

## Tips for Starting a Community Garden

- **Identify your vision**-consider a purpose & resources (skills, funds, materials), number of people to be involved, amount of time/energy to organize and work
- **Link up**-start with friends and neighbors to generate more ideas & it provide a volunteer/participant base; consider also working with established group(s): civic leagues, neighborhood watch groups, churches, clubs and adult organizations, scouts, outdoor enthusiasts, youth groups
- **Organizer your garden's decision making process**-form a committee, have collective decisions, set meeting dates and times, revisit that vision as a group
- **Look for space**-merging of yards, empty lots, adopt-a-spots, medians, flower beds
- **Soil test**-obtain a kit with instructions at the library, agricultural extension office or master gardeners; cost is \$10 and has good feedback with a complete analysis and recommendations
- **Plan your garden**-What work is there to be done? In-ground beds or rows, raised beds, a mix? Do you need to amend the soil? Do you have a water source?
- **Develop guidelines for use and maintenance**-free or pay-to-garden, organic or not, pest control & fertilizer choices, handling excess produce, sharing with the community
- **Find materials**-glean or reuse from other gardens, construction sites, garages, yard sales, retail, 2nds/discards-request donations; save seeds or ask for last year's seed at distributors-grow from produce used at home (celery, lettuce, potatoes are easy); find food grade barrels to harvest rain water, especially if you have an adjacent roof; apply for grants
- **Get the word out**-Facebook, organizations' meetings, place signs/flyers at your site and local businesses and establishments
- **Talk to your City**-check for support, zoning, grants, volunteers and support from environmental council, parks & rec, and inmate work crews; the City may already have resources to help!
- **Develop the site**-consider grading, drainage, sun & shade
- **Define a work schedule & manage volunteers**-tasks may include clearing land, building boxes, tilling soil, amending soil, planting, harvesting...AND do not forget to assign watering, weeding, pest control and fertilization schedules
- **Keep up communication among members & the community**-provide progress updates, revisit guidelines and schedules periodically
- **Reach out**-invite experts to educate your gardeners; invite neighbors to participate in fun activities within the garden (tastings, harvest parties, potlucks, games)

*Compiled by members of South Norfolk Community Garden, Chesapeake, VA, November 2013.*

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