

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



Fred Conrad

Community Garden Manager

Food Well Alliance

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.



Tobie Grant Manor CG



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

AUGP
Leadership
Training



Dunwoody Brook Run Park





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

Inter-sectoral partnerships



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**

Mulberry
Fields





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.



Decatur Christian Tower

Goodbye Mr. Harris





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



Applewood Senior Tower



Pro's and Con's of community garden initiatives

1. CG's can be self directed and develop leadership skills.
 2. CG's are generally revenue neutral.
 3. Gardens are beautiful.
 4. You can garden year-round in Georgia.
1. Conflict can become an administrative burden.
 2. Start up costs can be significant.
 3. Gardens can be unsightly.
 4. Gardens require continuous attention.



You never call me



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