So You Want to Start a Community Garden?

Key steps to organizing and leading a community gardening

With Doreen Pollack
Definitions

- Any piece of land gardened by a group of people (according to the ACGA)
  - Community Gardens
  - Victory Gardens
  - School Gardens
  - Backyard Gardens
  - Neighborhood Gardens
  - Communal Gardens
  - What else???
Why and Where?

urban
flowers
Rural
In a park
vegetables
an empty lot
away

Suburban
Feed your family
to sell
At a school
Build community
hospital
to give
Why Now?

- Food security
- Economy
- Neighborhood outreach
- Community building
- For the children
- For the earth - permaculture
So how do you get started?
Identify Need

- It as easy as A B C D
  - Asset
  - Based
  - Community
  - Development
What is ABCD?

Method for community development based on:

- Appreciating and mobilizing individual and community talents, skills and assets (rather than focusing on problems and needs)

- Community-driven development rather than development driven by external agencies or people

McKnight and Kretzmann
How does this work in the garden?

- Collecting stories
- Organizing a core group
- Survey your community
- Mapping the capacities and assets of individuals, associations and local institutions
How does this work in the garden?

- Building a community vision and plan
- Mobilizing and linking assets for economic development
- Leveraging activities, investments and resources from outside the community
Who will the garden serve?
Involve Others

Many hands make light work.

~John Heywood
Planning Committee

- Meet with interested people
- Select a well-organized coordinator
- Form committees to accomplish tasks: Funding & Resource Development; Youth Activities; Construction; Communication.
Funding

- Sponsors
- Grants
- Fees
- Income Model
Choose a site

- Who owns the land?
- Is there water on the land?
- Adequate water and sun?
- Past use of land – soil test
- Lease for at least 3 years
- Need insurance?
Prepare and develop the site

- Clean the site
- Develop a design
- Gather resources – free?
- Organize volunteers
- Work days
Garden lay out

Rent a plot

Communal
Storage and other areas
Organize the garden

- Membership conditions
- Plot size, how assigned, layout
- Organic or not
- Dues? How much?
- Community work days:
  - clean-up, maintenance
Creating the garden organization

- What is the focus of your garden?
- Name of garden
- Garden manager – more than one?
- Legal structure - Non-profit, or LLC
- Board of Directors
Managing the garden

- Communication method
- Guidelines and rules
- Application
- Fees
- Trouble shooting
- Protecting the garden
NOW it is time to garden!

- Soil amendments
- Growing seasons
- Watering
- Harvesting
What’s next - in the garden

- On-going meetings, communication
- On-going fundraising
- Outreach
- Volunteers management
- Record keeping
What’s next for you NOW?

- Do you still want to continue?
- Local support options
- Additional resources