

# Community Gardens Handbook

**How to Start and Maintain a  
Garden: A Guide for Community  
Groups in Alberta**



March 2019

Copyright © (2019) Alberta Health Services. This material is protected by Canadian and other international copyright laws. All rights reserved. These materials are intended for general information only and are provided on an "as is", "where is" basis. Although reasonable efforts were made to confirm the accuracy of the information, Alberta Health Services does not make any representation or warranty, express, implied or statutory, as to the accuracy, reliability, completeness, applicability or fitness for a particular purpose of such information. These materials are not a substitute for the advice of a qualified health professional. Alberta Health Services expressly disclaims all liability for the use of these materials, and for any claims, actions, demands or suits arising from such use. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-No Derivatives 4.0 International License. Contact [NutritionResources@ahs.ca](mailto:NutritionResources@ahs.ca)



# Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	5
<b>Introduction</b> .....	5
Why Start a Community Garden? .....	5
Community Gardens Do Not Reduce Household Food Insecurity.....	6
Making Everyone Feel Welcome to Join a Community Garden.....	6
Types of Community Gardens .....	7
<b>Getting Started: Steps for Success</b> .....	8
Step 1: Secure Enough Interest .....	9
Step 2: Form a Garden Committee .....	9
Step 3: Build Partnerships .....	11
Step 4: Create a Budget.....	12
Step 5: Select a Garden Site.....	13
Step 6: Plan and Design the Garden.....	14
Step 7: Create Garden Guidelines.....	17
<b>Start and Maintain the Garden</b> .....	18
Stage 1: Prepare the Site .....	18
Stage 2: Build and Install Garden Structures .....	18
Stage 3: Plant the Garden .....	19
Stage 4: Maintain the Garden .....	20
Stage 5: Harvest the Garden .....	21
<b>Evaluation</b> .....	21

<b>Appendices</b> .....	22
Appendix 1: Ways to Welcome Everyone to Your Garden.....	23
Appendix 2: Sample Site Maps.....	25
Appendix 3: Sample Needs Assessment.....	28
Appendix 4: Sample Agenda for First Garden Meeting .....	29
Appendix 5: Sample Terms of Reference .....	30
Appendix 6: Keeping Records .....	32
Appendix 7: Spring Registration .....	34
Appendix 8: Sample Gardener Application Forms .....	35
Appendix 9: Sample Calendar of Events .....	37
Appendix 10: Opening and Closing Day Checklist .....	38
Appendix 11: Sample Garden Guidelines.....	39
Appendix 12: Sample Welcome Letter .....	40
Appendix 13: Sample Community Garden Wish List .....	41
Appendix 14: Helpful Partners.....	42
Appendix 15: Funding Sources in Alberta.....	43
Appendix 16: Sample Budget Worksheet.....	45
Appendix 17: Garden Site Checklist.....	46
Appendix 18: What to Grow in Alberta .....	47
Appendix 19: Canning and Preserving.....	48
Appendix 20: Food and Nutrition Tips .....	49
Appendix 21: Evaluation Survey.....	50
<b>References</b> .....	52

# Acknowledgements

In 2011, the Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador published the [Community Garden Best Practices Toolkit: A Guide for Community Organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador](#). The Network gave Registered Dietitians from Alberta Health Services consent to adapt this toolkit to create this *Community Gardens Handbook*. The content of this handbook was also shaped by input from Alberta Agriculture and Forestry and various community garden organizers in Alberta and Newfoundland and Labrador. The information in this handbook is based on current and best practices.

## Introduction

A community garden is a shared space where people grow fruits, vegetables, herbs, and/or flowers.<sup>1</sup> The *Community Gardens Handbook* offers guidance to groups in Alberta who want to start and maintain a community garden that grows food. If you would like support to start a shared garden to grow flowers, the [Alberta Parks and Recreation Association](#) offers a lot of helpful ideas through their [Communities in Bloom](#) program.

## Why Start a Community Garden?

Starting or joining a community garden can be one way to help promote:

- access to small amounts of extra fresh vegetables and fruit during harvest season<sup>2</sup>
- more physical activity<sup>3</sup>
- a greater sense of community<sup>3</sup>
- improved gardening skills<sup>4</sup>
- a deeper connection to nature<sup>4,5</sup>
- lower stress levels<sup>4</sup>
- stronger social networks<sup>6</sup>
- more community engagement<sup>6</sup>



## Community Gardens Do Not Reduce Household Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is when one or more people in a household cannot get enough of the food they need due to a lack of money.<sup>7</sup> Many people believe that food-insecure households should grow a garden to gain access to more food. However, research shows that food programs do not reduce food insecurity.<sup>8</sup> Instead, methods which increase or protect household income are the best approach.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the best way to reduce household food insecurity is to improve access to enough income to cover all basic needs.<sup>9</sup>

Although gardening does not reduce food insecurity, it is still important to include low-income households in your community garden. Being a member of a garden may enhance their sense of community<sup>3</sup> and they may value the chance to meet new people and learn new skills if they have the time and interest.<sup>4</sup> [Appendix 1: Ways to Welcome Everyone to Your Garden](#) provides ideas on how to include people in your community garden when they live on a low income.

To learn more about household food insecurity, check out [The Affordability of Healthy Eating in Alberta](#) and [Household Food Insecurity in Alberta: A Backgrounder](#).

## Making Everyone Feel Welcome to Join a Community Garden

There may be people in the community who would like to be a part of the garden but do not join because they have unique social concerns, such as:

- a lack of money to pay for plot rental, tools, or supplies
- struggles to read or speak English
- not enough childcare when they wish to work in the garden
- no easy way to get to the garden site
- fears about their safety while working in the garden
- worry they will face judgements about who they are based on:
  - race or culture
  - mental or physical health
  - gender
  - sexual orientation
  - physical ability
  - religion or spiritual beliefs
  - body weight
  - age
  - social class
  - level of education

The guidance in this handbook can help you set up a garden where everyone feels welcome to join. For more ideas, see [Appendix 1: Ways to Welcome Everyone to Your Garden](#) on page 23.

## Types of Community Gardens

There are many types of community gardens, including individual plots, group plots, or a mix of the two. It is important to choose the type of garden that will best meet the needs of your group.

- 1. Individual plot gardens** divide the space into plots that are each cared for by a different gardener. Gardeners work at times that are best for their own schedule. This model provides land to people and groups that may not otherwise have garden space. This style works well for a group of gardeners who have different goals. Seasoned gardeners may like this style because it gives them more freedom to test out new crops.
- 2. Group gardens** follow the idea “all for one harvest, one harvest for all.” The group works together on one large garden and shares the harvest. Gardeners decide together what to plant and how to design the space. This style takes a lot of teamwork and works best with a smaller number of gardeners. This model also works well for groups such as a school, church, clubhouse, or community centre. New gardeners may enjoy this style because other people can offer support as they learn new skills.
- 3. Mixed plot gardens** combine both options. Group gardens may want to set aside some areas for individual use, such as:
  - Small plots for youth who want to learn to garden.
  - Test plots to try out new crops or growing methods.Individual plot gardens may want to share areas for certain plants, such as:
  - an herb bed or small orchard that will grow the same food for 2 years or more.
  - crops that need a lot of space to grow.
  - crops that create too much shade over other garden plants, such as squash, peas, and corn.



See [Appendix 2: Sample Site Maps](#) on page 25 for ideas on how to design community gardens.

### School Gardens

Community gardens can help children and youth learn how to grow vegetables and fruit while meeting course outcomes in subjects like science, social studies, and math.

To learn more, see Alberta Agriculture’s [A Guide to Growing School Gardens in Alberta](#)

# Getting Started: Steps for Success

There are 7 steps to start a new garden. It is best to start this process 6–12 months before you wish to plant the garden. There is more detail on each step in the pages that follow.

## 1. Secure Enough Interest

- Is there enough interest in the community to start a garden?
- What is the main purpose for the garden?
- Who will use the garden?
  - Families
  - Youth
  - Seniors
  - Churches
  - Schools
  - Adults
  - Clubs
  - Agencies

## 2. Form a Garden Committee

- Are there enough volunteers to provide support and take on roles?
- Is one or more people willing to be the garden coordinator?

## 3. Build Partnerships

You need partners with these skills:

- Gardening
- Programming
- City/Town Planning
- Landscaping
- Event Planning
- Teaching

## 4. Create a Budget

You need to figure out how you will pay for the garden:

- Member Fees
- Grants
- Donations
- Corporate Sponsors
- Fundraising
- Other Sponsors

## 5. Select a Site

- Is the site easy to access and large enough to meet current interest?
- Does the site allow for future growth?
- Does the site have good wind, sun, and shade conditions?
- Can you get a lease for the land?
- Is there access to a water source?

## 6. Plan and Design the Garden

- Have you chosen a type of garden? (group, individual, or both)
- Have you made a garden map?

## 7. Create Garden Guidelines

- What do you want or need as garden guidelines for all members?
- Are all gardeners willing to follow the guidelines?
- Are the guidelines posted at the garden where they are easy to see?



## Step 1: Secure Enough Interest



You need to have enough community members who are ready and willing to start and support a garden. Let people know about the idea for a community garden to measure the level of interest. Some communities may have a group that wants to join the community garden, such as a youth club, community centre, school, seniors' complex, or church. You may want to conduct a needs assessment in your community. See [Appendix 3: Sample Needs Assessment](#) on page 28 for ideas.

You also need to find one or more people who will take the lead. It can be helpful to hold or attend local community meetings to recruit members. [Appendix 4: Sample Agenda for First Garden Meeting](#) on page 29 outlines a plan and tasks for the first meeting to help form a robust group of garden members.

## Step 2: Form a Garden Committee

Once there is enough interest, you can form a Garden Committee to start and oversee the garden. This committee can include gardeners as well as other people who want to help with the garden. Match committee members to duties that suit their interests, time, and skills. Some may want to donate their labour, while others may prefer formal leader tasks. Share the workload fairly to prevent burnout.

The committee will host regular meetings during the year to address any issues or plans for the garden. The members will also plan key events such as opening day, fall clean up, closing day, harvest parties, and other social gatherings. It is helpful to create a Terms of Reference with the roles and duties of each member, and the process to follow to make decisions and set up meetings (see [Appendix 5](#) on page 30 for a sample Terms of Reference). [Appendix 6: Keeping Records](#) on page 32 provides a sample garden roster for Garden Committee members, a contact list for gardeners, and a map of who owns each garden plot.

**Quick Tip:** Take time to thank all Garden Committee members for their hard work. Garden parties can be a good way to do this.

## Communication with Garden Members

Keep gardeners up-to-date on garden news so they can provide input. Gardeners may also need ways to schedule group work events, share tools, or set up a car pool. Some ideas to stay connected include:

- on-site bulletin boards
- group email updates
- social media, such as Twitter®, Facebook®, or Instagram®
- a garden website or blog



Many gardens host a registration event before the start of the growing season. [Appendix 7: Spring Registration](#) on page 34 is a sample outline to guide you through this event to achieve the following tasks:

- Bring gardeners together to meet one other.
- Complete application forms (see [Appendix 8](#) on page 35 for samples).
- Select or assign plots, and pay for plots, if needed.
- Provide a calendar of events for the season (see [Appendix 9](#) on page 37 for a sample calendar).
- Outline the tasks for opening day and closing day (see [Appendix 10](#) on page 38 for ideas).
- Share the garden guidelines (see [Appendix 11](#) on page 39 for sample guidelines).
- Provide a welcome letter (see [Appendix 12](#) on page 40 for a sample letter).

## Communication with the Community

Connect with the people who live, work, or own a business near the garden to give them a chance to share their ideas and input. Here are some ideas for how to connect with the community:

- Share news on community bulletin boards.
- Use social media, such as Twitter®, Facebook®, or Instagram®.
- Provide information on a garden website or blog.
- Hold community tours of the garden.
- Invite the whole community to the harvest event.
- Host garden workshops for everyone in the community and for all ages.
- Record garden success with photos, videos, and annual reports.
- Promote the garden over local media (radio, television, newspapers, and free local papers).

## Step 3: Build Partnerships

Partners are people or organizations who are willing to offer their service and support to the garden for free or at a low cost. You may also be able to work with a partner to access more or better sources of funding.

When looking for partners, think about the skills and supplies you do not yet have within your group of gardeners. Some ideas include:

- Landscaping
- Construction
- Health and safety training
- Connections to local media (to help recruit gardeners and people who wish to support the garden)
- Supplies (see [Appendix 13: Sample Community Garden Wish List](#) on page 41 for ideas)



### Helpful Partners

There are many groups who may be able to help with your garden. See [Appendix 14: Helpful Partners](#) on page 42 for more details on these groups in Alberta. Some partners could include:

- **Horticultural organizations** such as those listed with the [Alberta Horticultural Association](#). You can also check with your town to find local groups. They can provide helpful tips on growing vegetables and fruits in your area.
- **Local farms and other community gardens** may be able to provide advice as well as seedlings or transplants for the garden. You could offer pre-season garden workshops with local farms or gardens.
- **Public health dietitians and other health promotion staff** within your [Community Health Centre at Alberta Health Services](#) may be able to connect you to local supports.
- **City, town, or municipal governments** may be able to provide access to land, soil, or water.
- **Hardware and gardening stores** may be able to donate items such as tools, materials, and seeds.
- **Trades people** may be able to offer electrical, construction, or landscaping support.
- **Funding agencies** may cover the costs of supplies, tools, garden set up, hoses, rain barrels, or wages. See [Appendix 15: Funding Sources in Alberta](#) on page 43 for ideas.
- **Churches, service clubs, and non-profit groups** may offer supplies, support, donations, and community contacts. Some local groups may be able to donate labour.
- **Schools** often enjoy outdoor classrooms in a community garden. Growing vegetables and plants can be a part of science, social studies, math, physical education, or art. Students can help with garden tasks as they learn. See Alberta Agriculture's [A Guide to Growing School Gardens in Alberta](#).

## Step 4: Create a Budget

\*Step 4 may come after [Step 5: Select a Site](#), depending on when you find a garden site.

A community garden may need supplies or supports that cost money. Some gardens don't look for extra funding because they collect member fees to pay for their needs. However, a fee can make it very hard for low-income people to join your garden. Thus, many gardens look for sponsors and funding to reduce costs for all gardeners and to support people who want to join but can't afford to pay. Some people may also be willing to take on extra tasks to reduce or offset their member fees.

### Potential Funding Sources

See [Appendix 15: Funding Sources in Alberta](#) on page 43 for ideas on who could fund or sponsor your garden. Before asking for money, create a budget that lists all the costs you need to cover to start and maintain your garden. You can use this budget to explain how you would spend money from sponsors or funders. [Appendix 16: Sample Budget Worksheet](#) on page 45 provides an outline for a budget. You may also need to create a “wish list” of costs to share with donors and sponsors so they know how you will spend the money they give you. See [Appendix 13: Sample Community Garden Wish List](#) on page 41 for ideas.

The most common ways for community gardens to raise funds include:

- **Annual member fees** for garden plots. It's recommended to collect fees only for the current season. Set fees to cover costs, not to make a profit. Keep in mind that some community members may not have enough money to pay a fee to join the garden. The Garden Committee may be able to help these people find other ways to pay for some or all of their fees.
- **Local businesses** may provide support in the form of donations, sponsorships, and grants.
- **Fundraising** can help cover garden costs or pay for large garden projects.
- **Municipal, provincial, and federal government grants** can support a community garden. It may be helpful to partner with another group who has registered charitable status because this improves your chance of getting grant money.



## Step 5: Select a Garden Site

There are many factors to consider when choosing a site, including:

- good conditions for growing plants
- safe location that is easy to access
- space for parking
- access to a water source
- good water drainage
- easy to see from pathways and roads
- zoning rules and specified land use in the area
- ability to obtain a land agreement



You may want to draw simple maps or take photos when visiting sites to help you compare and choose at a later time. The more detail you gather, the easier it will be to select the site. Be sure to consider less obvious places, such as courtyards and large buildings with flat rooftops.

[Appendix 17: Garden Site Checklist](#) on page 46 provides more details on what to look for.

### Other Important Factors When Choosing a Site

- Find out if there are any major pipes or cables under the ground before you dig, such as water, gas, or electricity. You can make a 'locate request' online at [www.albertaonecall.com](http://www.albertaonecall.com) or by telephone at 1-800-242-3447. A worker will then come to your garden site to mark all underground lines.
- Make sure the soil at the site is safe. You can send soil samples to a soil testing lab. See Alberta Agriculture & Forestry [Analytical Laboratories Listings](#) for ideas.
- Ask the people or store owners who live or work in the area near the site if they have any concerns about a new garden in their neighbourhood.
- Check if the landowner has insurance or can get insurance that would cover a community garden. Insurance protects against liability for injuries or damages.

## Step 6: Plan and Design the Garden

Develop a garden plan and design your site based on the gardeners' needs (see [Introduction: Types of Community Gardens](#)). A site map is a good way to organize and recruit gardeners. If possible, draw the map to scale. Create design options to present to the Garden Committee for a vote. See [Appendix 2: Sample Site Maps](#) on page 25 for ideas on setting up a community garden.

### At a Glance: What to Include in a Garden Map

1. Sun and shade patterns
2. Access to water, rain barrels
3. Wind patterns
4. Drainage patterns
5. Changes in ground slope
6. Trees
7. Shrubs and flower beds
8. Buildings
9. Fences
10. Paved areas
11. Traffic patterns, parking
12. Play areas
13. Sitting areas
14. Underground sprinkler system
15. Space for future growth
16. Compost bins and a storage shed

The following section provides general principles for designing a successful community garden.

### Design Ideas for Community Gardens

*Adapted from Dig it! A practical Toolkit: How local governments can support community gardens, by Herb Barbolet. Co-published by Ministry of Community Development and Union of British Columbia Municipalities.*

**Appearance:** Design gardens to add beauty in a way that is easy to maintain. Include fruit and berry trees, shrubs, herbs, and even edible flowers.

**Showcase:** Assign a space in your garden for a test plot for new types of plants.

**Flow:** Design the garden so it is easy to work with large tools such as wheelbarrows. Set up plots where each type of plant has ideal growing conditions (sunlight, wind breaks, etc.). Make storage sheds easy to access.

**Environment:** Promote the use of natural materials, fertilizer, mulch, and insect control.

**Safety:** Fix potential hazards quickly, such as holes in the ground or broken fencing.

**Eyes on the garden:** Make sure the garden is highly visible. Include signs to label the garden.

**Long-term focus:** Design the garden with long-term growth in mind. Try to secure enough space for more plots or common areas in future.

**Quick Tip:** Keep the garden simple the first year. You can always add more in future years.

## Key Features of Community Gardens

**Raised beds:** Raised beds are easier to access and useful when soil is poor quality or unsafe. The size of your raised beds will depend on access and space available. When space is limited, a 4 x 8 foot (1.2 x 2.4 metres) plot is enough to grow a good amount of produce.

Type of raised bed	Recommended size
Access from one side	up to 2 feet or (0.6 m) wide
Access from both sides	up to 4 feet (1.2 m) wide
Wheelchair access	18–20 inches or 45–51 centimetres (cm) high above grade and 24–48 inches (0.6–1.2 m) wide, with enough room to turn

**Soil:** In-ground and raised beds need at least 6 inches (15 cm) of soil. Some vegetables will need more (12–18 inches (30–46 cm)). Decide what you will plant before building raised beds. If you need to transfer soil to the site, test it for pH, nutrients, and contaminants.

**Water:** You will need nearby water access. Allow for easy access to water from all garden plots. Rain barrels can collect rain as a clean source of water.

**Compost:** Composting is a process that breaks down plant waste so gardeners can add it to the soil to increase nutrients. Community gardens can have their own compost bin on site, or give the compost to towns, cities, or people who collect plant waste. The Government of Alberta provides ideas on [How to Build and Maintain a Compost Bin](#).

**Mulch:** Look for mulch options such as leaves, grass clippings, and wood chips. Store mulch in a place where all gardeners can access it easily. Place it on top of the soil after planting to help retain moisture and stop weed growth.

**Other soil amendments:** You can add other items to improve soil quality, such as manure, peat, lime, or bone meal.

**Structures:** Storage sheds, potting areas, greenhouses, benches, playgrounds, and harvest tables enhance the garden and provide spaces for people to gather.

**Signage:** Bulletin boards help gardeners share information such as garden guidelines and tips for making the most of your harvest. Set up a large sign with the name of the garden.

**Fencing:** Fences can keep out wildlife and outline the private garden space. Green fences made of edible shrubs or trees are also a good option.

**Special features:** Enhance your garden with extras such as:

- a fruit tree orchard
- rest areas (benches or grass)
- beekeeping
- outdoor eating area (picnic tables with garbage can)
- washrooms
- test plots for new plants

## Garden Design for Families and Children

When setting up a garden that welcomes families and children:

- Include child garden plots and play areas.
- Ask children to perform easy tasks to give them a sense of success.
- Let children taste and take home food from the garden.
- Base plot size on the length of a child's reach so they can access plants from all sides.
- Provide child-friendly supplies such as small watering cans, gloves, and tools.
- Put children's garden plots in a central area to make it easy to watch them.



## Garden Design to Welcome all Mobility Levels

Design the garden so people of all mobility levels can join. Not all people will move through the space in the same way.

- Design garden pathways that are smooth, even, and at least 4 feet (1.2 metres) wide for strollers, wheelchairs, and wheelbarrows. Level the ground or add ramps. Ensure the slope of pathways does not exceed a rise of 2 inches (5 centimetres) or a fall of 10 feet (3 metres).
- Build tool sheds, greenhouses, and other buildings that people can access with strollers, wheelchairs, and wheelbarrows.
- Store supplies so they are easy to reach.
- Choose tools that are hardy but light. Some extra tools that may be helpful are: left-handed tools, tools with tailored grips for easy lifting, and extra-long tools to extend a person's reach.
- Add handrails, handles, or posts to garden beds or structures to make the area more stable.
- Have kneeling mats or short stools to make it easier and more comfortable to reach low garden beds.
- Keep in mind the height and arm reach of gardeners, and whether they are able to bend over garden beds. Add raised beds, or use table tops and containers to make it easier to reach plants.
- Include space for vehicle access and loading areas. A small number of parking spots and a bike lock-up area are important.





## Step 7: Create Garden Guidelines

Garden guidelines let all members know how the garden is run and what they need to do. [Appendix 11: Sample Garden Guidelines](#) on page 39 outlines a sample set of guidelines.

Ask gardeners, the landowner, funders, and other people in the area for their input on the guidelines. The guidelines will outline how to work with others, promote safety, share space, and respect everyone. Ask each new gardener to sign off on the guidelines when they register.

Garden guidelines often touch on the following topics:

- expected behaviour
- agreements, fees, waivers, and other forms
- safe handling of tools, materials, and chemicals
- tasks to maintain the garden
- important contacts\*
- process to address a breach of the guidelines

\* The Garden Committee may want to ask gardeners for consent to share their contact information with other members.



**Quick Tip:** Post the garden guidelines where everyone can see them (e.g. on a storage shed, bulletin board, or front gate). Make sure they are easy to read and protect them from wet weather.

# Start and Maintain the Garden

The garden season begins in the spring when you can access the site. It is a good idea to wait until the Victoria Day weekend in May to plant anything outdoors in Alberta.

There are five stages to set up and maintain the garden:

**Stage 1:** Prepare the Site

**Stage 2:** Build and Install Garden Structures

**Stage 3:** Plant the Garden

**Stage 4:** Maintain the Garden

**Stage 5:** Harvest the Garden



## Stage 1: Prepare the Site

You may need to prepare the site before you can plant the garden. Here are some common tasks at this stage:

- Clear the site of garbage and debris.
- Level the ground and set up planter boxes.
- Install water lines and a drainage system, if needed.
- Test the quality of the soil.
- Till the soil and add nutrients based on the results of soil testing.

## Stage 2: Build and Install Garden Structures

Once the site is ready, you can start to build and install garden structures. You can add more structures over time as needed. Some common garden structures include:

- Raised beds that are easy to access
- Pathways and ramps
- Compost bins
- Storage shed
- Rain barrels
- Fences and gates
- Sign posts
- Bulletin board
- Greenhouses
- Rest area with benches and shade
- Child play areas



## Stage 3: Plant the Garden

When choosing what to plant, talk to local gardeners and farmers to find the crops that will grow well in your region. See [Appendix 18: What to Grow in Alberta](#) on page 47 for ideas to help you find the best crops for your garden.

**Quick Tip:** Before planting the garden, you will likely need to work in good quality soil such as triple mix. Triple mix is equal parts topsoil, compost, and peat moss or coconut coir/fibre.

Based on skill and the length of the growing season, gardeners can plant seeds, seedlings, or both. Local garden centres and some farms sell seedlings and young plants to help when starting late in the growing season or if the growing season is short. Gardeners can also start transplants (such as tomatoes) indoors during early spring for plants that need more time to mature.

### Tips for Using Transplants

#### Starting Seedlings Indoors

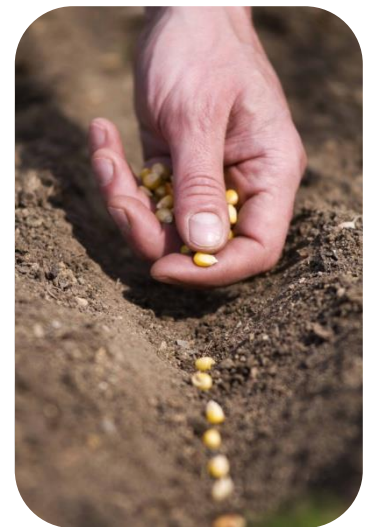
- Read seed packages for directions.
- Start seedlings indoors or in a greenhouse in small containers.
- Use a seed starter soil mix from a local garden centre.
- When starting indoors, it is helpful to use artificial lights designed for growing plants.
- Slowly expose seedlings to sunlight and cooler weather to harden them before transplanting.

#### Planting Transplants

- Wait until the heat of the day has passed before transplanting.
- Plant just the roots and a bit of stem in the soil.
- Press transplants firmly into the ground, leaving a depression around the transplant for easy watering.
- Water transplants at least once every 24 hours; soak the roots, but avoid wetting the leaves.

### Tips for Planting from Seed Outdoors

- Use hardy types of plants that are likely to grow in all weather.
- Follow the instructions on the seed packets for best results.
- Confirm the soil is warm enough before planting. See [Soil Temperature for Germination](#) for more details.



## Stage 4: Maintain the Garden

You need to maintain garden plots throughout the season. Garden members need to work together to maintain shared spaces, including plots, compost bins, garden sheds, and greenhouses.

Post a list of shared tasks that gardeners need to do on a routine basis. Ask gardeners to sign-up for tasks and mark the date they complete them to inspire everyone to do their part. Shared tasks include:

- Build raised beds, compost boxes, and sheds.
- Spread soil over beds and common plots.
- Clean and store shared tools.
- Collect and dispose of litter and debris.
- Maintain the compost bin and ensure it is always closed so pests do not get in.
- Remove leaves from walkways and paths.
- Maintain sheds, fences, greenhouses and other structures.
- Clear moss from stone or brick walkways so it does not become slippery.



### At a Glance: Garden Plot Maintenance

- Water plants in the morning or evening to retain more water in the soil.
- Weed often so that water and nutrients go to your plants rather than weeds.
- Apply fertilizer on a regular basis. Ask a local gardener or farmer for tips.
- Prune plants as needed.
- Tie back and stake plants that need extra support.

When there is a large task to complete, many community gardens plan work days where all gardeners gather to complete the job. Plan work days at least twice during the season: on opening day and closing day to prepare or shut down the garden. These work days can be turned into fun or education events by adding a potluck and workshop. See [Appendix 10: Opening and Closing Day Checklist](#) on page 38 for tasks to complete on these work days.

**Quick Tip:** Make sure all members know how to handle tools safely. Always have a first aid kit and safety gear on-site, including gloves, bandages, and safety glasses.

## Stage 5: Harvest the Garden

Vegetables and fruit ripen at different times. Harvest time also varies due to rain, temperature, and soil fertility. Your vegetables and fruits will taste best when they are ripe. Picking them at this stage will also allow the plant to keep growing. Cornell University provides helpful [Guidelines for Harvesting Vegetables](#).



Enjoy your fresh vegetables and fruit as you harvest them. If you have extra, share with family, friends or other gardeners. You may be able to donate fresh produce to community groups or local social events. You can also freeze, can, or dry vegetables and fruit to eat throughout the winter months. See [Appendix 19: Canning and Preserving](#) on page 48 for guidance.

Many community gardens plan a party during the fall to bring gardeners together to harvest their gardens. Harvest parties can also be learning events with a workshop on how and when to gather crops from the garden. Alberta Agriculture and Forestry provides helpful answers to [Post-Harvest Handling Frequently Asked Questions](#).

**Quick Tip:** Interested in promoting nutrition to your gardeners? Share ideas from [Appendix 20: Food and Nutrition Tips](#) on page 49 through email, the garden website or blog, or social media such as Twitter®, Facebook® or Instagram®

## Evaluation

You may want to get feedback about your garden. If you have grant funding, you may need to do an evaluation so you can report your success and learning to your funder. The results of the evaluation can also help you gain support for the garden in future years. If you get funding, ask your funder what they would like you to evaluate.

You can evaluate in many ways, and you can collect feedback in person or in writing. Gardeners, the landowner, and anyone who helped with the garden can provide ideas on how to improve or change for the next garden season. [Appendix 21: Evaluation Survey](#) on page 50 provides a sample evaluation survey.





## Appendices

## Appendix 1: Ways to Welcome Everyone to Your Garden

There may be people in your community who would like to be a part of the garden but do not join because they have unique social concerns. Here is a list of ideas you can try to make these people feel welcome:

### Improve Physical Access

- Choose a garden site that is close to transit or easy to access by bike or on foot so people can still join the garden if they do not own a vehicle.
- Set up a car pool system to help gardeners who do not own a vehicle.
- Design a garden layout that people can access if they use a cane, crutches, wheelchair, or walker.
- Offer raised beds and boxes to gardeners who cannot kneel very well.
- Set up picnic tables, benches, or mobile chairs for social spaces where gardeners can rest if they cannot stand, kneel, or work for long periods of time.
- Provide long reach tools for gardeners who cannot bend or extend their arms or legs very well.

### Invite Diversity

- Describe the purpose of the garden very clearly to the entire community so people from all cultures know what it is about.
- Attract diverse groups of people to join the garden through local agencies who support:
  - newcomers (immigrants and refugees)
  - single parents
  - cultural or ethnic groups
  - single adults
  - Indigenous groups
  - people who live with mental health issues
  - people who have a disability
  - sexual or gender diverse persons
- Recruit people from diverse cultures and social groups to join the Garden Committee to gain unique and varied ideas and feedback.
- Post signs or notices in other languages if there are gardeners who do not speak English very well.
- Hold work events at different times of the day so every gardener has a chance to fit at least one event into busy work and household schedules.
- Set up play areas and plots for children so parents can bring their family to the garden.



## Promote Respect and Safety

- Make it clear that respect among gardeners is a key value that all people need to support at all times.
- Create a fair wait list process, such as a first-come-first-serve basis.
- Set up a buddy system so no one has to be alone in the garden if they have concerns about their safety.
- Make sure the garden is in a safe area where women, children, and newcomers (immigrants and refugees) feel secure and welcome.
- Allow people with physical or mental health concerns to bring service or support animals to the garden.
- Ask seasoned gardeners to become mentors for people who have never had the chance to garden or who have never planted a garden in Alberta.



## Reduce Costs

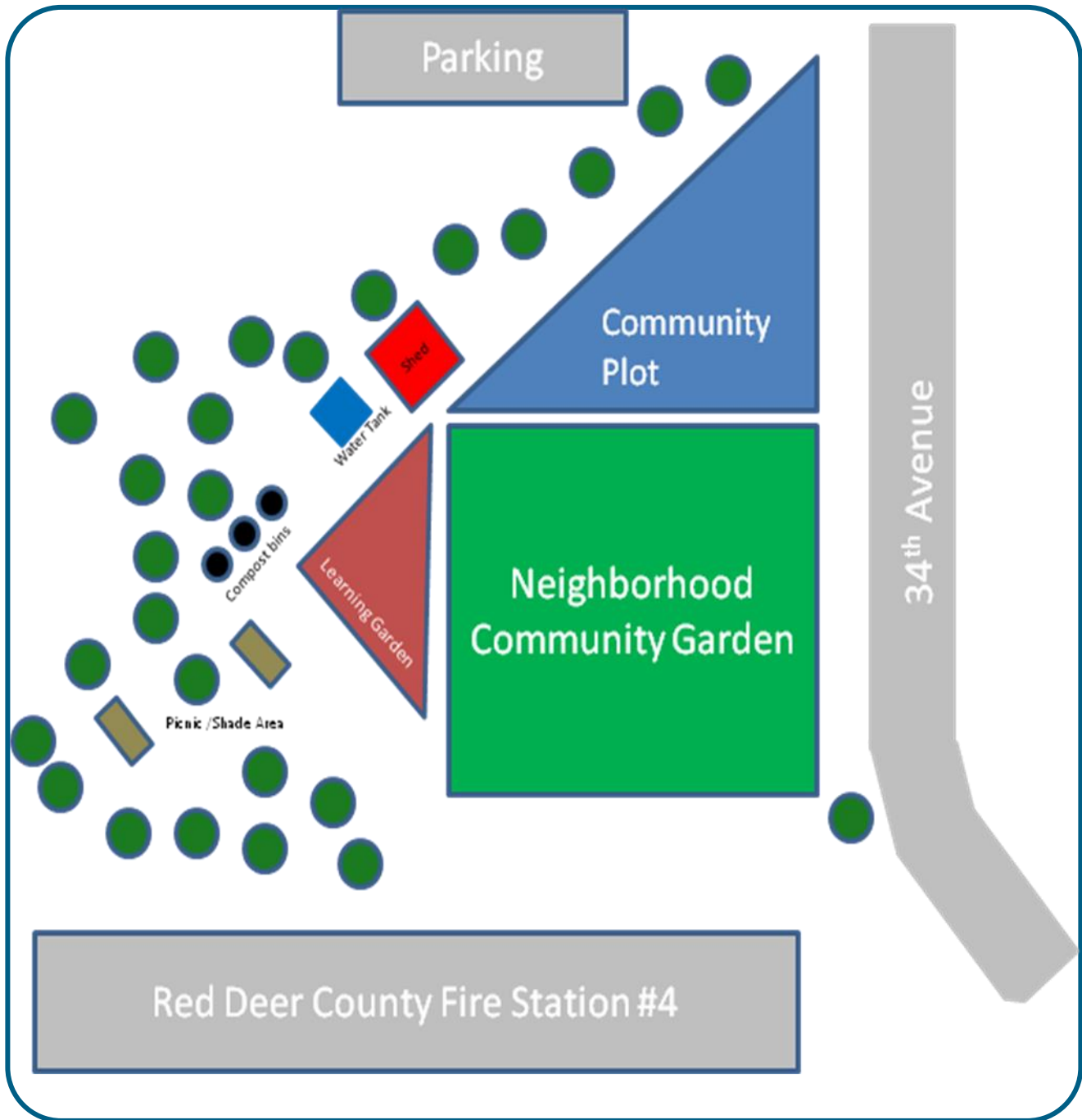
- Seek funding so people do not have to pay a fee to join the garden.
- Ask local businesses if they can donate tools, soil, seeds, or materials to help gardeners who do not have enough money to buy all of these items.
- Look for sponsors and donors who fund people that live with complex struggles, such as a physical or mental health issue, or too little income.
- Share tools among gardeners so each person does not have to buy every tool.





## Appendix 2: Sample Site Maps

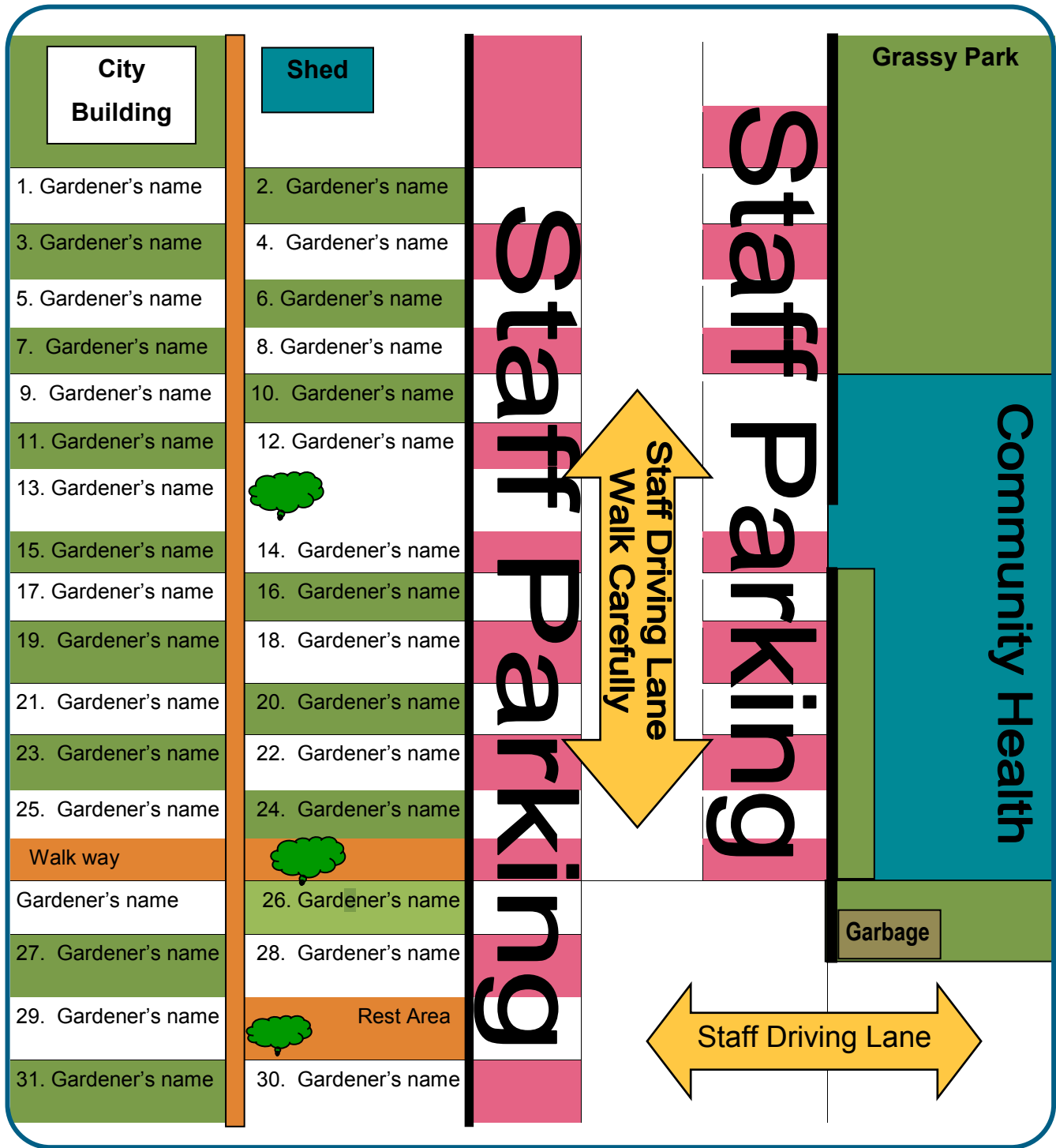
### Sample Site Map 1: Springbrook Community Garden



## Sample Site Map 2: Stettler Community Garden



Sample Site Map 3: Medicine Hat Community Garden



## Appendix 3: Sample Needs Assessment

When you ask for feedback and ideas from gardeners and community members, you can gain a better sense of whether or not there is enough interest and support to start and maintain a garden in your area. There are many ways you can perform a needs assessment in your community or neighbourhood, and each approach requires different amounts of time, money, and effort. Some common ideas include:

- **Talk to people directly.** Gather feedback by talking to people in places where they already meet or spend time, such as community centres, churches, school or community events, gardening stores, coffee shops, or recreation centres. Ask local businesses or groups to donate money, supplies, or support to help with the garden.
- **Conduct a survey.** Ask people to complete a paper or online survey.
- **Hold meetings.** Invite people to a local meeting to share their ideas and feedback.

### Steps for a Needs Assessment

The four basic steps to conduct a needs assessment are:

1. List the people and groups who have the most interest in a community garden, plus the people and groups who would have the most skill to start and maintain a garden.
2. Decide on the best ways to get feedback and ideas from as many of these people as you can.
3. Conduct the needs assessment.
4. Look over the results to see if you have enough interest and support for the garden.

### Common Questions to Include

1. Do you want to be a part of a garden in this community?
2. What interests you most about being a part of a community garden?
3. Are you willing to volunteer to help with the garden?
4. Which local site or area do you suggest for the garden?
5. Do you suggest individual plots or a group plot for the garden?
6. Who may be willing to offer support for the garden in this community?
7. What are the major benefits of a garden in this community?
8. What are the major problems for a garden in this community?
9. What sources of funding can we try to access to help pay for the garden?
10. How much can you afford to pay each month to have a plot in the garden?
11. How can we recruit enough people to join the garden?

## Appendix 4: Sample Agenda for First Garden Meeting

### **Before guests arrive:**

- Set up a welcome table with sign in sheet and name tags.
- Provide water and snacks if needed.
- Offer child care if you have a volunteer and enough safe space.
- Set up tables and chairs in a large circle so everyone can face each other.
- Post the agenda on flip charts around the room.
- Provide paper and pens to record notes and comments.

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

- Do an ice breaker by asking the group to share their names and interest in the garden.
- Review the purpose of the meeting and the agenda.

### **2. Garden Overview**

Provide background information on the garden. Explain what has been done so far.

### **3. Brainstorm Garden Ideas**

If the group is large, you may want to break into smaller groups of four to five people. Each group could discuss different topics, and then report back to the large group.

Questions to brainstorm include:

- What is the purpose of the garden and who is it for?
- What will the garden be named?
- What type of garden will meet the group's needs? (individual, group or mixed plots)
- What is the role of the Garden Committee? What roles do you need?
- How will money be raised to support the garden? Will there be a fee to use the garden?
- What is the best way for the gardeners to stay in touch?
- How will gardeners share the work?
- How will decisions be made? How will conflicts be settled?

### **4. Next Steps**

- Create a Terms of Reference (see [Appendix 5: Sample Terms of Reference](#) on page 30).
- Create a list of Garden Committee roles and ask people to sign up (see [Appendix 6: Keeping Records](#) on page 32).
- Schedule the next meeting.

Follow up quickly by sharing minutes, action items and key contact information.

## Appendix 5: Sample Terms of Reference

### Purpose

The main function of the Garden Committee is to oversee the general operation of the [INSERT Name of Garden] located at [INSERT Address]. The Terms of Reference outline the way the Committee will govern and manage the garden and its members, including operation and maintenance of the physical garden space and any related infrastructure.

### Membership

The Garden Committee will consist of a maximum of [INSERT Number] members, not including ad hoc subcommittee members or other consultants. The term of office lasts [INSERT Number] years and any active gardener who would like to join the Committee can express interest in writing to the current Registrar before the Annual General Meeting. All Garden Committee members will be elected or appointed each year at the Annual General Meeting.

### Committee Roles

**Garden Coordinator** oversees the operation of both the Committee and the garden.

**Registrar** maintains the waiting list for people who want a garden plot; assigns plots; runs the spring registration; accepts written requests to join the Garden Committee. For large gardens, more than one person may need to share this work.

**Recorder** helps set meeting agendas; records minutes; sends out agendas and minutes to all members.

**Communication Lead** acts as the main point of contact for all gardeners (often through a general garden email address); reviews comments; answers questions; brings concerns to the Committee.

**Outreach Coordinator** promotes the garden in the community; recruits new members; welcomes new members. For large gardens, more than one person may need to share this work.

**Treasurer** collects fees, manages the bank account, pays bills, approves spending, and applies for grants. The treasurer also drafts a budget for the season and approves any expenses. It is a good idea to have two people in this role as co-signers on the bank account.

**Grounds Leader** plans work days to make sure paths, common areas, hoses, fences, compost, greenhouses and other shared resources are in order. If needed, they can create a schedule of garden duties, such as watering.

**Education Leader** plans and promotes learning events at the garden, and connects new or struggling gardeners with seasoned mentors.

**Safety Leader** provides safety information, helps gardeners avoid injury, ensures there are first aid supplies, removes safety hazards, and works to reduce theft and damage.

## Member Duties

- Attend all Committee meetings, except for reasons beyond their control. If a Committee member misses more than [INSERT number] meetings in a 12-month period, they may be asked to resign from the Committee.
- Help recruit new Committee members as needed.
- Attend the Annual General Meeting.
- Help resolve any conflict.
- Represent the best interest of all gardeners.
- Help implement decisions.

## Meetings

The Committee will set up a meeting schedule for the entire year. The Committee may choose to call ad hoc or urgent meetings to address new issues or make decisions. All current and active gardeners can request meeting minutes as needed.

## Decision Making

The Committee will make decisions by a majority vote of 50% of all members. The Committee will follow these steps to make a decision:

1. A member will present a motion.
2. A second member will express support for the motion.
3. The Committee will discuss the motion.
4. The Committee will vote on the motion.
5. The Recorder will note the decision in the meeting notes.

## Review

The Committee will review the Terms of Reference at the first meeting of each year and revise as needed.

## Approval

These Terms of Reference for the [INSERT Name of Garden] Garden Committee have been approved by all Committee members on [INSERT Date].

## Appendix 6: Keeping Records

### 1. Contact List

Note: Get consent from everyone before sharing personal information between garden members.

Job	Name(s)	Phone	E-mail
Garden Coordinator(s)			
Registrar			
Recorder			
Communication Lead			
Outreach Coordinator			
Treasurer			
Grounds Leader			
Education Leader			
Safety Leader			
Composting Crew			

### 2. List of Gardeners

Note: Get consent from everyone before sharing personal information between garden members.

Name	Phone	E-mail	Plot #



### 3. Garden Plot Map

Note: Get consent from everyone before sharing personal information between garden members.

		Column				
		A	B	C	D	E
Row	A	Plot 1	Plot 2	Plot 3	Plot 4	Plot 5
	B	Plot 6	Plot 7	Plot 8	Plot 9	Plot 10
	C	Plot 11	Plot 12	Plot 13	Plot 14	Plot 15
	D	Plot 16	Plot 17	Plot 18	Plot 19	Plot 20
	E	Plot 21	Plot 22	Plot 23	Plot 24	Plot 25
	F	Plot 26	Plot 27	Plot 28	Plot 29	Plot 30
	G	Plot 31	Plot 32	Plot 33	Plot 34	Plot 35

## Appendix 7: Spring Registration

### Before Registration

- Create a map of the garden with plots marked for each gardener.
- Use the map to measure and label each plot in the garden.
- Post the map on the garden bulletin board so each gardener can find their plot.

### Registration Meeting

- Bring all gardeners together to meet one other.
- Complete application forms (see [Appendix 8](#) on page 35 for samples).
- Select or assign plots.
- Pay for plots, if needed.
- Provide the schedule of events for the season (see [Appendix 9](#) on page 37 for a sample calendar).
- Outline the tasks for Opening Day and Closing Day (see [Appendix 10](#) on page 38 for ideas).
- Share the Garden Guidelines (see [Appendix 11](#) on page 39 for sample guidelines).
- Provide a Welcome Letter (see [Appendix 12](#) on page 40 for a sample letter).
- Pass out free seeds and/or seedlings if you have them.

### Meeting Materials

- Garden map
- Name tags
- Receipt book
- Cash box with change
- Application forms
- Schedule of events
- Garden guidelines
- Fee charts
- Welcome letters
- Seeds
- Snacks and water or a potluck are always a fun idea

## Appendix 8: Sample Gardener Application Forms

### Example 1: Town of Stettler Community Garden

*Adapted with permission from the Stettler Community Garden*

**Please print clearly**

**Primary Plot Holder:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Applicant(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Postal Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone Number (home):** \_\_\_\_\_ **(work):** \_\_\_\_\_

**(cell):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Primary Plot Holder:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Size of Plot Required (check one):**

10 x 10 (\$5) \_\_\_\_\_

10 x 22 (\$10) \_\_\_\_\_

22 x 22 (\$20) \_\_\_\_\_

3 x 8 Raised bed (\$20) \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Community Gardens Committee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Application Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fee Paid:** YES NO

## Example 2: University of Missouri

Adapted from the Community Gardening Toolkit, University of Missouri Extension Publication MP906 (<http://extension.missouri.edu/p/MP906>).

### Gardener Application

Name of gardener(s):

Address:

Phone number:

E-mail address:

Emergency contact:

name and phone number

# of plots \_\_\_\_ x fee per plot \$ \_\_\_\_ = Total plot fee \$ \_\_\_\_

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

Would you like help from an experienced gardener?  Yes  No

Would you like to help a new gardener?  Yes  No

Please check area(s) of interest in volunteering with the community garden:

- committee work  site development  
 site maintenance  site clean-up

#### Consents

Members of the Community Garden, the Garden Committee, or the media may take photos and/or video at the garden. By signing below I give *[INSERT name of garden]* permission to use photos and/or video of me and/or my family to promote and communicate about the Community Garden.

**Check this box if you disagree.** If you disagree, please let photographers know when you encounter them at the garden.

By signing below, I agree that I have read and understand the Gardener Guidelines and plan to abide by all of the garden rules. I understand that neither the garden group nor owners of the land are responsible for my actions. I therefore agree to hold harmless the garden group and 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.

Signature:

Print name:

Date:

## Appendix 9: Sample Calendar of Events

Throughout the year, the Garden Committee hosts a number of meetings and events. Ask the Garden Coordinator or Committee any questions you have about the proposed calendar.

Event	Purpose
Annual Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review last garden season.</li> <li>• Plan for upcoming garden season.</li> <li>• Update and revise gardener guidelines.</li> <li>• Select garden co-leaders.</li> <li>• Select crew leaders and leadership team.</li> <li>• Prepare for spring registration.</li> </ul>
Spring Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pick up welcome packet.</li> <li>• Complete application.</li> <li>• Confirm plot assignment.</li> <li>• Sign up for a job/crew.</li> <li>• Pay plot fees.</li> <li>• Pick up seeds.</li> <li>• Meet gardeners and crew leaders.</li> </ul>
Opening Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure water is turned on.</li> <li>• Meet gardeners and crew leaders.</li> <li>• Clean the garden.</li> <li>• Hold potluck picnic.</li> </ul>
Garden Work Parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean the garden or help with various projects.</li> <li>• Hold potluck picnic.</li> </ul>
Closing Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put your garden to bed.</li> <li>• Confirm plot assignment for next year.</li> <li>• Clean plots by this date to guarantee your space for next year.</li> <li>• Hold potluck picnic.</li> </ul>
Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn about topics such as: soil fertility, composting, preserving, garden building, tree planting, and building or fence construction.</li> </ul>
Social Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebrate key garden days such as: opening and closing, seed planting and harvesting.</li> <li>• Attract new members.</li> <li>• Welcome the neighbourhood.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 10: Opening and Closing Day Checklist

Adapted from Community Action Coalition of South Central Wisconsin ([www.cacscw.org](http://www.cacscw.org))

**Opening Day** is a time for gardeners to get to know each other and complete these tasks:

- Build or repair any damages to compost bins, sheds, tool sheds, raised beds, and greenhouses.
- Measure, stake, and mark garden plots for each gardener.
- Put up the bulletin board and post a map of garden plots.
- Get out hoses, tools, containers, and water barrels.
- Mulch, plant, and weed common gardening areas.
- Clear paths and space around tool shed, compost bins, and other structures.
- Remove any trash.
- Fix broken or leaky hoses.
- Make sure you have enough materials:
  - Building materials (wood, nails, plastic, etc.)
  - Wooden stakes
  - Hammers or mallets
  - Cotton string or sisal twine to mark the outline of each plot
  - Permanent marker to label stakes with names
  - Long measuring tape
  - Calculator to figure out the length and width of plots
  - Gloves

**Closing Day** is a time to tidy up and prepare for winter with these tasks:

- Drain hoses, taps, and rain barrels.
- Coil hoses and put them away.
- Remove all stakes, fencing, tomato cages, and other items before tilling the garden.
- Till the garden
- Take down the bulletin board and signs and store them away.
- Clean and organize tools to store away or return to gardeners.
- Tidy common areas.
- Compost or dispose plant materials.
- Take away trash or put it out for pickup.
- Ask gardeners to share ideas for the next garden season.
- Ask gardeners to complete an evaluation survey.

## Appendix 11: Sample Garden Guidelines

1. Complete an application form. A plot fee of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is due by \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Sign up for one of the garden jobs. Please contact the garden coordinator(s) for more information.
3. Attend garden meetings and work parties throughout the season.
4. If you plan to stop using your space, please let the garden committee know as soon as possible so your plot can be given to someone else.
5. Tend your plot and the nearby pathways often.
  - Pick up litter when you see it.
  - Put dead plants into the compost bin. Any diseased plants and seedy or invasive weeds need to be bagged and put in the trash so they do not invade the garden.
  - Turn off water sources when you are done.
  - Roll up hoses, return tools to the shed, and lock the shed before leaving the garden.
  - Use only the approved pesticides and fertilizers in your garden.
6. Be mindful of safety.
  - Supervise children in the garden at all times.
  - Garden during daylight hours only.
  - Garden with others or bring a cell phone to stay safe.
7. Respect other gardeners and neighbours.
  - Do not work in another person's plot without their approval.
  - Plant tall plants and vines in places where they will not invade your neighbour's plot.
  - Do not smoke, chew tobacco, or use drugs or alcohol in the garden site.
  - Do not bring pets, use radios or speakers, or start fires.
8. Report theft, damage, and odd activities to the garden committee.
9. Help resolve any disputes in good faith. Report any concerns or conflicts to the garden committee.
10. Remove all dead plants and materials (string, wire, wood, metal, plastic, etc.) at the end of the season and dispose of them properly. Ensure your garden is cleaned up by \_\_\_\_\_.

Gardener's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 12: Sample Welcome Letter

**Gardener's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Plot Number Assignment:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Garden**  
**Year**

This Welcome Packet tells you how our garden works and who to contact with questions. It explains how you can get involved to help maintain the entire garden.

### Welcome to Community Gardening

A community garden is a place to grow food, flowers and herbs with other people. It can also be a place to connect with nature, learn new skills, and enjoy exercise.

**Responsibilities:** Community gardens rely on all gardeners to 1) maintain their own plot and 2) help manage the entire garden.

### Success, Safety and Security at the Garden

**Plan to visit your garden 2–3 times a week during the growing season.** It is important to weed, water, and harvest at the right times.

**Attend meetings and workdays.** This will help you meet other gardeners and be part of the community.

**Make friends with other gardeners.** Seasoned gardeners are helpful, so ask them for tips.

**Sign up for a garden job or committee.** By helping with a certain job or project, you support the whole garden and ensure the workload is shared among many people.

**Learn.** Check out books from the library, or attend classes. There is always something to learn about gardening. The more you learn, the more success you'll have.

**Meet the neighbours near the garden site.** Greet the neighbours and share extra produce. Take the time to let them know how the garden works.

**Harvest on a regular basis.** During harvest season, let garden leaders know if you plan to be out of town for more than a few days. Others can harvest for you and donate the food to a local service.

**Grow more than you need in case some is lost.**

**Put a border or fence around your plot if your garden rules allow it.**



## Appendix 13: Sample Community Garden Wish List

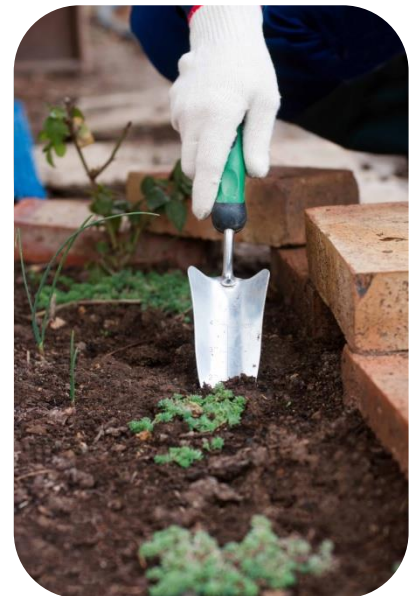
This list can help you find the tools and supplies you need. Gather more input from the Garden Committee, gardeners, and other people who have garden knowledge.

### Garden Items

- topsoil (triple-mix), compost, potting soil, seed starting mix
- seeds, bulbs, bedding plants, cover crop seeds
- perennials, shrubs, fruit bushes and shade trees
- manure, bone meal, blood meal, other natural fertilizers
- mulch, such as: shredded leaves, hay, shredded bark, wood chips, black plastic, shredded cardboard

### Equipment and Supplies

- forks, spades, shovels, trowels, rakes, hoes, cultivators
- pruning shears
- child-sized hand tools
- wheelbarrow and garden cart
- garden hose, soaker hose, drip irrigation system, spray nozzles
- hose reels, rain barrels, watering cans
- rototiller, mower, edger (could rent these items)
- plant labels, plot markers, signs, permanent markers
- plastic, wood or metal edging
- plastic and clay pots and containers, all sizes
- seedling trays, peat pots, organic seed starter mix
- wooden planters
- locks and chains
- fabric row covers, cloches
- gloves, kneeling pads
- tool caddies, tool aprons, garden trellis
- tomato or plant cages
- storage unit or shed
- compost system



## Appendix 14: Helpful Partners

### Support in Alberta

- [Alberta Health Services](#): Find a public health dietitian or health promotion staff in your region.
- [Alberta Public Libraries](#): Check your local public library for books and resources on gardening.
- Family Resource Centres: Family resource centres such as [Parent Link](#) and [McMan](#) provide activities and resources for children and families.
- [Service Alberta](#): Provides information on non-profit companies and incorporation in Alberta.

### Gardening and Horticulture Organizations

- [Alberta Horticultural Association](#): An organization of horticultural groups and individuals across the province. The website provides many links to other clubs in Alberta and North America.
- [Calgary Horticultural Society](#): Promotes gardening in Calgary, and the website provides useful information for gardeners across the province.
- [Edmonton Horticultural Society](#): Promotes interest and enjoyment in gardening. The website lists useful website links and course listings in the Edmonton area.
- [Master Gardeners Association of Alberta](#): Information for people who want to become a Master Gardener. Includes contact information for community garden groups who wish to partner with gardening experts.

### Food Organizations and Programs

- [Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association](#): Provides information and links to food growers in Alberta.
- [Food Banks Alberta](#): A group of food banks in Alberta that supports food bank programs while increasing awareness of hunger and poverty in the province.
- [Farm to Cafeteria Canada](#): A national network that increases access to fresh, nutritious, safe and local foods in cafeterias in schools and hospitals.
- [FoodShare Toronto](#): Tools, policies and programs supporting healthy food for all.
- [Alberta Food Matters](#): A non-profit organization with a mission to engage Albertans in strategies to ensure secure access to adequate amounts of safe, nutritious food for everyone in a manner that promotes human dignity.
- [Plant • Grow • Share a Row](#): A program where vegetables are grown and given to a local food bank to share with families in need of fresh nutritious foods.

## Appendix 15: Funding Sources in Alberta

### Charities and Foundations

- [Alberta EcoTrust – Environmental Grants](#)
- [Alberta Emerald Foundation – Youth Engagement Grant Application](#)
- [Aviva Community Fund](#)
- [Evergreen – Funding Opportunities](#)
- [Trico Charitable Foundation](#)

### Community Foundation Grants

Many Alberta communities have foundations that provide grants to registered charitable organizations. You can also find information on the [Community Foundations of Canada](#) website.

- [Battle River Community Foundation](#)
- [Airdrie and District Community Foundation](#)
- [Banff Canmore Community Foundation](#)
- [Calgary Foundation](#)
- [Community Foundation of Lethbridge and Southwestern Alberta](#)
- [Community Foundation of Northwestern Alberta](#)
- [Community Foundation of Southeastern Alberta](#)
- [Drayton Valley Community Foundation](#)
- [Edmonton Community Foundation](#)
- [Red Deer & District Community Foundation](#)
- [St Albert Community Foundation](#)
- [Wood Buffalo Community Foundation](#)

### United Way Alberta

- [Alberta Capital Region](#)
- [Alberta Northwest](#)
- [Calgary and Area](#)
- [Central Alberta](#)
- [Fort McMurray](#)
- [Hinton](#)
- [Lethbridge & South Western Alberta Society](#)
- [Lloydminster & District](#)
- [South Eastern Alberta](#)

## Companies

- [ATCO Gas – Getting Support](#)
- [Farm Credit Canada AgriSpirit Fund](#)
- [Shell Canada – Social Investment](#)
- [Suncor Energy – Apply for Funding](#)
- [Telus – Apply For Donations](#)

## Banks and Credit Unions

- [Alberta Treasury Branch – Sponsorships and Donations](#)
- [Bank of Montreal – Community](#)
- [Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce – How to Apply for Funding](#)
- [Canadian Western Bank Group – Funding Guidelines](#)
- [Royal Bank of Canada – Community & Sustainability](#)
- [Scotiabank](#)
- [TD Friends of the Environment Foundation](#)

## Government

- [Alberta Gaming & Liquor Commission – Charitable Gaming](#)
- [Alberta Healthy School Community Wellness Fund](#)
- [Alberta Lottery Fund – Applying for a Grant](#)
- [Alberta Recreation & Parks Association – Communities ChooseWell](#)
- [City of Edmonton – Grants & Funding](#)
- [Employment and Social Development Canada – Funding: New Horizons for Seniors Program](#)
- [Environment Canada – EcoAction Community Funding Program](#)
- [Government of Alberta – Community Partnerships Youth Grants](#)
- [Town of Mayerthorpe](#)

## Appendix 16: Sample Budget Worksheet

<b>Income</b>	<b>Projected</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Cash Income</b>			
Cash donations			
Grants			
Membership fees (plot fees)			
<b>In-kind Donations/ Resources</b>			
Garden plot (land) usage			
Volunteers (estimate \$ value)			
Community or municipal staff labour			
Equipment			
Plants			
Soil and landscaping materials			
Estimated value of donated items*			
<b>Total Income/ Resources (Cash + Donations)</b>			
<b>Expenses (Costs)</b>			
	<b>Projected</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Start up Costs</b>			
Site preparation			
Construction equipment rental			
Soil/mulch			
Path materials (ex. gravel)			
Water connection			
Irrigation and elevated hose taps or drip system			
Tools			
Soil amendments/ fertilizer/ pest repellents			
Seeds and plants			
Water hoses, rain barrel, compost bin, etc.			
Shed, picnic tables, gazebo, fencing			
Office supplies/bulletin board			
Printing/photocopying/advertising			
<b>Recurring Expenses (Annual)</b>			
Repairs			
Water			
Mulch			
Seeds/plants			
Path materials			
Replacement tools			
Soils amendments/ fertilizer/ pesticides			
Printing/photocopying/advertising			
<b>Total Expenses (Start Up + Annual)</b>			
<b>Net</b>	<b>Projected</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Total Income – Total Expenses</b>			

\* If donated items are put under Income, they must also be put under Expenses to cancel out.

## Appendix 17: Garden Site Checklist

Check all that apply.

### Sun, Shade, and Wind

- At least 6 hours of direct sunlight per day
- Not too much shade
- Shield against wind
  - Trees
  - Shrubs
  - Buildings
  - Fences

### Slope

- Slope of 2 to 4 degrees is best
- South facing slope
- Good water drainage
  - Few spots are always wet
  - Few spots are high and dry

### Soil

- Clear site of grass or other vegetation
- Loose texture, not compact
- Neutral pH
- Enough nutrients
- Needs a soil test
- No history of contaminants
  - Salt
  - Lead or other heavy metals
  - A lot of car exhaust
  - Industrial or chemical waste

### Current Resources

- Shed/Storage
- Bathrooms
- Water source
- Electrical outlets
- Trash cans
- Compost bins

### Access

- Paved or flat walkways
- Wheelchair access
- Raised beds, handrails and ramps
- Site is close to gardeners' homes
- Car access
- Parking
- Loading areas

### Play and Rest Areas

- Nearby parks or play areas for kids
- Benches or places to sit

### Safety

- Mark location of underground utilities
- Nearby buildings have windows that face the garden
- Visible from the street
- Enough entries and exits
- Fences to keep animals out

### Future Growth

- Room to grow
- Support of land owner

## Appendix 18: What to Grow in Alberta

Crops that can be grown vary by area. To see if a crop will grow in your area, first check your [plant hardiness zone](#). When you buy seeds or plants to grow in your garden, check the hardiness zone rating on the package to make sure it will grow in your area. Examples of crops that grow in regions of Alberta are:

Vegetables		Fruit	Other
<b>Seeded in garden</b>		<b>Small shrubs*</b>	<b>Herbs</b>
Beans	Lettuce	Blue honeysuckle	Basil
Beets	Onions	Currants (black, red, white)	Bay leaves*
Broccoli	Parsnips	Gooseberries	Chives*
Brussels sprouts	Peas (garden, snow, snap, etc)	<b>Large shrubs, trees*</b>	Cilantro/Coriander
Cabbage	Pumpkins*		Dill
Carrots	Radishes	Apples	Lavender*
Cauliflower	Rutabagas	Choke cherries	Mint*
Celery	Salad greens	Crab apples	Oregano
Corn	Spinach	Dwarf sour cherries	Parsley
Cucumbers*	Squash*	Pears	Sage
Green onions	Swiss chard	Plums	Savoury
Kale	Turnips	Saskatoon berries	Tarragon
Kohlrabi	Zucchini*		Thyme*
Leeks			
<b>Grown from transplants or tubers, bulbs, crowns, etc.</b>		<b>Vines, canes, plants*</b>	<b>Flowers</b>
Artichokes	Leeks	Cantaloupes	Edible flowers (nasturtiums, pansies, etc.)
Asparagus*	Onions	Raspberries	Flowers from zucchini and other squash
Broccoli	Peppers (banana, bell, hot, etc)	Rhubarb	
Brussels sprouts	Potatoes	Strawberries	
Cabbage	Pumpkins*		
Cauliflower	Spring onions		
Celery	Squash*		
Cucumbers*	Tomato		
Eggplant	Zucchini*		
Garlic			

\* These crops may grow to be very large and/or may take several years to yield.  
Large plants may be good for communal spaces.

## Appendix 19: Canning and Preserving

These resources can help you can and preserve your garden harvest in the autumn.

- [Half Your Plate](#) – Information about how to ripen fruit, home freezing, ready-to-eat produce. Contains a produce storage chart
- [Drying Vegetables](#) (Colorado State University Extension)
- [Drying Fruits](#) (Colorado State University Extension)
- [Home Canning Safety](#) (Health Canada) – Information about safe home canning (including preventing botulism), cleaning and sanitation guidelines, and needed equipment
- [National Center for Home Food Preservation](#) – Information on canning, freezing, drying, curing, fermenting, pickling, and making jam and jelly
- [Using Dehydration to Preserve Fruits, Vegetables, and Meats](#) (Virginia State University)



## Appendix 20: Food and Nutrition Tips

Use the following resources to add nutrition tips to newsletters, blogs, websites, emails or social media and to promote healthy eating among the community gardeners.

- [Healthy Eating Starts Here](#)
- [Eat More Fruits and Vegetables](#)
- [Inspiring Healthy Eating Recipes](#)
- [Eat Vegetables and Fruit](#)
- [Fill Half Your Plate with Fruits and Veggies](#)



## Appendix 21: Evaluation Survey

*Adapted from: Community Food Project Evaluation Toolkit, Community Food Security Coalition, 2006.*

Name of Garden \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

This survey aims to get your thoughts on this garden so we can improve it for you and others. We want your honest answers. Please do not put your name on this survey because it is private.

**1. How long have you been with this garden?**

\_\_\_\_\_ weeks      OR \_\_\_\_\_ months      OR \_\_\_\_\_ years

**2. How often do you usually garden or join garden events?**

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Daily            | <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week     | <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4–5 times a week | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 times a month | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than once a month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2–3 times a week | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 times a month |   |

**3. What do you like best about coming to this garden?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**4. What do you like least about coming to this garden?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Please rate each of these aspects of the garden:**

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
a. Location	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Access to tools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Access to water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Soil quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Variety of food grown in the garden	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Management of the garden	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Help from volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Volunteer knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Social nature	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**6. How would you rate your overall experience with this garden?**

Excellent       Good       Fair       Poor

**7. In what ways do you think your life is better because of this garden?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**8. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with these statements.**

*Since I joined this garden...*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
a. I eat more vegetables and/or fruit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. I eat less packaged foods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. I eat less fast food	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. I eat more foods that are traditional in my culture or family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. I eat new types of vegetables or fruit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. I can provide more fresh produce for my family and myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. I feel better about where my food comes from	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. I am more physically active	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**9. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with these statements.**

*Since I joined this garden...*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
a. I have learned more about gardening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. I know more about the environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. I care more about the environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. I feel more involved in this community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. I spend more time with family or friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. I teach my family and friends about gardening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. I give extra food to other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**10. Do you have any other comments about this garden?**

---



---



---

**Thank You!**

## References

1. Guitart D, Pickering C, Byrne J. Past results and future directions in urban community gardens research. *Urban forestry & urban greening*. 2012 Jan 1;11(4):364-73.
2. CoDyre M, Fraser ED, Landman K. How does your garden grow? An empirical evaluation of the costs and potential of urban gardening. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*. 2015 Jan 1;14(1):72-9.
3. Soga M, Gaston KJ, Yamaura Y. Gardening is beneficial for health: A meta-analysis. *Preventive Medicine Reports*. 2017 Mar 1;5:92-9.
4. York M, Wiseman T. Gardening as an occupation: a critical review. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*. 2012 Feb;75(2):76-84.
5. Hale J, Knapp C, Bardwell L, Buchenau M, Marshall J, Sancar F, Litt JS. Connecting food environments and health through the relational nature of aesthetics: Gaining insight through the community gardening experience. *Social science & medicine*. 2011 Jun 1;72(11):1853-63.
6. Alberta Health Services. Nutrition-related chronic disease prevention interventions: a review of the effectiveness of various universal population health promotion nutrition interventions for adults, full report. Nutrition Services, Population and Public Health. Calgary, Alberta, Canada. 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/cdp/if-cdp-ns-cdp-lit-review-full-report.pdf>
7. Tarasuk V, Mitchell A, Dachner N. Household food insecurity in Canada, 2014. Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity. 2016. Retrieved from <http://proof.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Household-Food-Insecurity-in-Canada-2014.pdf>
8. Dachner N, Tarasuk V. Tackling household food insecurity: An essential goal of a national food policy. *Canadian Food Studies/La Revue canadienne des études sur l'alimentation*. 2018 Sep 30;5(3):230-47.
9. McIntyre L, Patterson PB, Anderson LC, Mah CL. Household food insecurity in Canada: problem definition and potential solutions in the public policy domain. *Canadian Public Policy*. 2016 Mar;42(1):83-93.