



# COMMUNITY GARDENS TOOLKIT

This Community Gardens Toolkit is a resource guide that will help you get involved in the community garden movement in Portland. You can find this toolkit online at: [www.portlandonline.com/parks/gardentoolkit](http://www.portlandonline.com/parks/gardentoolkit) where you can click on the many web links provided or print out the document to share with others. 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!

- Cultivate nutritious, inexpensive, and delicious food
- Get physical activity and work with your hands
- Enjoy time with your family and neighbors outdoors
- Live more sustainably by eating organic and locally grown produce



## Table of Contents

### Portland Community Gardens Program

- Learn about the program .....page 2
- Engage in the program .....page 2
- Create a new community garden .....page 3

### Beyond the Community Gardens Program

- Connect with gardeners in your neighborhood .....page 4
- Gardening at home, in any space .....page 6
- Support sustainable food systems .....page 7

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

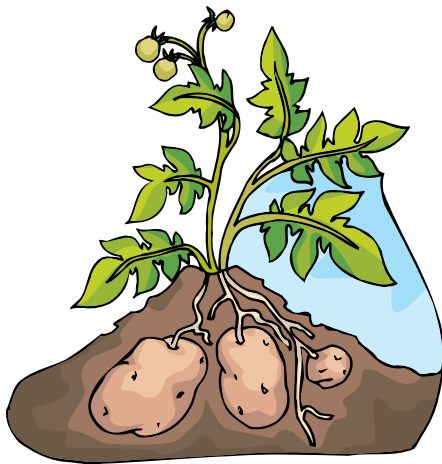
The PP&R Community Gardens program is unique because it allows you to rent your own plot of land with the necessary watering, fencing, and support needed to reap your first harvest. Click on the link above to find a community garden located near you. Some gardens may have immediate openings; others have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

### 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



**Join the Friends of Community Gardens** ([www.friendspdxgardens.org](http://www.friendspdxgardens.org)) a volunteer nonprofit organization working primarily with Portland Parks & Recreation to improve, advocate and expand community gardening in Portland.

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## Create 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:  
Laura Niemi, 503-823-1612, [laura.niemi@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:laura.niemi@portlandoregon.gov)  
([www.portlandonline.com/parks/communitygardens](http://www.portlandonline.com/parks/communitygardens))

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?

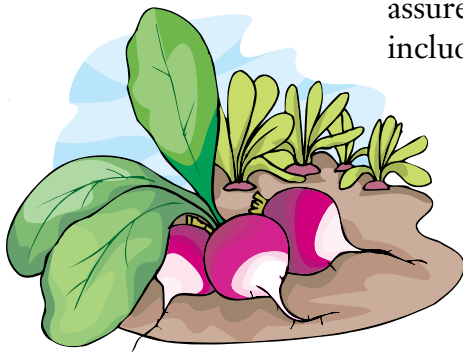
***Neighborhood support.*** The neighborhood must be in support of the garden in the proposed location. Usually this is demonstrated by petition, wherein gardens gathering signatures from their neighbors. Gardeners should have the backing of community and business organizations and work with Portland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

### Connect with Other Gardeners 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))

