



## COMMUNITY GARDENS TOOLKIT

There are numerous environmental, health, and economic benefits to gardening in your community. Portland community gardeners say that they choose to garden because it enables them to:

- Cultivate nutritious, inexpensive, and delicious food
- Get physical activity and work with their hands
- Enjoy time with their family outdoors
- Meet their neighbors and get involved in the community
- Live more sustainably by eating organic and locally grown produce

This Community Gardens Toolkit is a resource guide that will help you get involved in the community garden movement in Portland. From working alongside your neighbors in a Portland Community Garden to donating home-grown tomatoes to your local hunger-relief agency, how you choose to dig in is up to you!

### Learn about Portland Parks & Recreation's Community Gardens Program

The PP&R Community Gardens program is unique because it allows you to rent your own plot of land with the necessary watering, fencing, and support needed to reap your first harvest. Click on the link above to find a community garden located near you. Some gardens may have immediate openings; others have long waiting lists. (<http://www.portlandonline.com/parks/index.cfm?&c=39846>)

Because of the high demand, Commissioner Fish's team helped develop this toolkit to better meet the needs of Portlanders interested in growing their own food.



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## Engage in the program...

While you're waiting for a plot of your own, we encourage you to visit demonstration sites and participate in Community Garden programs, workshops, and events:

- Children's Gardening Program: In-school and after-school programs, serves children ages 6-12.
- Hit the Dirt! Teen Program: Teens, ages 13-17, can earn a certificate, letter of recommendation, and school credit.
- Produce for People Program: Links gardens with neighborhood emergency food agencies.
- Educational Workshops: Throughout the year, free workshops are offered to the public, including:
  - ◁ Intro to vegetable gardening
  - ◁ Composting
  - ◁ Fruit tree planting
  - ◁ Fruit tree pruning and maintenance
  - ◁ Small fruit
  - ◁ Weekly work parties at various community gardens

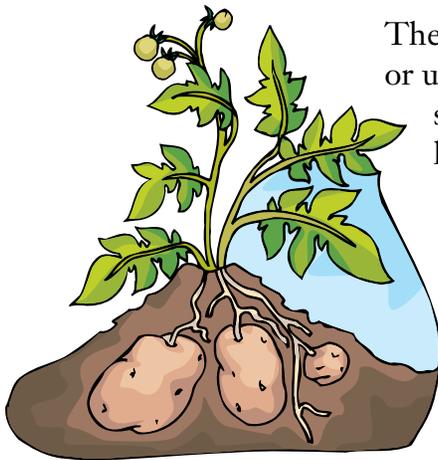
Annual Events include:

- ◁ Seed and Plant Exchanges in April
- ◁ Earth Day in April
- ◁ Children's Harvest Parties in July
- ◁ Community Garden Tour
- ◁ City Garden Fair
- ◁ Cider Fest at Gabriel Orchard
- ◁ Construction of new gardens and opening celebrations
- ◁ Fix-it Fairs

## Connect with other people gardening in your neighborhood

There are numerous resources in Portland that can help you grow food by connecting with other gardeners or usable yard space. Connecting with others not only allows you to share knowledge and resources, but also serves as a great opportunity to meet your neighbors and grow community. Here are some resources to help get you started:

- **Yard Sharing:** A web site ([www.yardsharing.org](http://www.yardsharing.org)) where potential gardeners can connect with people with extra yard space. Both seekers and people with yard space can mark where they are on the Portland-area map. The organization also has a Facebook group, Portland Yard Sharing, where people can connect.
- **Urban Farm Collective:** Run by the owners of Tin Shed Restaurant, this collective allows people to donate their yards or volunteer as "dirty hands" to harvest food in yards. Participants share the harvest equally. ([www.urbanfarmcollective.com](http://www.urbanfarmcollective.com))



- **Food not Lawns:** This web site was started by Heather C. Flores of Eugene, OR, who co-founded the FNL movement and authored the book, *Food not Lawns: How to Turn Your Yard into a Garden and Your Neighborhood into a Community*. There are FNL chapters in Portland, including SE Portland Food Not Lawns. ([www.myspace.com/seportlandfoodnotlawns](http://www.myspace.com/seportlandfoodnotlawns))
- **Portland Fruit Tree Project:** Volunteers help harvest fruit from yards around the city. Half the harvest is taken home by volunteers and the other half is donated to people in need. ([www.portlandfruit.org](http://www.portlandfruit.org))
- **Hyperlocavore:** This is a nationwide social-networking site ([www.hyperlocavore.ning.com](http://www.hyperlocavore.ning.com)) offering advice and help to find or start yard sharing in your town.
- **The Dirt:** A Portland-based web site ([www.thedirt.org](http://www.thedirt.org)) that provides updated information on gardening events around town. The site promotes the permaculture concept that involves a whole-systems approach to gardening.
- **Growing Gardens:** Volunteer for this “home gardens” program and help install a garden in the home of a low-income family in need. The program also trains the recipient of the garden and gives them three years of gardening support. ([www.growing-gardens.org](http://www.growing-gardens.org))
- **Tryon Life Community Farm:** TLC Farm facilitates a diversity of programs related to sustainable urban ecology. TLC has many workshops, courses, and internships. (<http://tryonfarm.org/share>)
- **Friends of Zenger Farm:** A non-profit farm and wetland in outer southeast Portland, Zenger Farm is dedicated to promoting sustainable food systems, environmental stewardship, and local economic development through a working urban farm. They offer adult workshops, summer camps, and other educational opportunities. ([www.zengerfarm.org](http://www.zengerfarm.org))
- **Learning Gardens Lab:** Primarily geared to serve the students and families of the multicultural and lower income southeast Portland neighborhoods that the garden calls home, LG Lab aims to provide a hands-on and enriching learning environment for students and volunteers alike. ([www.aboutus.org/learning\\_gardens\\_laboratory](http://www.aboutus.org/learning_gardens_laboratory))



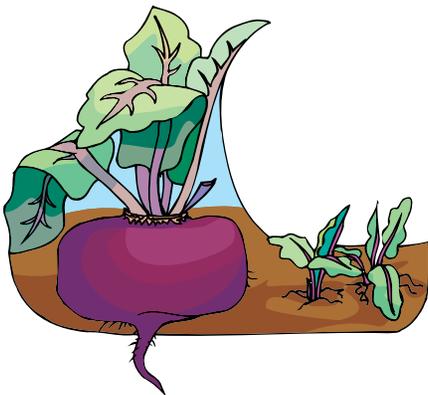
### Ideas for gardening at home

Home gardening may not allow you to connect with your neighbors like community gardening, but it still can be very rewarding. Invite friends and neighbors to learn with you and get the kids involved. Trade your zucchini for your neighbor’s tomatoes or host a harvest potluck. Here are some basic steps you can take to start growing your own food at home:

- If you're planting directly in a yard, pick a sunny spot and...
  - ◀ Think about planting your garden in your front yard, not just in the back yard. If your front or side yard receives more sun, create a garden there. Being out front also helps to connect with neighbors.
  - ◀ Consider amending your soil with some planting compost.
  - ◀ The land between the sidewalk and the street, often called the parking strip or planting strip, is part of the public right-of-way and can also be used for gardening. Keep in mind that you will need to closely maintain this space so that your garden does not obstruct the sidewalk or the street.
  - ◀ Make sure to test your soil for lead. Learn more about lead testing from this Oregonian article. If your soil is lead contaminated you will want to garden in containers. ([http://blog.oregonlive.com/pdxgreen/2009/06/the\\_dirt\\_on\\_testing\\_soil\\_for\\_l.html](http://blog.oregonlive.com/pdxgreen/2009/06/the_dirt_on_testing_soil_for_l.html))
- Don't have yard space? Try gardening in raised beds ([www.raisedbedgardeningtips.com](http://www.raisedbedgardeningtips.com)) or containers ([www.containergardeningtips.com](http://www.containergardeningtips.com).) Also, check out the links below for local resources.

Here are some resources to help get you started. Plus, you can check out your local library ([www.multcolib.org](http://www.multcolib.org)) for more resources.

- Gardening in the Northwest: A guide by Oregon State with a wide listing of publications, resources, and recommendations. (<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/resources-pacific>)
- Metro: Offers free gardening workshops to help you garden chemical-free. ([www.oregonmetro.gov](http://www.oregonmetro.gov))
- Growing-Gardens: Portland-area nonprofit that hosts workshops, classes, and working parties ([www.growing\\_gardens.org](http://www.growing_gardens.org).) They also have an amazing resource page, with information on how to test for lead ([www.growing-gardens.org/portland-gardening-resources/books-and-links.php](http://www.growing-gardens.org/portland-gardening-resources/books-and-links.php).)
- Portland Nursery gardening brochures: Compiled by Portland Nursery staff, these brochures cover everything from planting a native garden to pruning to growing citrus – and more. ([www.portlandnursery.com/service/brochures.shtml](http://www.portlandnursery.com/service/brochures.shtml))
- Check out other local nurseries: Talk to local nurseries about the produce you would like to grow, what plants work for your space, and amounts of sunlight and water. They may even offer classes. ([www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en-us&q=portland+plant+nursery&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8](http://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en-us&q=portland+plant+nursery&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8))
- Urban Growth Bounty Classes - Classes for growing vegetables and fruit, chickens and bees. ([www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?&c=50648](http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?&c=50648).)



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## Understand the steps for creating a new community garden.

Community gardens address pertinent needs and provide numerous benefits to neighborhoods. However, developing a new garden is a complex process that requires time, fundraising, planning, and community support. On average, a new garden can require \$50,000 for successful development. Partnerships also play a vital role in the creation and sustainability of community gardens. Here are some resources to help get you started:

- **Portland Community Gardens (PCG):** If you are interested in creating a new garden through Portland Parks & Recreation, make sure to connect with the program coordinator: Leslie Pohl-Kosbau, 503-823-1612, [pkleslie@ci.portland.or.us](mailto:pkleslie@ci.portland.or.us) ([www.portlandonline.com/parks/index.cfm?&c=39846](http://www.portlandonline.com/parks/index.cfm?&c=39846))

If you are interested in establishing a new community garden with the City of Portland, it is also helpful to know that PCG uses the following criteria:

***Demonstrated Need.*** Is the neighborhood without gardening opportunities? Do existing gardens have an unusually long waiting list?

***Neighborhood support.*** The neighborhood must be in support of the garden in the proposed location. Usually this is demonstrated by petition, wherein gardens gathering signatures from their neighbors. Gardeners should have the backing of community and business organizations and work with Portland Community Gardens as members of a steering committee.

***Parking.*** An assessment of participant parking should be part of the planning process. Participant parking should not have an adverse impact on the neighborhood.

***Property.*** Ownership or an agreement should be in place that allows use of the property for 10 years. Size: the property should support at least 15 or more garden plots. Topography: The property should be graded to assure drainage, yet be gentle enough to be accessible and allow participation from a diverse group of citizens, including seniors, children, and persons with physical challenges.

***Security.*** The property should be located in a safe place that allows a large amount of visibility from several vantage points, preferably in a neighborhood. Fencing. Protects the garden from most theft, illegal dumping, roaming animals, vehicles, and other intrusions. One of the gates should be large enough to allow access to tractors or large trucks for maintenance purposes.

***Water.*** Gardens need water from the City water system so that there is an adequate amount for the size of the garden. Hose bibs should be provided within the garden so that 50 feet of hose will reach every plot from an outlet.



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**Soil.** Must be free from contaminants and hazardous material. It should be sandy loam, relatively free of stones and debris, and capable of growing plants. The site will need to be graded, plowed and rototilled or heavily mulched to be acceptable for initial gardeners. Gardeners are encouraged to be good stewards of the soil by using organic methods and employing cover crops during the winter months.

**Light.** The site should have unobstructed natural light.

**Resources.** New projects need funding for capital development and ongoing operation and maintenance.

- American Community Gardening Association: This web site ([www.communitygarden.org](http://www.communitygarden.org)) includes information about community gardening on a broader national/international scale.
- Oregon Sustainable Agriculture Land Trust: OSALT's "Food in the City" program brings together community growing spaces, neighbors and mentors to help revitalize communities and facilitate community garden projects. ([www.osalt.org/food\\_in\\_the\\_city-land.html](http://www.osalt.org/food_in_the_city-land.html))
- Community Garden Start-Up Guide: From the University of California Cooperative Extension, this guide intended to help neighborhood groups and organizations along the path to starting and sustaining a community garden. ([http://celosangeles.ucdavis.edu/garden/articles/startup\\_guide.html](http://celosangeles.ucdavis.edu/garden/articles/startup_guide.html))
- Office of Neighborhood Involvement: ONI can help you organize and connect with your fellow neighbors and neighborhood association. ([www.portlandonline.com/oni/index.cfm?](http://www.portlandonline.com/oni/index.cfm?))
- City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability: BPS offers new classes and workshops on organic vegetable gardening series with your backyard farmers. ([www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?&c=50648&a=276896](http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?&c=50648&a=276896))

### Support sustainable food systems.

Gardening ties into the larger movement for sustainable food systems that will help to provide future generations with food security. If you don't have the time or inclination to garden, you can still find other ways to contribute to sustainable food production. Buy local and organic food at the grocery store, at a farmer's market or direct from a local farmer; join a food security organization; or help your neighborhood church or business plant a garden. Here are some resources to help get you started:

- **Oregon Environmental Council:** Most of the resources listed on this page ([www.oconline.org/](http://www.oconline.org/) search "SOLE" and "Vote with your Fork") come from OEC's Seasonal Organic Local Ethical (SOLE) initiative, under the much larger Healthy Food and Farm Program. The program also includes a Vote with Your Fork! pledge for individuals and a lunch workshop for businesses.





*Sustaining a healthy park and recreation system to make Portland a great place to live, work and play.*

www.PortlandParks.org  
Commissioner Nick Fish  
Director Zari Santner

- **Slow Food Portland:** This is a global, grassroots movement that links the pleasure of food with a commitment to community and the environment. ([www.slowfoodportland.com](http://www.slowfoodportland.com))
- **Portland Multnomah Food Policy Council:** A citizen-based advisory council with meetings open to the public on the second Wednesday of each month. ([www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?&c=42290](http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?&c=42290))
- **The Community Food Security Coalition:** CFSC is dedicated to building strong, sustainable, local and regional food systems. ([www.foodsecurity.org](http://www.foodsecurity.org))
- **Ecotrust:** The Farm and Food Program ([www.ecotrust.org/foodfarms](http://www.ecotrust.org/foodfarms)) is dedicated to improving the understanding of agriculture, increasing the market share of locally grown food, and sharing the abundance of our region. It includes a Farm to School initiative, a Local Food System Toolkit, and the Edible Portland magazine. ([www.edibleportland.com](http://www.edibleportland.com))
- **Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon:** The Farm and Food program is dedicated to empowering faith communities, farmers, and neighborhoods to build rural-urban alliances and create innovative partnerships for just and sustainable food systems. ([www.emoregon.org/food\\_farms.php](http://www.emoregon.org/food_farms.php))
- **Oregon Food Bank:** Serves as the hub of a statewide network ([www.oregonfoodbank.org/ofb\\_services/statewide\\_services](http://www.oregonfoodbank.org/ofb_services/statewide_services)) of over 900 hunger-relief agencies. In addition to providing emergency food boxes, OFB also works to eliminate the root causes of hunger through advocacy, nutrition education, learning gardens and public education. ([www.oregonfoodbank.org](http://www.oregonfoodbank.org))
- **Portland Farmers Market:** PFM helps local farmers connect directly with Portland consumers by building community in an urban setting and providing public education on regional farming, gardening and food preparation. ([www.portlandfarmersmarket.org](http://www.portlandfarmersmarket.org)) Other Portland area farmers markets can be found here. ([www.oeonline.org/resources/livinggreen/shopping/portland-area-farmers-markets](http://www.oeonline.org/resources/livinggreen/shopping/portland-area-farmers-markets))
- **Oregon Farmers' Markets Association:** Promotes, supports, and develops partnerships for the benefit of Oregon farmers and Oregon communities. ([www.oregonfarmersmarkets.org](http://www.oregonfarmersmarkets.org))
- **Tri-County Farm Fresh Seasonal Produce Guide:** A seasonal produce guide for Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties. ([www.tricountyfarm.org/farms](http://www.tricountyfarm.org/farms))
- **Where to Buy Oregon Products** (Agri-Business Council of Oregon): Lists of farmers markets, farm-direct markets, roadside stands, garden centers, nurseries, and Oregon food producers and processors. Organized by county and searchable by name. ([www.oregonfresh.net](http://www.oregonfresh.net))
- **Eat Well Guide:** Online listing of sustainable food resources by zip code, including restaurants, co-ops, stores, CSAs, and more. ([www.eatwellguide.org](http://www.eatwellguide.org))