Community Gardens: Using Food as a Tool to Bring People Together



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Learning Objectives

- Identify several models for managing community gardens.
- Explore some of the many physical layouts and infrastructure of community gardens.
- Best practices and examples of community gardens.
- Identify potential roles that municipalities and community gardens play in healthy communities.





A Typical Community Garden

- Organized as a garden club
- Monthly meetings with refreshments, guest speakers, elected leadership
- Pay dues to be a member of the garden club, not to "rent" a plot
- Social events in and out of the garden
- Self reliant, self regulated, revenue neutral







Volunteer opportunities

An atypical Community Garden

- Incorporated as 501(c)3
- · Aggressive, diverse and ongoing fundraising
- Paid staff
- Outreach programs
- Education programs
- Continuous capital improvements
- Conservation easements
- May operate multiple community gardens



Benefits of Community Gardening

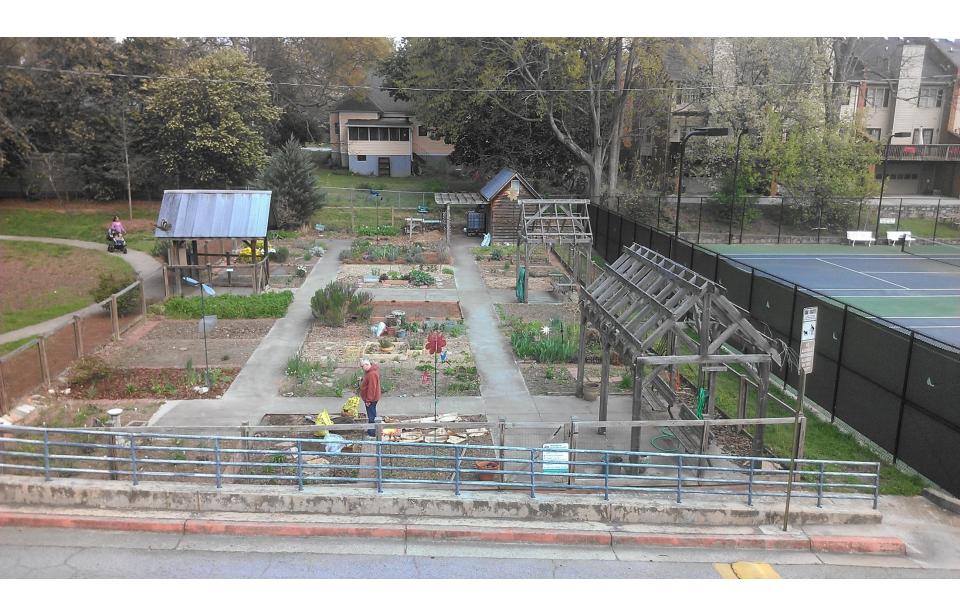
- · Improves the quality of life for people in the garden
- · Provides a catalyst for neighborhood and community development
- Encourages self-reliance
- Beautifies neighborhoods
- Produces nutritious food, reduces family food budgets
- Conserves resources
- · Creates opportunity for recreation, exercise, therapy, and education
- Reduces crime
- Preserves green space
- · Creates income opportunities and economic development
- Reduces city heat from streets and parking lots
- Provides opportunities for intergenerational and cross-cultural connections

The American Community Gardening Association offers a wealth of information about how to get a community garden up and running. The information in this section comes from the ACGA website, www.communitygarden.org. Follow the link to "Start a Community Garden."

Other Stuff Community Gardens do

- Reclaim abandoned vacant land
- Preserve green space
- Horticultural therapy
- Education
- Bringing more people into parks at different times, maximizing assets
- Amenities to private real estate and corporate facilities
- Event spaces





CG's and Physical Health

- Movement: Lifting, Bending,
 Stretching, Walking, Balance, Stamina
- Diet: Gardeners eat more servings of fruits & vegetables
- Recreation: America's #1 hobby, only bite sized. As exercise, gardening is more motivating than a tread mill.







Special populations

- People at risk for depression (seniors)
- People in supported living (group homes)
- People in residential treatment (psychiatric, substance abuse and physical)
- Refugees and recent immigrants
- Affordable housing
- Transitional housing





Pro's and Con's of community garden initiatives

- CG's can be self directed and develop leadership skills.
- 2. CG's are generally revenue neutral.
- Gardens are beautiful.
- You can garden year-round in Georgia.

- Conflict can become an administrative burden.
- Start up costs can be significant.
- Gardens can be unsightly.
- Gardens require continuous attention.



You never call me



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