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.new-ag.info/00-5/focuson/focuson8.html>

## CONS

- Plot-based community gardens tend to be less community oriented. With participants gardening on their own schedules, it's rare to have a majority of participants in the garden at one time as you would with organized workdays at collective community gardens.
- There may be fewer opportunities for mentoring between new and experienced gardeners.

*See it in Action in La Crosse: Washburn Community Garden*

## COLLECTIVE COMMUNITY GARDENS

With this model, all participants are responsible for planting, maintaining, and harvesting from the garden collectively, typically through organized workdays. This model may work well in gardens with few participants, as it requires a greater degree of coordination/cooperative effort. It may also work well in gardens that are intended to serve a higher purpose, such as education or charitable donation.

## PROS

- Collective community gardens tend to be more community oriented. When the garden is intended to serve a higher purpose—such as education or charitable donation—there is a sense that the whole community of gardeners is “in this together.”
- There may be more opportunities for mentoring between new and experienced gardeners.

## CONS

- Collective community gardens may not work well for participants who need the ability to garden on their own schedule.
- People tend to feel less responsible for something that is shared; it's easy for people to slip into the mind-set of “someone else will do it.”
- It's often difficult to assign work and distribute the harvest equally, which can lead to hard feelings between gardeners.

*See it in Action in La Crosse: Kane Street Community Garden*

## FOOD FORESTS

A food forest is a gardening model/land management system that mimics a woodland ecosystem. Fruit and nut trees make up the forest's upper level, while berry bushes, edible perennials, and annuals make up the lower levels. (It may be helpful to think of it as an edible perennial garden.)

### PROS

- Food forests tend to be very community oriented. When landscaped attractively, with areas where people can sit and enjoy the garden, they can have a very park-like atmosphere. The community is attracted to, and takes ownership of, a food forest much as they would a public park.
- Food forests are less maintenance intensive than other models. Besides regular mowing and weed-whipping, a few organized workdays (planting, pruning, mulching, tree-trimming, etc.) in a growing season are usually all that's required to maintain the garden.

### CONS [ARE THERE ANY?]

*See it in Action in La Crosse: YMCA Food Forest (coming soon)*

## SCHOOL/CHURCH GARDENS

School and church gardens are included in this chapter because both add another group of people to the typical structure of a community garden.

School gardens are almost always intended to serve educational purposes (with teachers and students involved in, if not entirely responsible for, planting, maintaining, and harvesting from the garden). In order to start a garden on school grounds, you will need to work closely with school administrators and teachers. It is somewhat rare for school gardens to be used by the wider community (with the exception of student volunteers and their parents during the summer months when school is out of session). Usually, school districts have rules about who can be on school grounds and when they can be there.

### PROS

- Gardening offers children hands-on, experiential learning opportunities in many areas of study: the natural sciences, math, language arts (through garden journaling), visual arts (through garden-related art projects), and nutrition.

- Gardening encourages children to begin thinking of themselves as stewards of our shared environment and helps foster their connection with nature.
- Gardening promotes a healthy lifestyle, offering children opportunities for physical activity as well as growing and tasting fruits and vegetables that may be unfamiliar to them.

## CONS [ARE THERE ANY?]

*See it in Action in La Crosse: State Road School, Maintained by GROW La Crosse?*  
*[Is this still a question?]*

## APARTMENT COMPLEX GARDENING

?

# 5

## Funding

Building, installing, and maintaining a community garden will cost money, and you will eventually need to seek funding. The amount you need will depend on the garden's material requirements (determined by the garden's size and the scope of its operations), the skill sets of volunteers, and how successful you have been at forming partnerships and using community resources. (See Chapter 6, *Forming Partnerships/Using Community Resources*.)

Whether you choose to plan your garden before or after seeking funding/asking for donations is largely a matter of personal preference. However, it's always easier to ask a potential funding organization or donor for a specific amount of money or a specific item, so it's a good idea to do some planning before seeking funds.

To that end, it's before you put together a list of money funding organization wish list—a list of all the items (tools, materials, etc.) that you need to start the garden. You may choose to ask for an item itself or for the monetary value of the item. If you only want the monetary value of an item, checking it is a good way to see what you have and what you still need. (See Appendix F: *Sample Garden Wish List*.)

### IDEAS FOR FUNDING THE GARDEN

- **Donations:** You may choose to ask for an item itself or for the monetary value of that item.  
(Please See Appendix G: *Sample Request for Monetary Donation*.)
- **Fiscal Sponsorship:** Many gardens, at least initially, will partner with a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in order to benefit from that organization's legal and tax-exempt status. Other benefits might include administrative and fund-raising assistance and help obtaining liability insurance. Often, fiscal sponsors charge an administrative fee.
- **Funding Organizations:** Governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations may offer community garden grants. Often such grants are available only to organizations with tax-exempt status (this is where having a fiscal sponsor is beneficial). The Internet is an excellent place to start researching community garden grants; there are too many to list here!

- **Fund Raisers:** Car washes, bake sales, plant/bulb sales, etc.
- **Membership Fees:** Some gardens are able to cover the costs of maintenance, rent, their share of the utilities, etc., through annual membership fees. However, you will likely need some money up front to cover building and installation as well as the first year's rent and utilities (if any).

# 6

## Forming Partnerships/Using Community Resources

One of the best ways to cut costs in the garden is by forming partnerships in the community and making use of community resources.

### POTENTIAL PROJECT PARTNERS/RESOURCES

- **Businesses:** Hardware stores and garden centers may donate items such as wood (for raised beds), mulch, topsoil, compost, tools, seeds, or transplants). Don't be afraid to approach big-box hardware stores. It looks good for them when they engage in their communities.
- **The City:** The City of La Crosse offers free compost to city residents at the Isle La Plume Brush and Yard Waste Site. Many municipalities (including La Crosse) occasionally offer free mulch to city residents as well. (Note that it may not be organic.)
- **Libraries:** The La Crosse Public Library (Main Branch) operates a free seed library. Just remember to return saved seeds at the end of the growing season.
- **Garden Clubs/Master Gardeners:** This is where you will likely find experienced gardeners. Ask if they are willing to donate an hour or two of their time to lead educational workshops/demonstrations for new gardeners.
- **Friends and Neighbors:** Reach out—see whom you know who's having a garage sale or cleaning out a garage or shed. This is an excellent way to get tools free (or at a low cost). Also, you may already know people with landscaping, construction, or carpentry skills; ask if they will donate an hour or two of their time.
- **Friends of Friends:** If you live in Wisconsin, you're almost certain to know someone—a friend of a friend, perhaps—who is in some way connected to a farm, stable, etc. You may be able to get composted cow or horse manure free (or at low cost) by reaching out. (Note that the materials may not be organic).
- **The Internet:** Craigslist is an excellent way to get all sorts of stuff at low cost. Check under the "farm & garden" section for mulch, topsoil, compost, compost bins, tools, rain barrels, etc. (Never give personal information, and always make transactions in a public place. Many police stations offer the use of their parking lot for Craigslist transactions.)

# 7

## Building and Installing the Garden

So, you've reached the point where you've selected a site, selected a model, signed a lease agreement and/or obtained a conditional use permit. You have the funds and materials you need to start your garden. Time to get building! Reach out for help to early volunteers and anyone you know with landscaping, construction, or carpentry skills.

There are many excellent resources on how to plan, build, and install a garden. Your local library and the Internet are great places to start researching garden plans if you haven't done so already. Below is a list of things to keep in mind when planning the garden.

- **Sun:** Situate the garden where it will receive at least six hours of direct sunlight during the growing season.
- **Water:** Situate the garden as near as possible to a water source.
- **Physical Accessibility:** Plan for enough space between plots to accommodate strollers, walkers, wheelchairs, wheelbarrows, and people walking and kneeling. A width of 3 to 4 feet is best.
- **Relaxation and Play:** Plan for an area where people can sit, relax, and enjoy the garden. A shady area and one or two picnic tables may be all you need. Many community gardens have a children's plot with plastic buckets, shovels, etc. This will keep children busy at play and help them feel included in the garden while their parent/family member is gardening.
- **Safety:** Situate the garden where it is visible from the street or a pedestrian area.
- **Truck Access:** Larger vehicles will occasionally need access to the site, so plan for an area where trucks can safely and easily drive in and out.
- **Allowance for Growth:** In your first year, build only what you need to accommodate the current number of gardeners, but have space available for expansion.
- **Communication:** Many community gardens have an information board where gardeners can find important contact information and information on meetings, events, demonstrations, workshops, etc.



# 8

## Security

Unfortunately, most community gardens will experience theft or vandalism. The safest garden is one that is well maintained, used by people in the neighborhood, and visible from the street or pedestrian area. Before you resort to booby-trapping your garden, consider how you might increase community/neighborhood engagement with it. The best prevention against theft and vandalism is often just getting people to care.

### IDEAS ON KEEPING GARDENERS AND THE GARDEN SAFE

- Select a site that is visible from the street or pedestrian area.
- Encourage people in the neighborhood to use the garden.
- Set garden hours to between sunrise and sunset.
- Keep the garden well maintained. A garden that looks like it isn't being used can attract thieves and vandals.
- Promptly clean up after acts of vandalism.
- Consider hosting garden tours or parties that are open to everyone in the community/neighborhood.
- Consider ways to involve the youth in your community/neighborhood.
- If garden tools remain on site, consider storing them in a locked shed.
- Consider fencing as a last resort—fences are expensive to build, must be maintained, and often require a permit from your city.

# 9

## A Review

Before you start a new community garden, take at least one committee meeting to review the responsibilities of each garden committee member as well the committee's decision-making process. Make sure you have good systems in place for addressing issues that arise. Below is a list of issues common to many community gardens and how you might prevent or mitigate them.

- **Management/Leadership:** Community gardens are management intensive. Eventually, you may lose committee members or other volunteers because of time-commitment issues or burnout. It's important to be flexible and share responsibilities when the need arises. If you're the garden coordinator, make sure that committee members receive the help they need. Also, make sure to recognize all of their hard work (and the work of other volunteers).
- **Maintenance :** Community gardens are also maintenance intensive. After a few growing seasons, it's easy to lose track of who does what and when. Appoint a grounds leader to help organize workdays to make sure that paths, fences and gates, greenhouses, and other garden infrastructure and equipment are maintained and repaired. The grounds leader will also help to secure and coordinate volunteers for mowing, weed-whipping, and tree trimming. (See Appendix C: Garden Committee Positions.)
- **Gardener Issues:** You may have to ask a gardener to forfeit his or her plot. This can be very difficult to do, as there may be hard feelings. Having a set of garden guidelines, to which each participant agrees in advance, can help prevent or mitigate gardener-related issues. (See Appendix H: Sample Garden Guidelines.) Also, many community gardens hold regular gardener-led meetings where participants can voice concerns. Appoint a communications coordinator who can answer questions on behalf of the committee and bring gardener concerns to the committee. (See Appendix C: Garden Committee Positions.)
- **Water:** Securing a permanent source of water can be challenging. If the landowner won't allow access to water, then you may have to seek another source. Possible sources:
- **City Water:** Although it's your most costly option, you might look into connecting to a city water line, ideally within a few hundred feet of the garden. If there is not such a connection, it may be possible to have a new connection installed for the garden. You will likely need another permit

from the city for a new connection as well as the services of a licensed plumber. In La Crosse, information can be found at [cityoflacrosse.org/index.aspx?NID=1208](http://cityoflacrosse.org/index.aspx?NID=1208).

- **A Neighbor:** Just because the landowner won't allow access to water doesn't mean a neighbor won't. If there are neighbors nearby, ask if they would allow the garden access to their water.
- **Cistern:** Community gardens in Houston and La Crescent, Minnesota, draw water from cisterns that are filled regularly throughout the growing season by their local fire departments. There are also water-hauling services that will (at a cost) fill cisterns.
- **Rainwater Catchment:** Rain barrels are a great supplementary source of water for the garden.
- **Liability Insurance:** Community gardens are under increasing pressure to carry liability insurance. Although it can be expensive for an individual garden, larger organizations can often obtain policies for community gardens at a reasonable price or add them to an existing policy—this is where having a fiscal sponsor is beneficial. The American Community Garden Association now offers a community garden insurance program. For more information, visit [communitygarden.org/programs/garden-insurance/](http://communitygarden.org/programs/garden-insurance/).
- **Site Permanency:** Most community gardens are on borrowed land, so it's difficult to know for certain how many years the site will be available. Landowners decide to sell, schools build additions, churches expand their parking lots, etc. Unfortunately, there's not much you can do to prevent this. Just make sure to include a clause in your lease agreement stating that the owner will notify the garden group a specified number of months in advance of any change in ownership or of any building project that will affect the garden.

# 10

## Starting the New Community Garden!

You've reached the end of the community garden's development process, which is really just the beginning for the new garden. It's time to register participants and start gardening! (Please See Appendix I: Sample Gardener Registration Form.)

Sometime in the garden's first year, consider hosting a garden-opening party. This is a great way to show off the new community garden and to recognize volunteers, project partners, and donors for their hard work and generous donations.

# 11

## Resources

### NATIONAL:

- American Community Garden Association
- Community gardening-specific content and resources

### MIDWEST:

- Seed Saver's Exchange, Decorah, Iowa - [seedsavers.org](http://seedsavers.org)
- Organic heirloom seeds and transplants
- Gardener education

### WISCONSIN:

- University of Wisconsin-Extension - [hort.uwex.edu](http://hort.uwex.edu)
- What to plant and when (USDA plant hardiness maps and planting guides)
- Gardener education
- Common plants for community gardens in Wisconsin:  
[hort.uwex.edu/articles/common-crops-for-community-gardens/](http://hort.uwex.edu/articles/common-crops-for-community-gardens/)
- Food and Ecosystem Educational Demonstration Sites (FEEDS) - A University of Wisconsin-Extension Project - [feeds.uwex.edu](http://feeds.uwex.edu)
- Starting a community garden:  
[feeds.uwex.edu/about/startingacommunitygarden.cfm](http://feeds.uwex.edu/about/startingacommunitygarden.cfm)
- Garden Coordinator's checklist for getting started:  
[feeds.uwex.edu/about/checklistgettingstarted.cfm](http://feeds.uwex.edu/about/checklistgettingstarted.cfm)
- Data on community gardens in Wisconsin:  
[feeds.uwex.edu/gardens/index.cfm](http://feeds.uwex.edu/gardens/index.cfm)

## LA CROSSE AND THE SURROUNDING AREA:

- Hillview Urban Agriculture Center - La Crosse, WI - *hillviewuac.org*
- Fiscal sponsorship, help starting and/or partnership with community gardens in La Crosse
- Gardener education
- GROW La Crosse - La Crosse, WI - *growlacrosse.org*
- Help starting/partnership with school gardens in La Crosse
- Kane St. Community Garden  
*lacrossehtf.org/the-kane-street-community-garden*

# 12

## Appendix

### **APPENDIX A:** **SAMPLE AGENDA FOR INTRODUCTORY GARDEN MEETING**

Your introductory garden meeting(s) should be held in a public place in your neighborhood (school, library, community center, church, etc.). While it's impossible to accommodate everyone's schedule, try to find a time when most people are available. Also, try to keep the meeting under two hours—you can always schedule another. Finally, be mindful that some people may bring children, so offer child care if a volunteer and space are available.

#### **SETUP**

- Set up a welcome table with name tags and a sign-up sheet for participants' names and contact info.
- Offer beverages (coffee, tea, water, etc.).
- Offer child care if a volunteer and space are available.
- Arrange tables and chairs in a large circle for easy discussion.
- Provide everyone with a copy of the agenda, a pen or pencil, and a few sheets of blank paper for notes.

#### **AGENDA**

##### **1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

- Welcome participants as they arrive.
- Ask them to fill out a name tag and provide name and contact info.
- Invite them to have a beverage and find a seat in the circle.
- Ask them to state their name and explain their interest in community gardening.
- Briefly review the agenda.

## 2. COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT OVERVIEW

- Explain the purpose of the meeting—your desire to start a community garden.
- Explain the benefits of community gardens—specifically, the potential benefits to your neighborhood.
- If you’ve already selected a site, or you have a site in mind, tell them about it. Explain any work that’s already been done in the development process.

## 3. DISCUSSION/BRAINSTORMING

- What purpose will the garden serve?
- Whom will it involve?
- Whom will it benefit?
- Has a site been selected? If not, is there a site in mind?
- Which garden model is most appropriate and will best suit the space—collective, plot-based, etc?
- Who is on the garden committee? What is its function?
- Will there be an annual membership fee?
- How will the garden be funded?

## 4. NEXT STEPS

- Have a sign-up sheet for garden committee positions.
- Have a sign-up sheet for early volunteering opportunities.
- Schedule the next meeting (if necessary).
- Thank participants for their time.
- Follow up promptly with people interested in garden committee positions to set up first committee meetings. Follow up with people interested in early volunteering opportunities with a list of action items. Follow up with others by providing updates on the development process and how they can get involved (volunteering, gardener registration, etc.).



## SAMPLE FLYER

Help Start a New Community Garden  
in our Neighborhood!



For more information, please  
contact Garden Coordinator,  
Jane Doe:

Phone: (123)456-7890  
E-mail: janegardens@gmail.com

[illegible]

## APPENDIX C:

### GARDEN COMMITTEE POSITIONS

Below is a list of possible committee positions. You may find that you do not need or do not yet have enough volunteers to fill all of these positions, and that's OK!

- **Coordinator:** Leads the garden's development process in coordination with committee members. Coordinates and secures cooperation of volunteers and project partners and maintains continuity. May apply for garden grants.
- **Treasurer** (1 hour/week): Collects membership fees and deposits them in the garden bank account. In coordination with the committee, may create a budget for the gardening season, authorize spending, and pay bills. May manage garden grants. Some gardens may have more than one treasurer. It's a good idea to have several co-signers on the garden bank account for convenience.
- **Registrar** (1-3 hours/week): Maintains a waiting list of people who would like garden plots, takes calls from interested gardeners, and assigns plots.
- **Communications Facilitator** (1-3 hours/week): Makes sure gardeners are in touch through meetings, phone calls, e-mails, etc. Answers questions and brings gardener concerns to the committee.
- **Outreach Coordinator** (1-3 hours/week): Coordinates publicity for the garden; organizes and publicizes garden events.
- **Grounds Leader** (1-3 hours/week): Organizes workdays to keep paths, fences and gates, greenhouses, and other garden infrastructure and equipment maintained and repaired. Coordinates volunteers for mowing, weed-whipping, and tree trimming.
- **Education Leader** (1-3 hours/week): Organizes educational workshops and demonstrations and connects new and experienced gardeners for mentoring.

**APPENDIX D:**

**SAMPLE LEASE AGREEMENT/HOLD HARMLESS CLAUSE**

This is intended only as a sample, as it covers only the most basic provisions of a lease. It’s a good idea to consult with an attorney when drafting your lease agreement.

Sample Lease Agreement  
Main Street Community Garden  
100 Main Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601

This lease, dated ( \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ ), is between (Property Owner), the owner of the property at 100 Main Street, and the lessees: (Main Street Community Garden) and (Fiscal Sponsor).

This lease is for use of land for the purpose of building and operating a community garden. The garden will be located on the eastern portion of the lot owned by (Property Owner). (Main Street Community Garden) will prepare a plan for the garden in consultation with (Property Owner) and the City of La Crosse. (Main Street Community Garden) is solely responsible for planning, building, and operating a community garden on the land owned by (Property Owner), including obtaining any permits required to operate a community garden.

The term of this lease is ( \_\_ ) year(s), starting on ( \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ ), and ending on ( \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ ). This lease will automatically renew for an additional ( \_\_ )-year term unless either (Property Owner) or (Main Street Community Garden) provides written notice to the other of nonrenewal no later than ( \_\_ ) months prior to the end of the current term. There shall be no charge for the use of the land for the purpose specified herein.

or

On the date that this lease is signed and on each following anniversary, (Main Street Community Garden) will pay (Property Owner) \$( \_\_ ) in rent for the next year. (Main Street Community Garden’s) failure to pay rent within ( \_\_ ) days/ weeks of when payment is due breaches this lease. In such a case, (Property Owner) retains all rights provided for under the law in the case of nonpayment of rent.

The (Property Owner) will provide access to and reasonable use of water, sewage, storm sewer, or any other utility service used by (Main Street Community Garden) during the lease term.

or

(Main Street Community Garden) is solely responsible for obtaining and paying for all water, sewage, storm sewer, or any other utility service used by (Main Street Community Garden) during the lease term.

(Main Street Community Garden) agrees to hold (Property Owner) harmless against all claims, liabilities, losses, damages, expenses, and attorneys' fees, including losses arising from injury or property damage that may be suffered or sustained by (Main Street Community Garden), or any other person affiliated with (Main Street Community Garden) that may arise from (Main Street Community Garden)'s or any of its affiliates' use, operation, or presence on the land.

Liability insurance will be obtained by (Main Street Community Garden) and (Fiscal Sponsor). (Property Owner) will be listed as an additional insured party on the policy. Signing of this agreement constitutes acceptance of the above terms and conditions.

_____ Property Owner	_____ Date
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_____ Main Street Community Garden	_____ Date
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_____ Fiscal Sponsor	_____ Date
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**APPENDIX E:**

**WASHBURN COMMUNITY GARDEN CONDITIONAL  
USE PERMIT APPLICATION**

## APPENDIX F:

### SAMPLE REQUEST FOR MONETARY DONATION

Asking for money can be difficult. There's always a chance people or organizations will say no—or nothing at all—but a well-worded letter will go a long way toward helping your garden to obtain funds.

(Jane Doe, Garden Coordinator)  
(Main Street Community Garden)  
100 Main Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. (Last Name of Potential Donor),

My name is (Jane Doe). I'm writing you today on behalf of (Main Street Community Garden), a new community garden project in (Your Neighborhood). (Main Street Community Garden) will provide gardeners in (Your Neighborhood) and surrounding neighborhoods with fresh, healthy, affordable food as well as opportunities for education and personal enrichment. (Main Street Community Garden) will also donate a portion of each year's harvest to (Charitable Organization), as a way of helping those in greatest need in our community.

We need your help in making (Main Street Community Garden) a success! We're requesting a contribution of \$50 toward our total goal of \$1,000. Your donation will be used to purchase much-needed (tools, materials, etc.) for the garden.

Thank you for considering our request! If you have any questions, please contact me either by telephone: (123) 456-7890, or by e-mail: janegardens@gmail.com.

Sincerely,  
(Jane Doe)

## APPENDIX G:

### SAMPLE GARDEN WISH LIST

Below is a list of tools, materials, etc., that you may need to start your community garden. Adapt the list to suit your garden's needs.

- ☐ Sod cutter (can be rented)
- ☐ Rototiller (can be rented)
- ☐ Wood (for raised beds)
- ☐ Powered saw (for raised beds)
- ☐ Powered screwdriver and galvanized screws (for raised beds)
- ☐ Soil/compost/composted manure mix
- ☐ Landscaping fabric (or other weed-barrier material), and landscaping fabric pins
- ☐ Mulching material
- ☐ Wheelbarrow(s)
- ☐ Shovels and spades
- ☐ Hoes
- ☐ Hard and soft rakes
- ☐ Garden forks
- ☐ Garden hoses, soaker hoses, spray nozzles
- ☐ Rain barrels
- ☐ Compost bins or tumblers
- ☐ Lawn mower, weed-whipper
- ☐ Tree trimming tools
- ☐ Tool shed (if garden tools remain on site), padlock
- ☐ Greenhouse, hoop-house, etc.
- ☐ Fencing/gates
- ☐ Signage
- ☐ Bench(es)

In many community gardens, participants are responsible for providing the following items for themselves, but if you intend to provide them, add them to your list:

- ☐ Seeds, transplants
- ☐ Plant markers
- ☐ Watering cans
- ☐ Hand tools
- ☐ Tool caddies
- ☐ Gloves, aprons, kneeling pads
- ☐ Plant stakes, supports, and other trellising systems
- ☐ Twine
- ☐ Cold frames, cloches
- ☐ Organic/natural fertilizers: vermicompost, fish emulsion, bone meal, blood meal, etc.
- ☐ Organic/natural pesticides: insecticidal soaps, diatomaceous earth, etc.



## APPENDIX H:

### SAMPLE GARDEN GUIDELINES

Welcome to (Main Street Community Garden). We're so happy you'll be joining us in the (20\_\_) growing season! Here at (Main Street Community Garden), we strive to create a space where everyone feels safe, respected, and welcome—and respects the space and other gardeners in turn. To that end, we've created the following guidelines. You must agree to follow them as a condition of participation.

Not following these guidelines will result in

1. Issuance of one verbal warning from the Garden Committee.
2. If no response or correction has been made within ( \_\_ ) week(s), issuance of one written warning from the Garden Committee.
3. If no response or correction has been made within ( \_\_ ) week(s) of the written warning, issuance of a written notice from the Garden Committee that you have forfeited your plot.
4. You may re-register as a participant only after one year, and only at the discretion of the Garden Committee.

### GUIDELINES

1. I use this garden at the sole discretion of the (Main Street Community Garden) Garden Committee, and I agree to follow these guidelines.
2. I understand that the fee for the use of the garden is (\$\_\_ ) per plot, per year (January 1 – December 31), due on or before (January 1). The fee for half a year (beginning July 1 or later) is (\$\_\_ ). The fee is nonrefundable.
3. Once I have been assigned a plot, I will cultivate and plant my plot within two weeks. I will maintain my plot between garden opening ( \_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ ), and garden closing ( \_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ ). My plot cannot be left unmaintained or unused for longer than three weeks during the growing season. If I need to be away from my plot longer than three weeks or I need help maintaining my plot, I will seek the assistance of the (Main Street Community Garden) Garden Committee.
4. My plot is number ( \_\_ ) and is ( \_\_ x \_\_ ) feet. I will not expand my plot beyond this measurement or into paths or other plots. I will keep all my plants within the limits of my garden plot and will not allow any plants to grow more than 6 feet high. I will keep my plot free of weeds, pests, and disease. I will compost all plant debris from my plot.

5. I will not take anything from the garden or from another participant (or their plot) that does not belong to me. Anything I bring from home I will take home with me.
6. I will strive to keep garden paths and other common areas well maintained by throwing away trash and composting plant debris when I see it. I will volunteer for at least two organized workdays during the growing season. I will notify the (Main Street Community Garden) Garden Committee if I'm unable to participate in workdays for physical reasons or if I need to reschedule a workday.
7. Neither I nor any of my family members or guests will make another participant or their family members or guests feel unsafe, disrespected, or unwelcome in the garden. I will strive to be neighborly in my conduct. If I need help mediating a disagreement between myself and another participant, I will seek the assistance of the (Main Street Community Garden) Garden Committee.
8. I will restrict my use of the garden to the hours between sunrise and sunset.
9. If I or any of my family members or guests at any time feel unsafe in the garden, I/we will leave the garden immediately and seek the assistance of the police and the (Main Street Community Garden) Garden Committee.
10. I will not attempt to use or operate any tools or equipment that I do not feel comfortable with or do not have prior experience using or operating. I will seek assistance.
11. I will not use drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products while in the garden. Nor will I go into the garden under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
12. I will not bring dogs or other pets into the garden.
13. I will not make copies of or share keys or combinations to any locks on (Main Street Community Garden's) (tool shed, greenhouse, etc.).
14. I will accompany family members and guests in the garden, and they will conduct themselves in accordance with these guidelines. I will supervise my children while they are in the garden, and I will be responsible for their conduct.
15. I will strive to conserve water, only watering my plot when necessary. I will make sure that all faucets are turned off and hoses are neatly coiled when I am done using them.

16. I will use only natural or organic fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides on my plot. I will consult the list of approved fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides on the (Main Street Community Garden) information board, or I will seek the assistance of the (Main Street Community Garden) Garden Committee.

I have read and understood and agree to follow these guidelines as a condition of participation.

_____	_____
Participant	Date

_____	_____
Garden Coordinator	Date

## APPENDIX I:

### SAMPLE GARDENER REGISTRATION FORM

#### GARDENER INFORMATION

Gardener Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please list family members or guests who will regularly accompany you  
\_\_\_\_\_

Gardener Address \_\_\_\_\_

Gardner Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Gardner E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

#### EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Contact E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Did you have a plot at this garden last year? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Number of plots this year: \_\_\_\_ Fee per plot: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total plot fee paid: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Plot Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign up for at least two organized workdays during the growing season. Please let the garden committee know if you are unable to participate in workdays for physical reasons. Workdays will be held every other Saturday April-October and typically last 2 to 3 hours.

Workdays	Name
April 16, 2016 Spring Clean-Up	
April 30, 2016	
May 14, 2016	
May 28, 2016	
June 11, 2016	
June 25, 2016	
July 9, 2016	
July 23, 2016	
August 6, 2016	
August 20, 2016	
September 3, 2016	
September 17, 2016	
October 1, 2016	
October 15, 2016 Fall Clean-Up	
If you have skills, experience, or expertise that you'd like to share with the garden committee, please let us know: _____	
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	

If you are a new gardener, would you like an experienced gardener to help you?  
Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

If you are an experienced gardener, would you like to help a new gardener?  
Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

**Photo Permission:** From time to time, gardeners, garden leaders and the media will take photos of the garden. Please check here ( ☐ ) if you do not give your permission for your photo to be published. If you do not give your permission, please let photographers know when you encounter them at the garden.

**Phone and E-mail:** All gardeners are required to share their phone number and e-mail address with garden leaders. In addition, a gardener phone and e-mail list is shared with all gardeners. Please check here ( ☐ ) if you do not give your permission to share your phone number and e-mail address with all gardeners.

I have read and understood, and I agree to follow the Garden Guidelines. I understand that neither the garden group nor the landowner(s) are responsible for my actions. I therefore agree to hold harmless the garden group and the landowner(s) for any liability, damage, loss or claim that occurs in connection with use of the garden by me or any of my family members or guests.

_____	_____
Participant	Date

_____	_____
Garden Coordinator	Date



Funding has been provided by the **Coulee Food System Coalition (CFSC)** via the **Robert & Eleanor Franke Foundation Food For All mini-grant program** for an experienced outside contractor to work with the City of La Crosse to overhaul the existing ordinances and educate the community on the changes. The mission of the CFSC is to build a diverse and sustainable food system. **Hillview Urban Agriculture Center** is the fiscal sponsor of CFSC. Partners include the City of La Crosse, Hillview Urban Agriculture Center, La Crosse Area Family YMCA, Couleecap, Western Technical College, and Great Rivers United Way.

