

These Frequently Asked Questions and Answers (FAQs) are intended to help get your new community garden off to a good start by providing information from in-place community gardens on their organization, their garden design and infrastructure, and operation. The Answers reflect the diversity of gardens -- their objectives, structure, and methods. The FAQs are not intended to encompass the many ongoing specific and timely questions that are addressed on the ptcommunitygardens@yahoo.com site.

Garden: Grange Youth Garden
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<p>Q1: How is your garden group organized? How many members?</p> <p>What is the leadership -- core group of volunteers with lots of energy or natural leadership/organizing skills? and/or professional gardener who runs the day to day operations? other?</p> <p>What if any committees are there?</p>	<p>We began in March by meeting every Saturday morning. I was the organizational leader in terms of seeking donations, finding equipment, and recruiting members. Cassie had gardening experience so she would assume leadership in the garden. We divided tasks amongst each other in the hope that the more invested people became the more committed they would be to the garden. This worked very well. We invited each other to lead in various ways. Someone would be in charge of soup while another would spend the week looking for a picnic table. There was so much work to be done and items to find that we took a treasure hunt approach to finding what we needed. This invited all members to serve as leaders.</p> <p>Our core group was 8-12 people between 16 and 25 years old. By mid June we were not meeting as a group each Saturday. During the summer months members were pulled in other directions. We would still meet on Saturdays but participation declined. We addressed this by inviting members to come to the garden on their own schedule. This opportunity was possible because of all the work we did to establish our garden in the Spring. By mid June the garden was in place and things were healthy so our duties were less arduous. We would go to the garden in small groups or individually. This worked especially well when we found a dry erase board where we asked members to sign in and write down what they had done and what projects remained unfinished. Cassie would outline goals on the whiteboard and we would communicate with one another.</p> <p>We asked experienced gardeners and farmers to help us and teach us which worked quite well. Our garden was open to anyone who wanted to join and the people who</p>
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	helped were from all ages and walks of life.
Q2: Describe your Member - Host agreement. Are there Member - Host agreements you think are critical to success over time?	<p>We were very inclusive. I think each garden will need a core group of leaders. Our garden had four or five of these members that you could absolutely count on. The commitment of this core group made it possible for us to offer the invitation to others to simply come and check out what we were doing. We didn't need to ask for a big commitment from them and instead chose to target as many people as possible to come to our garden in the hope that we would inspire them.</p> <p>I think it is really important to build a core group that takes ownership of the project. Once they are in place it becomes possible to recruit others to get involved. The core leaders set the tone of the project and create an atmosphere that others want to participate in. I think this was the most successful aspects of our garden.</p>
Q3: How do you handle damage/injury/liability insurance for members and host?	
Q4: What are the conditions to becoming a member? belonging to the neighborhood? other?	Anyone and everyone.
Q5: Do you have guidelines or rules about when new members can join the group, i.e., limited windows of opportunity during the year? ..	We were always looking for new members.
Q6: Do you have a philosophy, guidelines, rules, and/or by-laws? What are they?	Our philosophy was to engage young people in gardening. We felt that our age group needed more outlets in the community and we wanted to support each other in learning how to grow our own food. We focused on learning through experimentation. Not many of us had experience so it was important to feel like we were going to fail or succeed together. That camaraderie felt really good and we tried to share it with as many people as we could.

<p>Q7: What is the one-time new member financial commitment? What are the continuing dues, and how often are they collected?</p>	<p>We didn't have any dues. We found that people were very supportive of our project and we sought donations from individuals and businesses. The fact that we were a youth garden made it much easier to fundraise. We also relied on free cycle and promoted scavenger hunt style missions to find what we needed. Cassie really set the tone for this type of approach by promoting permaculture in the garden. We carried that mentality over to materials. We would build things with scraps, find seeds that others didn't need, and just rely on our community and environment to provide what our garden needed. It's more important to have passion and teamwork than money.</p>
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<p>Q8: How much, how often, and for what one-time expenses have you collected special dues?</p>	<p>None</p>
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<p>Q9: Do you pay a gardener to organize and oversee member work? Why?</p>	<p>No</p>
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<p>Q10: To what extent has your membership grown after the initial garden was established, eg. after clearing, rototilling, major soil amendments, fencing, irrigation were completed?</p>	<p>Our membership has declined since all of our initial work. Part of that is due to the fact that our members were all young and fairly unsettled. As summer turned to fall we spent less and less time in the garden. One of our strengths was also one of our weaknesses. Our core group of leaders was so integral to the project that once other commitments seemed to take hold of our lives, the project really suffered. In retrospect I think it would have been really great to be able to partner with a school, the Boiler Room, or some type of permanent entity to ensure that we were training new leaders to keep the project alive.</p>
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<p>Q11: Do you have 'categories' of membership where quantity of produce and work are 'graduated' -- similar to some CSAs where one can purchase, or work for, small (couple) or large (family) shares?</p>	<p>Distribution of food was our biggest weakness. Anyone who participated in our garden could harvest as much as they wanted within reason. We recruited people to come and harvest what they would eat. We never thought we would grow as much food as we did. Some of our younger members were not as proactive about taking food home. In retrospect I would have been more diligent about harvesting and finding places to donate</p>

	food.
Q12: Do you offer the option of garden members having a p-patch (an individual plot)? If so, are there common garden resources that are shared with the p-patch gardeners?	We were constantly making new beds so anyone who had the desire to grow something specific was encouraged to do so. However, if it was in the garden it was there to be shared.
Q13: How are organizational functions such as bookkeeping and purchasing handled? Other non-gardening activities?	We asked each member to take charge of specific roles. This was helpful in cultivating leaders and making sure that the tasks were distributed.
Q14: What forms of community service does your membership perform -- food bank donations? community education? assisting new/startup community gardens? other?	We donated food the boiler room and some members brought food to the food bank. Looking back, I would make sure that this component of the garden was more effectively addressed.
GARDEN DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION	
Q15: What is the typical? the ideal? garden size? How have you taken advantage of exceptionally small/large garden plots, less than ideal amount/duration of sun, and ‘difficult’ soil types?	Our space was a bit big for us and we ended up planting more than we could keep up with in terms of harvesting. I think it is best to start small and really build systems for membership, food usage, and organization and then expand. If a group is going into their first year then stay small!
Q16: Describe your overall garden design/layout and what factors influenced it? Has it changed over time and why?	We have horizontal beds on each side of the garden with circular beds in the middle. We put a picnic table in the middle where we would meet and have lunch. This layout fell in line with our philosophy.
Q17: Does your garden include art? Describe.	We made signs but I wish we would had more art. We invited artists from the boiler room to create art but it never worked out. I think art would be a unique way to allow more people to participate in the project.
Q18: Describe what “organic” means in your garden. Does it apply to non-chemical insecticides, pesticides,	No chemicals! Seeds, water, sunlight, and nutrients.

herbicides? and non-chemical fertilizer? other?	
Q19: What if any invasive and vining crops do you prohibit (ex. Mint)?	
Q20: What produce have you chosen to grow -- perennial/annual vegetables? fruits? flowers? What season(s) have you chosen to grow -- spring-summer-fall, or winter garden also? What types of food use have you chosen -- immediate consumption? food preservation? Do you grow for seed production?	Strawberries, tomatoes, potatoes, kales, chards, greens, herbs, carrots, peppers, squashes, flowers. No seed production but we did preserve our tomatoes.
Q21: What materials and methods of irrigation/watering and why? What suggestions regarding rain barrels?	Watered infrequently.
Q22: Any advice or considerations in selecting a water meter (assuming there is a host-provided water source)?	
Q23: What infrastructure (fencing, hoop house, watering/irrigation, compost bins, tool shed, and other) did you put into place initially? How has it grown? What approximate costs?	Rosewind donated a greenhouse which we transported. We built compost bins and worm bins with scrap materials.
Q24: What methods do you use for managing compost -- bins, heaps, sheet- composting, other? How many households contribute compost material? Does the garden accept neighborhood waste? What kinds of problems have you experienced and how were they solved?	We collected compost from the Grange but it was minimal. We ended up heaping our compost from the garden but we had to pursue compost outside the garden.
Q25: What is a good lab for soil testing? What kinds of soil test do you	

recommend?	
Q26: What suggestions do you have for getting low-cost, free, donated, or loaned equipment and materials for garden startup activities?	Just ask. If you are persistent and ask around you can find a lot of stuff. We went on free cycle, asked experienced gardeners, went to Henry's, put up fliers, and spread info by word of mouth. I was so surprised to see how much we could find with perseverance and enthusiasm.
Q27: What grant sources are available?	
Q28: For what projects/materials has your garden received grants?	
Q29: What methods have worked to develop your garden incrementally? Do you have suggestions for starting with a small section and developing the garden as infrastructure and membership grows?	
OPERATIONS	
Q30: How does membership communicate (other than gardening together) -- phone trees, email list, at-garden message board, regular meetings?	Garden message board. I think email would be effective but not everyone in our group was using email.
Q31: Do members meet regularly? For what purpose? How frequently? What location? What is your meeting format (committee reports? problem solving? social/food? other?	Once a week from March until June and then on a less scheduled basis.
Q32: How are decisions made -- by leader(s), by member consensus? both? other?	Both
Q33: How are work parties organized -- around a special task (ex. fence building)? or regular, weekly sessions for ongoing gardening (planting, weeding,	We would have specific goals in mind in the spring and we would make food which was a great way to spend time together and allowed us to work for longer hours.

watering, etc.)?	
Q34; How is work shared and/or assigned?	
Q35: How do you harvest so that produce is shared equitably and that produce use is maximized?	