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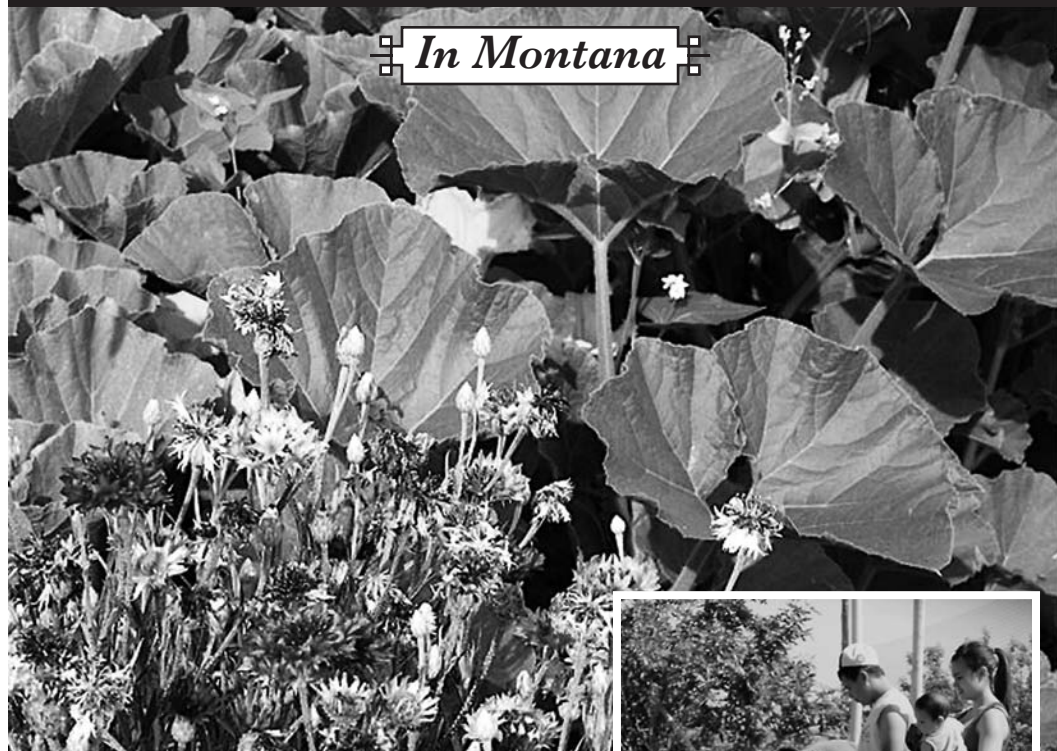
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BUILDING COMMUNITY GARDENS



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BUILDING COMMUNITY GARDENS IN MONTANA

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INTRODUCTION

Growing your own food in community gardens is a practical, affordable step toward a healthy, vibrant Montana food system and ecology.

Community gardens have grown in popularity across Montana, and the time has never been better to start a community garden in your own community. Community gardens are an equitable, ecological, and healthy contribution to communities. They benefit whole communities by restoring vibrancy to often vacant land and by bringing neighbors together. Community gardens improve the quality of life, social interactions, and self-reliance of urban and semi-urban neighborhoods in Montana by creating safe public space, conserving energy and resources, and preserving green space.

For those who choose active involvement in community gardens, the benefits are innumerable. Community gardens

allow people to provide themselves with healthy, nutritious, delicious, and affordable food. They encourage an active lifestyle and bring families, friends, and neighbors together in a positive and safe environment. They give access to land for people who wouldn't otherwise grow their own food. Community gardens can save individuals and families money on their grocery bills and save energy in the cost of food transportation.

In the last several decades, Montana's food system has drastically changed the way Montanans get their food. Whereas Montana produced 70% of its own food in the 1940s it produces less than 10% today. A portion of the former percentage was comprised of backyard and community



World War I era
US poster by James
Montgomery Flagg,
1918, lithograph, color;
56 x 36 cm. Columbia
urges civilians to raise
their own food to free up
resources for the war effort.



Victory garden poster, World War II



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Florence Crittenden Home Garden, Helena.

gardening. As means of transportation were made more efficient, the global food system began to deliver food from all over the world through an extremely energy-intensive transportation process. Many are looking to rebuild a more sustainable, self-reliant food system in Montana. Growing your own food in community gardens is a practical, affordable step toward a healthy, vibrant Montana food system and ecology.

Community gardens have an intriguing national history. Once supported as a patriotic effort during wartime, community gardens, known as Victory Gardens, have been a significant presence in urban

areas across America in the past. During World War I, the Great Depression, and WWII, the US Department of Agriculture estimates that more than 20 million victory gardens were planted in backyards, on rooftops, and in vacant lots across the country in response to a call to support the troops and conserve energy and materials by growing one's own food. As part of the resurgence of community gardens, First Lady Michelle Obama has followed the lead of Eleanor Roosevelt and planted an organic vegetable garden on the grounds of the White House. Food from the garden supplies the White House and a Washington, D.C. food bank.

CHAPTER 1: STARTING A COMMUNITY GARDEN

Though it is a multi-step process, starting a community garden is not nearly as daunting as it may at times seem.

There are many steps involved in starting a community garden. This manual is meant to address the basic process, common issues and possible solutions to starting your garden. Decide which practices are best for your project. Community gardens can be initiated in a variety of ways, and there are abundant resources available. It could be that a piece of land is offered to an interested group, or that an organization offers support. Sometimes there are no obvious leads beyond interest from neighborhood residents. This interest is plenty to begin your project.

Though it is a multi-step process, starting a community garden is not nearly as daunting as it may at times seem. There may be temporary setbacks, but these can be overcome, and a garden can be planned in relatively short order. Depending on the size and scope of your plans, it may take very little prep time at all.

It is important to have a healthy-sized group of people willing to help before planning and building your garden. It takes a significant amount of work to put together a well planned garden, and having a number of people to share the necessary tasks will make the entire process more manageable and fun. Generally, with at least ten committed community members willing to volunteer their time, you'll be off to a good start.

START A PLANNING COMMITTEE

When organizing a community garden, your first step is to gather a planning committee, which will oversee the initial steps of the process and create an overarching vision for the garden.

In the best scenario a few neighbors, friends, or community members will have

already discussed starting a community garden when you begin. Sometimes those interested in helping to start a community garden are not actually interested in using the garden themselves. Their interest may come from being avid gardeners or farmers, or from a philosophical or community development perspective. Whatever the case may be, volunteers of this nature are excellent assets to your project; just remember to be conscientious about notifying the neighborhood around your garden site of meeting times and plans; this will keep potential gardeners in the loop of planning and building the garden.

When starting a planning committee, you should aim for diversity in representation at your meetings. Neighborhood residents, interested gardeners, allied organizations' membership, City Council members, the City Parks Department, and civic groups are all good places to find planning committee members. Consider your needs and who can help meet them. People who will use the garden, people who live in the area, and those who can help access resources (city parks department, local businesses, or volunteer labor pools) are important groups to include in the planning process.

A good way to get started is to have an organizational meeting with your developing planning committee, followed by a general community meeting in the neighborhood to propose your idea and gather input from residents and interested gardeners.

The planning committee's first organizational meeting can include a number of items in the agenda, but make sure to come up with a few basics: a general plan of what the garden should look like,



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a few different land options, and what the focus of the garden should be. Assess the assets in your community to determine any resources that may be helpful to you. Though your initial plans may change, you'll want to bring a well-developed idea to a community meeting; this will ensure meaningful response and input from the rest of the community.

Subsequent planning committee meetings may include a discussion of what decision making methods the committee will use (consensus decision making, voting, etc.) and establishing sub-committees to carry out the work of the group. Pertinent subcommittees may be Communications, Fundraising, Construction, Outreach/Publicity, and Garden Site Development. Within your planning committee, it will be helpful to identify a garden coordinator who will call and facilitate meetings, organize the general neighborhood meeting, follow subcommittee progress, and eventually maintain contact with the gardeners.

IDENTIFY ADDITIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

Consider involving city officials such as City Council members, members of the Parks and Recreation Board, city staff, landscape designers, leadership of nearby neighborhood associations, interested gardeners, and property owners in the garden planning process. If a community

member targeted by your group as an essential member of the planning committee cannot attend the meetings, ask whether your group might send them meeting minutes so that they are aware of the project's progress. The more diverse the steering committee and sponsorship are, the more resources will be available to you as needs arise.

GETTING COMMUNITY FEEDBACK AND SUPPORT

Initial outreach is essential for a truly community-supported garden. First, you will need to know who will be using the garden in order to design and plan it. If the garden is intended to benefit a particular neighborhood, group or population, be sure that they are involved in the planning from the beginning and that their needs are being met throughout the planning phase. Your project will benefit immensely from this kind of input, from picking a site, to brainstorming garden designs, to gathering labor and supplies.

HOLD AN INFORMATIONAL MEETING

Libraries, schools, and parks are good places to hold general informational meetings. Be prepared to provide refreshments, snacks and free childcare and advertise these in outreach material. This will significantly increase attendance and participation in your project.

A community meeting to discuss ideas for a new garden. Public input is a vital part of your planning process.

Begin the meeting with introductions and speak generally about the many benefits of community gardens. Follow with a concise, clear, and organized presentation of your vision for the garden, including any visual representation you may have (drawings, photos, etc.). Briefly outline the steps that need to be taken to build a garden and how long you anticipate it will take until the garden is ready for planting. Emphasize that the garden is a public space and that all are welcome to participate. Be prepared to answer questions about your garden's design and location. Most importantly, ask for input. What kind of garden would the community like to see (flowers, vegetables, fruit)? Should the garden target special populations within the community? If so, who? Where is the preferred location?

At the meeting, respond to and record comments, concerns, and suggestions from attendees. Consider this feedback while developing plans, and always regard the garden site's neighborhood as an ally in the project. There will be a wealth of

information and good ideas coming from the community. Constructive criticism can also be applied to your plans at this development stage. Remember, responding to criticism now will garner a broader base of support for the garden from the beginning.

You may also choose to follow this meeting up by sending letters to residents in neighboring areas, or by going door-to-door with a survey to gather support and ideas from people who were unable, or uninterested, in attending the meeting. The more early input you have, the better prepared you will be to build a community-based garden and to avoid obstacles in the future.

If you are using public land to build the garden, a specific public input process may be necessary to avoid problems down the road. In fact, the City Parks Department may have a specific survey process that will need to be followed for your project to be approved. Be sure to contact your Parks Department for local requirements.

A visible sign can help attract visitors, gardeners, and publicity to your garden.



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APPROACH A SPONSOR

A sponsor is an individual or organization that commits to support a project. Site sponsorship can be a tremendous asset. Sponsors may donate equipment or agree to house lease agreements, insurance, and funding, all of which may require the presence of a steady entity such as an incorporated non-profit or LLC in order to enter into these legal agreements.

PUBLICITY AND OUTREACH

Once you have created a planning committee and a general informational meeting for the community has been held, get ready to do some outreach, and plan for publicity. Create a name for your garden. If you have secured your site, promi-

nently place a colorful sign announcing, “Future site of _____ Community Garden.”

Take advantage of your town’s newspapers. Local reporters are often eager to cover positive local events, such as the creation of a community garden. The publicity and support you may receive from the media along the way will greatly benefit your project. This support will manifest in many ways, from attracting volunteers and donors to lending more legitimacy to your project for future funding. When you contact the press, be prepared with talking points and a written press release. Be aware that the media may wait for a big event such as the first big work day building the garden, or a ribbon cutting ceremony.

CHAPTER 2: FIND THE RIGHT SITE FOR YOUR GARDEN

Choosing the right site for your garden can ensure success by providing the best environment for new gardeners to succeed at growing nutritious vegetables, while enjoying each others' company, and thriving in a new community space.

Armed with ideas from the garden planning committee and neighborhood input, you are ready to evaluate your land options. We recommend choosing several sites in a neighborhood that may fit your needs. Consider any other possibilities brought forward at community and group meetings. Many factors are involved in securing a site, so having several viable options is important.

Be prepared for issues to arise at this point. Setbacks could include a property owner who does not approve of the project, contaminated soil which poses too great a risk for growing food, an unwilling neighbor, lack of a water source, or the prohibitive cost of installing a water meter. If any of these situations occur, don't be discouraged. Chances are that other, likely better, land options exist for your garden.

Like any collaborative project, a successful community garden depends on people having good experiences from the beginning. Choosing the right site for your

garden can ensure success by providing the best environment for new gardeners to succeed at growing nutritious vegetables, while enjoying each others' company, and thriving in a new community space.

EVALUATE YOUR LAND

A good garden is one that balances several factors: ecological and financial viability, timeliness, and the capacity of the planning committee to do the necessary work. You should come up with a checklist to evaluate land suggestions (see Appendix C for a sample evaluation) that arise and visit each potential site to observe the pros and cons of each. Factors to include in your evaluation:

Sunlight: You will need a location receiving at least 6 hours of sunlight a day.

Shade: If shade from structure or trees, from which direction?

Size: How many beds of what size could you build?

Topography: Is the land relatively flat?



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Salad greens sprout in the ExplorationWorks children's educational garden.

What could you do if it had a significant slope?

Visibility: How visible is the garden for others? Will this location make the garden an asset to the whole community and mixed uses?

Soil composition: Sand, silt, clay, organic matter, compacted.

Drainage: Is it adequate?

Depth of topsoil

Any underground pipes or lines?

pH level

Results of soil test: Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P)-Potassium (K), heavy metals, etc.

Proximity to target population: Can gardeners walk to the site?

Accessibility: Handicapped accessible entrances and paths? Parking available?

Pre-existing assets: Fence, shed, good soil, boulders or other landscaping material.

Water access: Where would your water come from?

Are there public restroom facilities nearby?

Is there electrical power? (You don't actually need electricity for your garden, but this is helpful to know when making construction plans.)

History of use: You may need to contact the owner for this information, but it is important to know if there has been industrial or other high-risk activity in the past that may cause the property to be a poor choice for a community garden.

TEST YOUR SOIL

A visual analysis can determine the quality of your soil in regards to its textural composition, drainage, and whether it is compacted or not. However, there are many sources of pollution that may hinder your ability to grow safe food, so to be

sure you know what you are dealing with before you make any development plans. Soil should be tested in the fall prior to planting.

A soil test is necessary to determine the safety and adequacy of your soil. To do this you will need to collect a sample from the land, and have it tested by a laboratory. You should test your pH, nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium content (nutrients required to grow healthy plants). It is also vital to test for heavy metals or other toxins which may be present in your soil.

Call your local county extension office to find out where to send soil samples, costs involved and exact methods of collection and labeling. Your county extension office has a wealth of information about gardening and will be a good resource for any growing questions you may have in general.

When gathering soil for your test, you will need a clean spoon, zip-top bags labeled with the exact location the samples were taken, and a small trowel. Choose four representative locations on the property and label each of the four zip-top bags. For each of your four sample locations, collect a few tablespoons of soil from an inch below the surface. Scrape away the top inch of soil in your sample, as it does not accurately represent the composition of the soil below. Gather the soil for each zip-top bag in this way from three places within a few feet of each other so that each sample accurately represents the small area you are testing.

If you are unsure what to test for, speak to your county extension officer. However, be sure your test includes the basics: pH, N-P-K, oil, zinc, arsenic, cadmium, and lead. This basic test should be relatively affordable and is generally around \$60. Heavy metal testing will require additional digestion fees, but it is vital to do the test.



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A healthy harvest at the Waukesha Community Garden in Helena.

Note: If the location is owned by, or is near a railroad, you can call the railroad company and ask them to test the soil for you. They may conduct testing for you regardless of whether or not the company owns the land.

CHOOSE YOUR SITE

Once you have settled on one or two viable locations, you are ready to seek permission to use the land from the owner(s).

Determine who owns the land:

To get land-use permission, you will have to know for certain who owns the land and how to get in contact with them. Your county tax assessor's office will have this information. If you don't have an actual address for the site, gather the surrounding addresses and describe the site to the best of your ability, as the assessor's office often has photos and maps of each parcel of land in the county. They can tell you based on the county's tax information who does in fact own the land, and can give you the contact information for that person or business. This is public information, and the assessor's office should be helpful to you in your search.

Sometimes there are discrepancies or holes in property lines, making it difficult to determine who actually owns the land you are hoping to use, so even if you think you know whose property it is, you should take the time to check with the county tax assessor's office before you begin building.

It is also important to learn how the land is zoned and whether community gardening is a permitted use. In most cases, it is.

COMMUNICATE WITH THE LAND OWNER:

Once you find out who owns the property, contact them for permission to use their land. You may write a letter, call, or visit with them in person. You may want to write them even if you already have a verbal agreement, so that the initial inquiry is documented. The support of City Commissioners, the City Parks Department, or other organizations can be very helpful at this point. A courteous, well-organized letter outlining a logical plan and specific proposal for leasing the land will go a long way toward persuading an owner to allow the use of their vacant land. Describe the benefits of community gardens to the neighborhood, your community, and to them as property owners. Describe the support the project already has and emphasize that you have a core group of dedicated people organizing the project.

LEASE AGREEMENTS AND USE AGREEMENTS

Once you have permission to use property, formal arrangements will need to be made. There are several ways that land can be acquired to build a community garden. Most commonly, land is rented or leased from a private property owner, a non-profit organization (such as a church or social service organization), or from

the city or county. The city or county may request to enter into a use-agreement, where the garden organization is not actually leasing the land, but rather is simply agreeing to the terms of its use.

Building a garden on private property is often a faster process than when using public land, but it can be harder to access public funds or sponsorship if the land is not publicly accessible.

Whichever land you choose, you will want to be sure you can obtain permission to lease or use it for at least three years. It is difficult to justify building garden beds and other infrastructure for less time. If possible, try to include in your lease agreement a clause stating that if your agreement should need to be terminated, your garden will remain in use until the end of the growing season. This will mitigate the potential for gardeners' loss.

Also, include in your lease agreement a hold-harmless clause for the benefit of the property owner. A hold-harmless clause limits their liability for injury or damage at the garden. An example of a hold harmless clause follows:

"We the undersigned members of the (name) garden group hereby agree to hold harmless (owner) from and against any damage, loss, liability, claim, demand, suit, cost and expense directly or indirectly resulting from, arising out of or in connection with the use of the (name) garden by the garden group, its successors, assigns, employees, agents and invites."

DONATED LAND

You may also be in a position to buy or accept a donation of land to your garden. Think about whether your group can really afford this opportunity, as it will require you to pay taxes or to incorporate and file for 501(c)3 status soon thereafter.

PUBLIC LAND

Depending on whether you choose to use a garden site that is incorporated within a city, you will need to acquire permission from either the city commission or the county commission. Cities often have several kinds of open space within their boundaries, including designated (but undeveloped) parkland, subdivision dedications, or land already within a public park. Each of these levels of development are possible to convert to a community garden.

Be well-prepared before presenting a proposal to the city or county commission to use area within a park or undeveloped parkland to build a community garden. Have a written proposal of your plan, where you hope to build, your financial information (how the garden will be funded), and, if available, a landscape design for visual representation. Visuals of your community garden plans really illuminate ideas, and display their potential to create beautiful and rewarding space in your community.

Community gardens are a newly rediscovered use of land and your careful and courteous work with the authorities in your town will pave the way for future gardens. It may well be your plan to have the commission (the tax funds) pay for all or part of the garden. Be sure the commission, or specific commissioners, are well aware of this before you make your general proposal so they aren't surprised. The city endeavors to build public recreational structures and open space every time they build parks, baseball, football and soccer fields, tennis courts, and swimming pools, so requesting public funding is reasonable. A common concern is that community gardens are often restricted for use by people who have rented plots and paid dues. This is true for many other regulated

activities on public land, including many of the areas listed above. Be respectful and courteous in your negotiations with the city, but don't allow your community garden to get excluded from potential funding because of the simple fact that it is unprecedented in your town.

WATER SOURCES

Montana's arid climate, even west of the Continental Divide, requires a reliable source of water when building your garden. There are several options for water sources, depending on the size of your garden, land ownership, and the surrounding infrastructure available. It is important to evaluate your ability to get water to your site before you settle on a piece of land, as a costly water setup has the potential to stall or even halt progress on your project.

Often the easiest option available is to use water from an existing spigot with an adaptor to join several long extension hoses. Often a neighboring building, company, or house will either allow a garden to use their water for a nominal fee or as a donation. It is also possible to install a water meter to read the amount that is running to the garden and pay the water bill accordingly. However, running

a connecting hose off of a spigot can only provide for a small garden, and can pose problems if gardeners have too few hoses to share during busy times of the day.

In addition to local businesses and non-profits, you may find the city to be an ally in providing water for your garden. Contact the city parks department to talk about possible ways to access city water, the department will likely know the typical process for extending or diverting a water line as this is commonly required for many land developments projects. Finding a water source is just one of the reasons why it can be so important to maintain a good working relationship with the city and the park's department, as they can really aid in your search.

If you already have water lines in the area, you have a few options. One option the Parks Department may suggest is to install a short water line and above ground spigot on a fire hydrant and read your meter each season. It may also be necessary to connect to the water main below ground, install a new line, a meter, and a tab that prevents backflow. This second option is a fairly involved process and requires a backhoe. If hired out, the equipment and labor for this job would cost several thousand dollars. While you may have the fundraising capabilities for this, many gardens do not. Try negotiating with the city on public land, or neighboring buildings on private land to use their water for the first few years until your garden become more established.

When working with the city, remember that water is necessary for many endeavors involving parks, and that a community garden often actually uses less water than growing grass in parks, sporting fields, or any maintained public space. An additional benefit to the city is that a community of gardeners is responsible for maintaining a garden, so a community



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garden on public land does not represent additional work for the city. Community gardens are a re-emerging use of land, and city officials and parks directors may be hesitant at first to treat them like other parkland. Working with the city from the beginning will really help in the long run in this regard. Don't give up if your first answer regarding water isn't what you had hoped; over time, with good relations, this can change.

LIABILITY INSURANCE

Increasingly, landowners require the inclusion of public liability insurance in lease or use agreements. The city or county on public land, the property owner on private land or the garden planning committee itself will likely request liability insurance for the garden site. There are two relevant types of liability insurance: insurance for the property, and general public insurance for people while they are on the property. General public liability insurance protects the landowner and the garden planning committee or organization from lawsuits arising from injury incurred on the garden property. Gardening is a relatively low risk activity, but it is commonly required to have this insurance nonetheless. Insurance for the property covers damage to tools such as wheelbarrows, or equipment such as water systems or a tool shed. Usually only the general liability is necessary.

Finding affordable public liability insurance may be tricky, though certainly not impossible. Some insurance companies are hesitant to insure gardens simply because the prospect is a new one and they may as yet not have company policy for it. Premiums will vary depending on your location, the size of your garden, the number of garden users you plan to host, and whether you plan to have large public



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events at the garden.

Community gardens will sometimes have the option to enter into an umbrella insurance plan with other gardens or a sponsoring organization which can significantly reduce insurance costs. These kinds of alternatives to your own insurance plan may be preferable to some community garden groups. A non-profit can often acquire liability insurance at a reduced rate or may already have it if they have a social service component to the work that they do. In many cases, this insurance can simply be extended to gardeners with no significant changes to the policy. Churches often already have liability insurance as well.

Similarly, the city and county likely have liability insurance covering activities on public land, and it is possible that they will allow this insurance to cover a community garden on public land. This is another area where your community garden will set a precedent for future gardens.

CHAPTER 3: DESIGN YOUR GARDEN

When designing your garden, it is important to consider Montana's climate and ecology; particularly the issues of water and fencing.

DESIGN YOUR GARDEN WITH COMMUNITY IN MIND

It is important to design your garden with the community who will use it in mind. Utilize the opportunities at your planning committee meetings and at the general informational meeting to ask the following questions: Are there elderly folks who may need vertical or raised beds? Are there small children? Are gardeners interested in large, family sized plots, smaller plots, or both? Community plots for Volunteer for Veggie programs? Fruit trees or shrubs? Herb beds? A flower garden? These are all good questions to ask early in the process. Use feedback from the general community meeting to meet the goals and needs of the community.

In general, your garden plan should include enough individual plots to maintain a vested interest for at least 10-15

individuals or families. This will generally mean 10-15 plots. This practice will serve to establish ownership of and responsibility for the garden. Beyond that, the more people who are involved in the garden, the better cared-for it will be. A local organization like the YMCA, homeless shelter, food pantry, Girl or Boy Scouts, or children's summer camp may want to have a garden bed or plot, inviting its membership to garden there. You might consider designing a few larger beds for this purpose.

When designing your garden, it is important to consider Montana's climate and ecology; particularly the issues of water and fencing. Considerable attention to water is essential to the success of a Montana garden. From rain-catch systems to drip irrigation, there are many options for providing water; just be sure to make a plan that will ensure the success and satisfaction of gardeners using the space. Fences are



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Digging in the dirt at the children's ExplorationWorks! garden in Helena.

often a priority for community gardens, as animals like deer and gophers can cause a lot of damage to gardens, especially later in the season as the landscape dries and veggies ripen and become more fragrant. Deer can generally jump fences up to six feet high, and gophers will dig one foot below a fence. Plan according to the ecology of your area, and ask nearby gardeners for tips on how they keep animals away.

Accessibility

One of the most important assets needed for a community garden is the accessibility of your land. The term, “accessible” means a few different things, mainly geographical accessibility and access in your design. These factors include proximity to gardeners’ homes and the ability of people to get to the location by foot, bike, bus, or car. The design of a garden also determines its accessibility. Your design should include garden beds that elderly and disabled people can easily use. You must be sure the design fully fits the needs for limited mobility access, ensuring that the path from the parking area all the way to those disability garden beds also accessible. Also, is the material used to lay the path maneuverable in a wheelchair?

Garden Beds

Consider designing some taller raised beds or shorter beds for gardeners with limited mobility: the elderly, people who use wheelchairs, disabled, and young children. Making the garden usable for the broadest population is vital to its success.

Besides their usefulness for gardeners with limited mobility, raised beds can be a solution to poor soil, or an answer to questionable levels of heavy metals on the property. Raised beds are built above ground, with materials such as wood or cinder blocks and filled with soil. Make sure your raised beds are at least 18 inches deep and filled partway with coarse



People help build the garden beds in the Helena Food Share garden.

COURTESY WHEEL.

pebbles to allow drainage before filling with your soil.

Pathways

You will want to plan paths with a minimum width of four feet. Paths to the wheelchair accessible areas of the garden should be planned to be built with concrete bricks, concrete, or clay brick set in sand that is well compacted. Other paths between plots may be laid with weed barrier underneath 3-4 inches of bark mulch or gravel. Avoid grass in your pathways as it will quickly creep into plant beds and cause problems for everyone.

Irrigation

After finding a main source of water, there are a few irrigation options. You may choose to lay irrigation pipe through the garden to allow individual plot holders to water with drip irrigation. Drip and soaker-hose irrigation can be used for efficient watering and conservation in all areas of the garden for transplanted and established plants, as well as fruit trees and shrubs. If you settle on this method, we recommend a manual drip irrigation setup. You will want to encourage gardeners

The more diverse the uses of a community garden, the more used and supported it will be. Be creative! A butterfly garden, an herb garden, or a fruit orchard are all landscape options for common space.

to come to the garden as often as possible. Having automatic watering systems in place can cause problems with weeds as the season progresses.

Ideally a community garden will have approximately one hose bib for every four plots, whether you use drip irrigation in the system or not. Hand watering with a hose is the most practical and affordable for individual plots (and it's almost a necessity when you start plants from seed). Hand watering uses far less water than sprinkler systems, and is therefore a much preferred option.

You might need to seek some assistance in designing your irrigation system. Find a landscape contractor, designer, or nursery professional to help you develop a basic layout and materials list.

ADDITIONAL FEATURES

The more diverse the uses of a community garden, the more used and supported it will be. Be sure to build in shared community spaces of the garden as well as individual plots. Be creative! A butterfly garden, an herb garden, or a fruit orchard are all landscape options for common space. Do, however, consider who will care for them as you design these spaces and coordinate accordingly when you create your garden guidelines.

Other community spaces could include a roofed bulletin board for posting notices and announcements, a visible sign to promote the garden from the outside, a tool shed, a cob oven, compost bins, shade structures, picnic tables, a greenhouse, an amputheater for classes and performances, and walking paths for people passing through. Murals painted by school children or sculptures made by adult artists are also engaging additions to community gardens.

These are just a few tips to consider when beginning to design and build your garden. Looking through the many books out there on the topic, and seeking the help of a landscape architect from the beginning will help fill in the gaps in transitioning the garden from your community's vision into a well thought through garden design.



MAUREEN SHAUGHNESSY, NATIVE DESIGN, HELENA, MT.



MAUREEN SHAUGHNESSY, NATIVE DESIGN, HELENA, MT.

Gardeners at the Waukesha Community garden in Helena have individual compost bins on their plots.

INCORPORATING FOOD ASSISTANCE (FOOD-SHARE, SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAMS, VOLUNTEER FOR VEGGIES)

Many community gardens incorporate food assistance programs to provide fresh, local food to garden volunteers, food banks, and schools for lunch programs. These programs all provide a way for community members to be involved in the garden without having to commit to maintaining a bed of their own.

Food assistance programs can be set up in a variety of ways. Some gardens ask members with individual plots to grow a row for the hungry and then donate food from that row to the local food bank.

Some gardens put a basket in a common area for gardeners to place surplus veggies for donation, while others have communal beds and ask gardeners to share in the task of growing the food there to be donated.

Volunteer for Veggie programs can be set up for volunteers to tend a garden plot in exchange for food. The amount they take home corresponds to the number of hours worked. A program like this can keep a garden well-maintained and allow more folks in your community to benefit from the garden. You may want to have a garden manager coordinate the Volunteer for Veggies program to make it run smoothly.

CHAPTER 4: BUILD YOUR GARDEN

Asking around will often reveal an abundance of resources available to help start a community garden.

GATHER SUPPLIES

Working with an experienced and community-minded landscape architect can add a creative and inspiring spin on your garden design. In addition, architects often have insight on appropriate materials, as well as ways to find deals on them. Visit your library to find design and building tips from the many books on the topic. See Appendix J for a book list and estimated costs of supplies.

Asking around and inquiry will often reveal an abundance of resources available to help start a community garden. Remember that both local businesses and national chains are often willing support community groups looking to make improvements in their neighborhoods or towns. Inquiring with these businesses is often a good place to start. Your city also may have supplies, equipment, and labor it could offer, such as a backhoe, a water meter, or other materials which are expensive at market value but easy enough to lend.

There are often inexpensive or free

resources to tap when gathering supplies to build your garden. A volunteer may know a source for some large landscaping rocks or cedar posts. A friendly horse farmer may be willing to donate a load or two of compost, maybe even each year. Another farmer may donate the use of a rototiller in the spring.

Other similarly minded organizations, companies and individuals in your community are also often good places to find resources, such as Friends of Trees groups, landscaping businesses, and fellow gardeners who may have old or extra tools and equipment, unused greenhouses, seeds, gloves, planting trays, or other supplies.

Salvaging materials is a good option, but there are some materials to avoid. Building raised beds with railroad ties and pressure treated wood are tempting options for rot resistance, but they both contain dangerous chemicals that you don't want near food you intend to eat. It's best to stay away from these materials in a community garden.



Gathering supplies for a brand new garden.

PHOTOS COURTESY BIG TIMBER COMMUNITY GARDEN, 2008.

VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS

Once you have secured your garden site, you can begin to build the garden. If well planned, this effort can really galvanize community support for your project. A few well-attended volunteer work days can accomplish a great deal of work, and get the garden ready to plant in short order.

There are many ways to find volunteers. Everyone who has been involved in planning the garden should be invited to help build it. Churches, schools, friendly organizations, neighbors, friends, and local businesses often have a few helping hands to offer. The Montana Conservation Corps is a public works organization that may have volunteers available. The County Extension Service's Master Gardener students have a number of volunteer work hours they must fulfill and may be eager to help. Put the word out as widely as possible and you will likely find the help you need.

The key to productive work days is to be well prepared. Here are a few things to have ready before the big day:

- A step by step plan of what is to be built and in what order. You will want to do a thorough clean-up of trash and debris first, then proceed to divide the volunteers into work crews depending on skill and ability.
- Have a work day event coordinator ready to act as a contact person, liaison for volunteers, and follow the garden design to be sure the garden is being built according to plan throughout the day. Consider a back-up coordinator as well.
- Be prepared with all the necessary materials: tools, wood cut to the proper dimensions, soil, fencing, fruit trees and shrubs, the right size screws, picks, forks, spade shovels, buckets, wheelbarrows, mulch or other pathway material, and any other materials included in your design. Have a few willing volunteers ready to make runs to the hardware store to retrieve forgotten items as the need arises. Remember to build signs into the garden design, from marking individual beds to a large sign identifying the garden to the outside.
- Provide food and refreshments to volunteers throughout the day. You may look for lunch donations from grocery stores or restaurants to help with this. The more of a celebration you make of the event, the more support you will have.



The Big Timber Community Garden project, before and after.



PHOTOS COURTESY BIG TIMBER COMMUNITY GARDEN, 2008.

CHAPTER 5: GARDEN ORGANIZATION

Any reason to gather those who use the garden and those who would like to is a good way to build community and garner support.

After a few months of organizing a garden together, your group may be in a better position to come up with a more explicit organizational structure. You do not need a formal organization to build a garden and make it work, but it can help with the longevity of your project to have a more formal structure.

A few basic agreements are necessary in order to make your project a success. Most of all, you want to be sure to clearly outline what is expected of each gardener. You will also likely choose to adopt use agreements with each gardener and possibly membership fees. These will vary depending on your project's budget and costs. Determine among your group what will work best.

HOW TO MANAGE YOUR GARDEN

The agreements that gardeners in a community garden make with each other need to cover a number of topics. From deciding to share tools, compost bins, and hoses to sharing community tasks such as weeding pathways and other common areas, there are a lot of choices to make regarding the maintenance and everyday workings of a successful project. How will you make sure the necessary tasks get done? Will your garden be organic? Will you establish one or several work days in the spring, summer or fall to turn soil, weed pathways and plant cover crops? Will you make a mandatory number of hours that each gardener must contribute to these community tasks on their own? Will gardeners hold meetings? How often? To answer these questions, be sure you have the input of the gardeners who will use the garden.

MEMBERSHIP AND DUES

One task your garden coordinating group will need to undertake is to consider how the garden will determine membership. By what criteria will the gardeners be chosen? By whom? Possible criteria could include the proximity of residence to the garden, by financial need, or a specific target group. Whatever your process may be, make sure it is clear and fair to all.

Most gardens do have a user's fee for individual plots. This can help cover costs for things such as water bills, soil amendments, compost, tools, etc. It can also help ensure the necessary commitment to properly maintain garden plots from each gardener. You could establish a scholarship fund or a payment plan (if the fee is \$25 dollars, an option would be to pay \$5 a month for 5 months) to help ease the burden of a one-time payment.

GARDEN GUIDELINES

Once a management plan has been devised, formalize the agreements by writing a garden guidelines contract. This will serve as a use agreement between the garden group as a whole and each individual gardener. In addition to outlining the rules of use, your agreement should state the consequences of non-compliance (likely a given amount of time or number of warnings will result in the loss of a plot.) Each gardener renting a plot will need to sign the garden guidelines and return this form to the garden manager. These guidelines should include a hold-harmless statement, similar to the one in the gardens use agreement with the land-owner. Several examples of garden guidelines can be found in Appendix F.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS

• Surveys

Surveying users of the community garden at the end of each season is a good way to get feedback on your management plan as well as many other aspects of your project. A simple survey can be very beneficial to a developing project. See Appendix H for examples of surveys.

• Education

One of the many benefits of community gardens is that they are a shared space for people to use for gatherings, meetings, and classes. Holding classes in the garden can serve to create a network of gardeners within your community more broadly and therefore involve more people in your garden. Classes can connect experienced gardeners with those anxious to learn and can be encouraging for beginning gardeners with plots in your garden to have a good experience their first year. See Appendix E for sample outreach material.

• Celebrate!

An annual harvest party, potlucks, or other planned events are a lovely addition to community gardens. Any reason to gather those who use the garden and those who would like to is a good way to build community and garner support. Live music, food, and activities increase the draw to your event.

• Fundraising options

Fundraising is often an important aspect of the success of your project. Fundraising may include soliciting donations from local businesses or holding events at local restaurants, grocery stores or churches, or grantseeking. See the appendix for examples of local fundraising events as well as grant opportunities.

A community garden can generally manage with very little money. However, local fundraising goes hand in hand with



PHOTO COURTESY WHEEL

A women's raised bed building class at the ExplorationWorks! garden, taught by Anna Baker.

creating positive publicity for your garden and can serve to rally support as well as operational funds.

• Incorporating as a Non-Profit

Obtaining grants, leases, and insurance can all be made easier with the backing of an organization with either non-profit status or a limited liability corporation. Often an organizational sponsor is willing to provide this type of support. Over time, however, with consideration given to the size and scope of your project, you may decide that incorporating the garden group itself is a good option. In order to do this, you will need to follow a specific procedure listed in, Appendix K.

• Vandalism

Generally vandalism is more of a concern than an actualized event. Most often, vandalism is infrequent and minor. However, having a garden that is open to all, has multiple uses and ways to be involved, and is well used is less likely to be vandalized. Other elements in a garden's design can also put off vandals, including a streetlight or a combination lock on the garden gate.

GOING ORGANIC

Many community gardens use organic practices, as pesticides, herbicides and other garden additives can be unsafe for people, animals, the water supply, and the environment. It is especially important to use organic practices in a community garden because of the risks involved when many people using the same space to grow food. Adopting organic guidelines for your project will ensure confidence for all gardeners that the garden is a safe place for them and their children and a sustainable stewardship of the land and its ecology.

CHAPTER 6: SUCCESS!

*Communities
across
Montana
are building
community
gardens.*

MONTANA'S COMMUNITY GARDENS

Community gardens in Montana have followed a nation trend of rising popularity. People are becoming more aware of the ecological and social impact of where their food comes from, and in response are choosing to grow their own food, shopping at farmer's markets, and looking for local, Montana-grown produce in stores. Communities across Montana are building community gardens. Missoula's Garden City Harvest has been building community gardens for years in low-income neighborhoods, where people are often without access to their own yard space. Helena's Growing Community Project, founded by the Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO) and Working for Equality and Economic Liberation (WEEL), has also created a network of community gardens and is currently working to bring community gardens every neighborhood in Helena. The following pages will highlight these two Montana success stories, sharing inspiration and logistical advice for community gardens as they get underway across the state.

GARDEN CITY HARVEST COMMUNITY GARDENS

Garden City Harvest organizes and manages the operation of seven community gardens in the greater Missoula Valley: River Road Garden, Orchard Gardens, HomeWORD Garden, Northside Garden, Associated Students of the University of

Montana (ASUM) Garden, Meadow Hill School, Second Street Garden, and the Garden of Eaton.

Community gardens are working green spaces shared by neighborhood residents and the public. Neighborhood-based community gardens provide many benefits to Missoula residents. For a small fee gardeners have access to: household garden plots, tools, water, compost, seeds, advice, and beautiful places where families and neighbors gather to enjoy growing healthy, delicious food. Garden City Harvest (GCH) strives to locate gardens in low-income neighborhoods, which tend to be urbanized, and they specifically serve people without access to their own land. According to one family, the best part of their community gardening experience was "the chance to have a quiet place to come as a family to work in the dirt and grow our own food."

Land at most GCH community gardens is also dedicated to growing produce for the Missoula Food Bank and other organizations assisting hungry Missoulians. In addition, they also operate the "Volunteer for Veggies" program where people can volunteer in exchange for organic vegetables grown at the gardens throughout the season.

Partners at the gardens include the Youth Homes of Missoula, United Way of Missoula County, Watson Family Children Shelter, Montana Conservation Corps, Flagship, homeWORD, Blessed Trinity Church, Associated Students of the University of Montana, the City of Missoula, and numerous volunteers.



MAUREEN SHAGHNESSY,
NATIVE DESIGN, HELENA, MT.

2nd Street Garden Development Process – Case Study

2004 Neighbors in re-developing (Missoula Champion Mill site) neighborhood see underutilized piece of land in neighborhood getting abused by off-roading cars and trucks and weeds. They want to make it safe for children and functional as open space or park to serve the neighborhood or subdivision.

2005 Neighbors determine the plot is City of Missoula Property (Public Works) Neighbors obtain permission to develop site into garden from City of Missoula. Neighbors discuss options for the site and want a community garden.

They contact Garden City Harvest, a non-profit that coordinates the community garden network in Missoula, about assistance and advice concerning a potential community garden.

Neighbors and GCH community garden director inspect the site and discuss options for garden layout.

2006 Garden City Harvest agrees to serve as technical advisor regarding site development and be a supporting partner with the neighborhood group developing 2nd Street garden. Development costs determined: Water to site-\$3,000 required excavation and installation of metered frost free hydrant for

garden water, \$1,000-fencing site perimeter, \$800-soil amendments, and \$500-supplies and tools. Partners agree to seek grant funding from City of Missoula and Missoula Redevelopment Agency to aid with site development. Two grants are written and secured by the neighborhood group, one for water installation and one for fencing and soil amendments. Neighborhood group coordinates installation of water to the site. Tools and supplies are purchased and stored in a neighbor's garage.

Neighbors ask if Garden City Harvest will be garden manager and add the garden to the GCH network of gardens. Garden City Harvest Board of Directors vote to assume management responsibility for the site after one year of operation on its own.

2007 Garden City Harvest coordinates the inaugural community gardening season at the site. 15 plots are developed with areas left to expand and grow communal crops, compost storage and a storage, shed. Neighbors request shed donation from neighborhood housing developer. Used shed is donated and delivered to the site.

The garden plots quickly sell out on opening day in early April. End of season reports indicate success on many levels.

HELENA COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT: BUILDING A MODEL PROGRAM

The Growing Community Project is a diverse group of individuals and organizations that are working together to develop community gardens within walking distance of every neighborhood in Helena, Montana.

The Growing Community Project aims to build community gardens, based on community support, which bring together diverse neighborhoods so that we may create community while addressing food security issues. We believe that everyone should have access to healthy, affordable food.

There are three gardens in our network to date. Gardens can start small and grow over the years to fit your vision. The following is an overview of how each garden came to be and how they are managed.

ExplorationWorks!

Community Works developed Exploration Garden in the summer of 2005 in cooperation with the Helena Rotary Club

and the YMCA. It is an outdoor classroom and exhibit of ExplorationWorks, an interactive children's museum. The garden provides hands-on learning opportunities in the study of plants and botany, health and nutrition, cooking, and environmental sciences.

In 2007 the Growing Community Project began working with ExplorationWorks! to expand Exploration Garden to include plots that could be rented to the community. We added 12 raised beds and began renting plots to people in the neighborhood in the spring of 2008. WEEL, ExplorationWorks, and AERO held a fundraiser to build a fence in order to curb a deer problem. With the help of generous donations, many volunteers, and countless volunteer hours, we built the fence over 5 weeks.

Exploration Garden is located right next to the YMCA off Last Chance Gulch.

Florence Crittenden Home

In the spring of 2007, the Florence Crittenton Home contacted the Growing Community Project for help in building a communal garden for the women who live and work at the Home. The young women designed, built, planted, and tended their garden. It was built with help from the Montana Conservation Corps (MCC). The girls harvested vegetables in the fall and made their own organic baby food. They also gave away packets of herbs at the annual Sixth Ward and Midtowne Flea Market, an event held in their neighborhood.

In 2008 the garden was expanded to include room for corn, squash, beans, and an apple tree. Many thanks to Montana Conservation Corp and the Boy Scouts.

Florence Crittenton Home resident, Jess, loves to garden with her 2 year-old son, James.



PHOTO COURTESY WEEL

Florence Crittenton Home resident, Jess, loves to garden with her 2 year-old son, James. Jess is very interested in gardening, and interned with the Growing Community Project in the summer of 2008. She was integral in organizing the Food Share Garden, and doing outreach to the neighborhood around the garden. She also spent many hours working in the Florence Crittenton Home Garden.

Jess began gardening when she was eight, and has a green thumb. "You get to watch seedlings grow and mature and produce seeds of their own. In all reality, it's like watching kids grow. It just takes less time."

Helena Food Share Community Garden

The Food Share Community Garden is just steps away from Food Share. Food Share recently bought land next door to expand their warehouse, but until the capital is raised, the land won't be used for much. Joyce Brown decided not to let the empty space go to waste, even if only for a couple years, and began organizing and working with the Growing Community Project and Food Share to build a community garden. She asked local businesses for donations, and nearly all of the materials for the garden were generously donated. The garden was built over three weeks, with an amazing number of volunteers turning out to help.



PHOTO COURTESY WHEEL

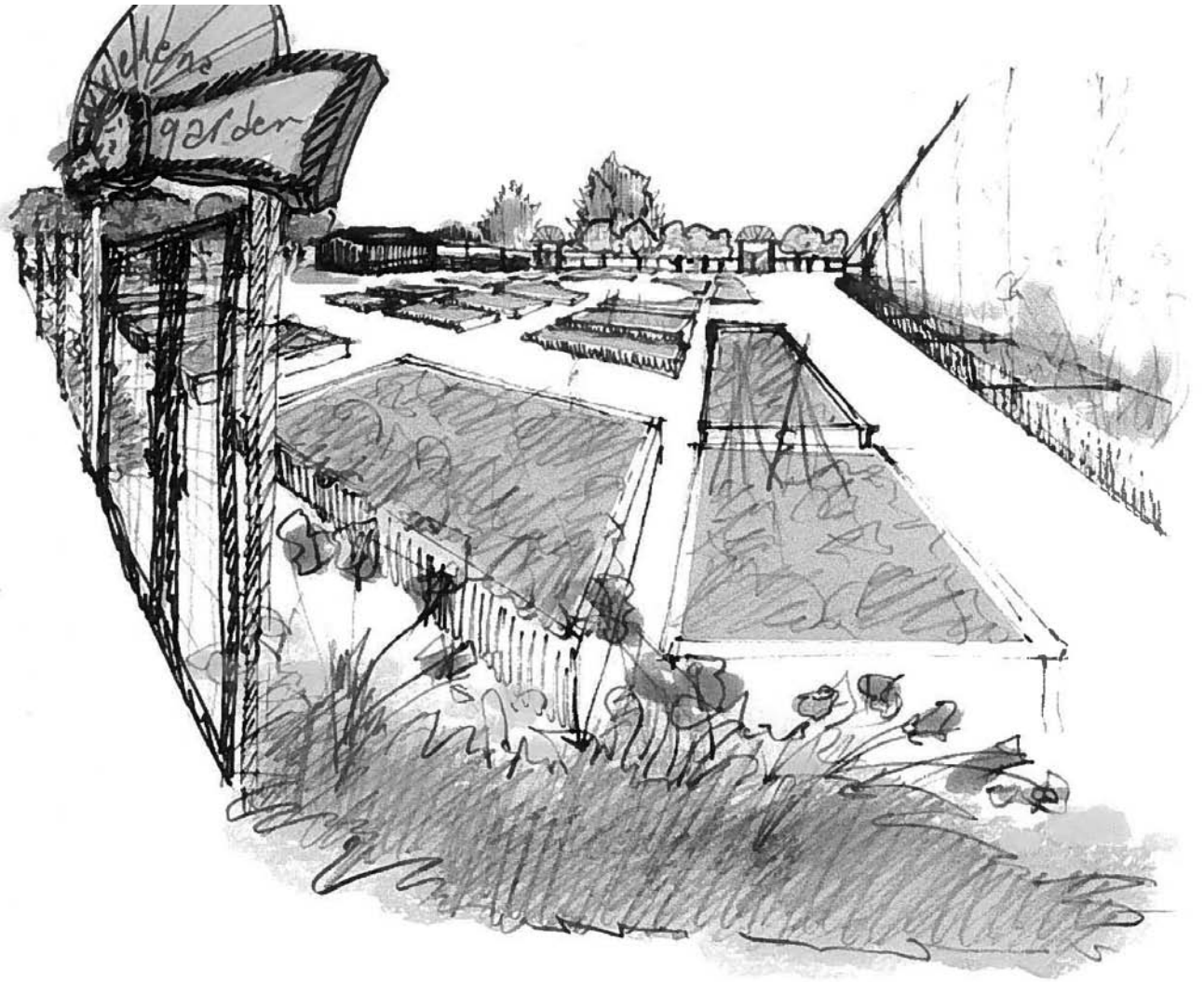
Volunteers raise fence at Helena Food Share community garden.

Half of the Food Share Garden are community plots, where individuals can rent a plot for the growing season. The other half are Volunteer for Veggies beds. All of the starts and seeds were donated. These beds are open for community members to come and volunteer a little of their time weeding, watering, and harvesting veggies, and in exchange can take home as many veggies as they need. The rest of the vegetables were donated directly to Food Share. Over the course of 2008 the gardeners donated over 400 pounds of veggies to Food Share!

APPENDIX A: GARDEN DESIGN

ARTISTIC RENDITION OF A NEIGHBORHOOD GARDEN
USED AT A COMMUNITY MEETING.

COURTESY MAUREEN SHAUGHNESSEY, NATIVE DESIGN



EXPLORATIONWORKS! COMMUNITY GARDEN DESIGN, HELENA



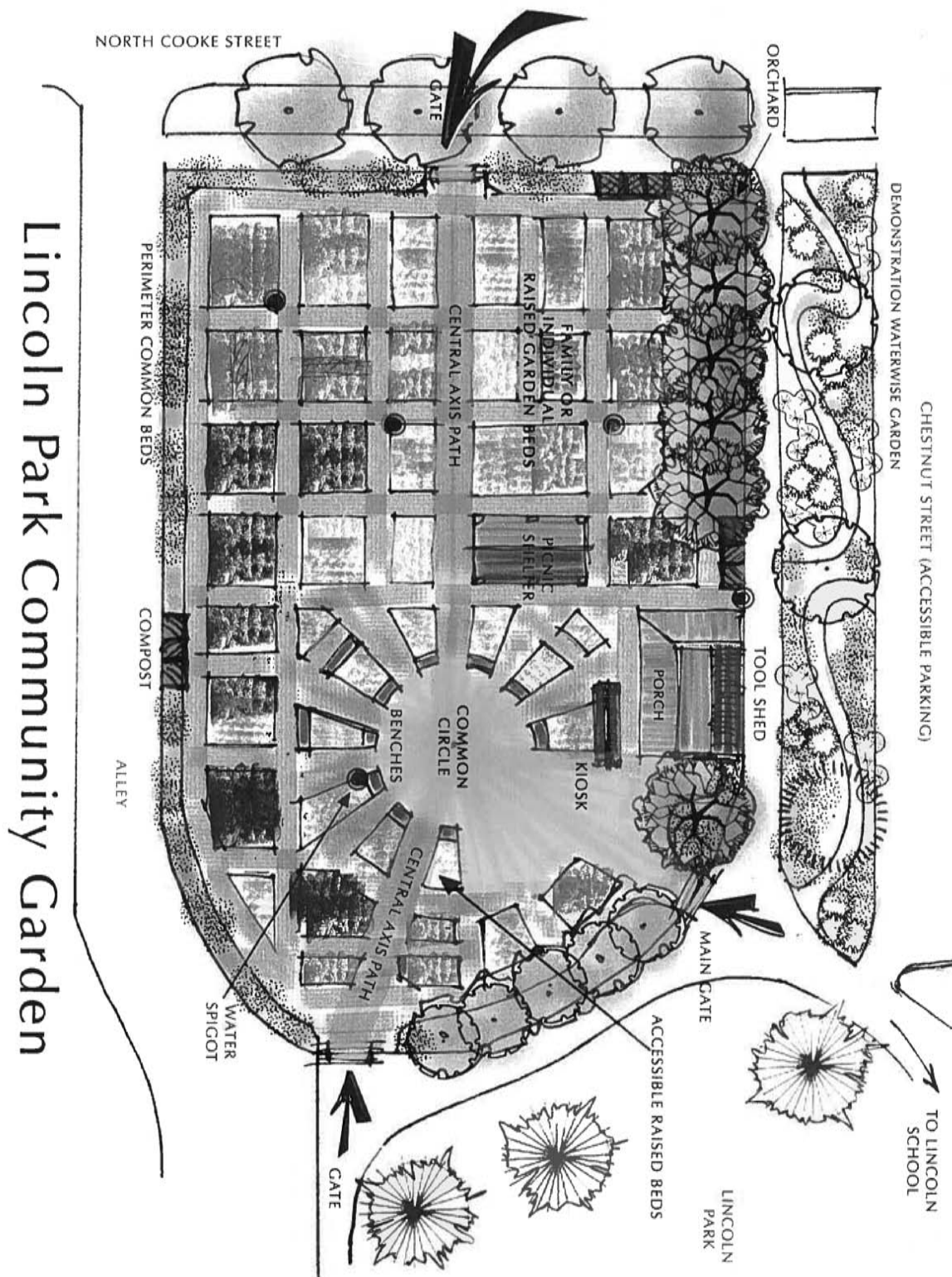
ROUGH DRAFT OF GARDEN LAYOUT INCORPORATING VARIOUS IDEAS



APPENDIX A: GARDEN DESIGN

HELENA GARDEN DESIGN INCORPORATING FEATURES SUCH AS FRUIT TREES, WATER-WISE DEMONSTRATIONS, WATERING SYSTEM, COMMON AREA AND TOOL SHED.

COURTESY MAUREEN SHAUGHNESSEY, NATIVE DESIGN



Dear Pennsylvania Power and Light,

I would like to express my support of AERO and their Growing Community Project. AERO has built a community garden project that creates community while addressing food security in Helena. I have been an active member of the Growing Community Project since its inception, working with AERO staff and community members to design inclusive, professional and attractive gardens so that all neighbors will benefit, whether they grow food themselves or not.

As a landscape designer, I support AERO's expansion of the educational garden on city parkland, near the YMCA as well as the expansion of neighborhood gardens across Helena. This central and visible location in Helena is located within walking distance to other community gathering spaces; a stage used for musical performance, soccer fields, and a skateboarding park. A central visible garden will be a benefit to all who pass by, make Helena more beautiful and improve our quality of life.

I have worked with AERO staff to design new garden features that will be inclusive and welcoming to all residents of Helena. My ideas include a picnic shelter for potlucks, a central gathering area for classes and presentations, a bulletin board for announcements and information sharing, public garden space for fruit trees, a "Water-Wise" demonstration garden area, as well as additional raised garden beds that double as benches in the non-growing season.

Of particular interest to me is making sure the Growing Community gardens are accessible to *everyone*, including children, disabled, seniors, families and youth. This may be accomplished by, among other ideas, raised beds with wheelchair access; some paved pathways for wheelchair access; gardening and nutrition workshops for children, teens and adults; and an organized program for sharing excess harvest with other community members.

The additions to the existing neighborhood gardens in Helena, planned by the AERO staff and volunteers, will bring a sense of community to the gardens, and spread the program's benefits across our city. I am honored and excited to be part of the planning group for the Growing Community Project and urge you to accept AERO's proposal for funding.

Warmly,

Maureen Shaughnessy
Owner, Native Design
721 East Broadway Street
Helena, Montana 59601
406.431.9931



City of Helena

Department of Parks & Recreation
316 North Park Avenue
Helena, MT 59623
Telephone: 406-447-8463 Fax: 406-447-8460

July 23, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the City of Helena, Department of Parks & Recreation, this letter expresses our support for community gardens within the Helena Parks system and other public lands. The City currently supports two gardens. I have found them to be an important means of bringing people together to enjoy a creative and productive activity and instill a sense of support for one another.

As the community explores other opportunities for additional gardens, be assured that the City of Helena will do its part to help them come about.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this effort.

Sincerely,


Randy Lilje, Director of Parks & Recreation

Alan G. Peura
Helena City Commissioner
1100 Highland Street
Helena, MT 59601-5122
406/442-1176
apeura@ci.helena.mt.us

July 20, 2007

Dear Pennsylvania Power and Light:

Over the past year, I have been involved in a very exciting project that is sponsored by two community organizations here in Helena, Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO) and Working for Equality and Economic Liberation (WEEL). The project goal is to increase the number and accessibility of community gardens throughout the City of Helena by creating more gardens in parks across the city.

AERO launched this project to expand community gardens in an effort to address poverty by giving low-income families the opportunity to grow their own food, and also to empower at-risk youth to get involved in their communities as well as empower neighbors to find solutions for their own neighborhoods, together.

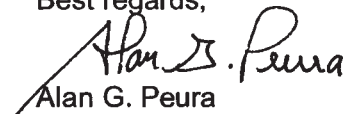
Building a model community garden in which to provide an example of what could happen all over Helena is a vital part of this total project. In addition, having adjacent space to provide educational classes will allow our mentoring and empowerment model to flourish. And the benefits of this simple approach are numerous, including a reduction of the "food miles" that Helenans contribute to by creating more local food options, the contribution community gardens make to our growing local food economy, and the overall enhancements to the quality of life in Helena neighborhoods.

This project is a great opportunity for local, neighborhood empowerment through a grassroots network of locally-controlled community gardens.

I am a strong advocate of this program and all of the goals and benefits it will bring to the Helena community. I hope that you will be able to step-up and assist us in this broad-based effort.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please feel free to contact me.

Best regards,


Alan G. Peura
Helena City Commissioner



City of Helena

Department of Parks & Recreation
316 North Park Avenue
Helena, MT 59623
Telephone: 406-447-8463 Fax: 406-447-8460

February 28, 2007

Ms. Kathryn Huthison
AERO
Helena, MT 59601

RE: Lincoln Park Community Garden Project

Dear Kathryn:

This letter is to confirm our earlier discussions regarding the proposed community garden at Lincoln Park in Helena, Montana. The City of Helena supports this effort and intends to work with AERO, WEEL, and other interested parties to see that this project comes to fruition.

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of the community and the Lincoln Park neighborhood. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy Lilje". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Randy Lilje, Director of Parks & Recreation

LAND EVALUATION CHECKLIST FOR POTENTIAL COMMUNITY GARDEN SITE

- _____ **Sunlight:** You will need a location receiving at least 6 hours of sunlight a day.
- _____ **Shade:** If shade from structure or trees, from which direction?
- _____ **Size:** How many beds of what size could you build?
- _____ **Topography:** Is the property relatively flat? What could you do if it were sloped?
- _____ **Visibility:** How visible is the garden to others? Will this location make the garden an asset to the whole community and mixed uses?
- _____ **Soil composition:** Sand, silt, clay, organic matter, compacted
- _____ **Drainage:** Is it adequate?
- _____ **Depth of topsoil**
- _____ **Any underground pipes or lines?**
- _____ **pH level**
- _____ **Results of soil test:** N-P-K, heavy metals, etc
- _____ **Proximity to target population:** Can gardeners walk to the site?
- _____ **Accessibility:** Handicapped accessible entrances and paths? Parking available?
- _____ **Pre-existing assets:** Fence, a shed, good soil, lots of boulders or other landscaping material)
- _____ **Water access:** Where would your water come from?
- _____ **Are there public bathrooms nearby?**
- _____ **Is there electrical power?** (You don t actually need electricity for your garden,but this is helpful to know when making construction plans.)
- _____ **History of use:** You may need to contact the owner for this information, but it is helpful to know if there has been industrial or high risk activity in the past that would cause the property to be a poor choice for a community garden.

City of Helena
USE AGREEMENT - COMMUNITY GARDENS

THIS AGREEMENT is made and entered into this ____ day of _____, by and between the CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA, 316 North Park Avenue, Helena, Montana, 59623, a municipal corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of Montana, hereinafter referred to as City, and **WEEL**, with its principal place of business at **32 S. Ewing, Helena, MT 59601**, hereinafter referred to as User.

SECTION ONE

Use Allowed

City, for and in consideration of the covenants to be performed by User, does hereby allow User to use that certain real property located at 1200 N Last Chance Gulch Helena, Montana, County of Lewis & Clark, State of Montana, more specifically located on Centennial Park land, in between the YMCA and N. Last Chance Gulch as shown on the attached Exhibit A (Property). The Property will be used for a community garden. The garden may include raised beds, fruiting trees and shrubs, removable storage building(s), compost bins, water harvesting structures, seating and gathering areas, fencing, as well as educational, informational, and interpretive signage, to be designed by the User and approved by City.

SECTION TWO

Term of Agreement

The term of the Agreement is for _____, beginning on _____ and terminating on _____. This agreement may be extended for additional terms upon mutual agreement of the parties.

SECTION THREE

Consideration for Use

For and in consideration of said use, User agrees to pay City, within thirty (30) days after being billed by City, the expenses incurred by City during the term of the agreement for the applicable utility costs directly related to the User's use, including water. The City shall bill WEEL for water use based on a pro-rated percentage of use agreed upon between ExplorationWorks and the Growing Community Project (WEEL).

SECTION FOUR

Covenants of User

User does hereby covenant and agree with City that User will:

1. use and occupy the premises in a careful and prudent manner and not commit any waste thereon. User will keep the garden in a neat and well-kept condition at all times and will keep the garden free of weeds, dead vegetative materials and garbage, the compost bins free from offensive odors,

continued on next page

and the grounds free from tools and gardening implements that may be unsightly or pose a hazard to users or visitors. User's storage building(s), water harvesting structures, and any other structures must be compatible with the park and surrounding setting, be maintained at all times, and not allowed to be in an unsightly, hazardous or dilapidated state. User may store tools and gardening implements in the User's storage building(s) located on the Property, but may not store any personal property outside the storage building(s) on the Property, except as expressly allowed by City in writing;

2. not use or occupy the Property for any unlawful purpose, and confirm to and obey all present and future laws, ordinances, and rules and regulations of all government authorities or agencies, respecting the use of and occupation of the Property;
3. not assign this agreement or sublet the property or any part thereof, other than for the purpose of community garden plots to individual citizens and families;
4. not use or occupy the Property, or permit the same to be used or occupied, for any purpose deemed extra-hazardous on account of fire or otherwise;
5. make no substantial alterations, additions or capital improvements in or to the Property without the prior, written consent of City. User may construct or place a storage building or buildings and fencing on the Property for its use, provided the City has first approved the location, design, materials and construction of the same. Any improvements, major repairs or alterations to the storage building must be approved first by City. It is understood that the cost of any such improvements, major repairs or alterations will be no obligation of the City, and the Property will be returned to its original condition (original conditions being defined as having all structures removed and having re-seeded turf grass with the City assuming responsibility for re-adapting the irrigation) upon termination of this or any subsequent agreement. The development and maintenance of the garden must be aesthetically complimentary to the park setting.
6. indemnify and save City, its officers, agents, and employees harmless from any and all loss, damage, or liability occasioned by, growing out of, or in any way arising or resulting from any tortious or negligent act on the part of User or User's agents or employees, and for such purpose User shall procure and maintain in full force and effect, commencing with the first work developing the garden and continuing during the term of this agreement, insurance issued by a reliable company or companies for personal injury and property damage, in an amount not less than \$1.0 million per occurrence, and naming City as co-insured with User. User shall provide an officially executed copy of such policy to City. Said insurance shall be in a form suitable to City.

continued on next page

SECTION FIVE

Public Access

User understands and agrees that the Property is part of the Helena parks system and as such, public access and use are allowed at all times. The park within which the Property is located allows for other public uses. The Property may be accessed and visited by the public at any time. Because of unlimited public access to the Property, the city does not guarantee or warrant that the Property will not be disturbed or damaged, whether intentionally or negligently, by the public. The use granted by this agreement is not superior to other uses in the park and User agrees that it will coordinate its use with other public uses in the park so as to minimize conflicts.

SECTION SIX

Mutual Covenants

It is mutually agreed by and between City and User that:

1. if User is in default of any of the covenants or provisions of this agreement at any time, and if User fails to remedy such default within fifteen (15) days of receipt of written notice thereof from City, City is entitled to enter upon the premises and repossess, have and enjoy the same as if this agreement had not been made, and thereupon this agreement and everything herein contained on the part of the City to be done and performed shall cease and terminate.
2. any notice required to be given under this agreement shall be in writing and may be served on either of the parties by registered or certified mail in a sealed, postage prepaid envelope addressed to City at the Parks and Recreation Department, 316 North Park Avenue, Helena, Montana 59623 or to User at _ExplorationWorks, 995 Carousel Way, Helena, MT 59601. Any such notice shall be deemed deliverable on the date of the mailing thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this agreement the day and year first above written.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

By: _____

ATTEST:

By: _____

USER, **WEEL**

By: _____

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

By: _____, City Attorney

Friday, September 28th
Lunch 11am-3pm or Dinner 5:30-9pm

Benny's Bistro is located
at 108 6th Avenue,
Helena, MT



*Benny's Bistro
Fundraiser for Helena
Community Gardens*

Friday, September 28th's Lunch Specials and a
Four Course Dinner Special for \$28 from
Benny's Bistro come fresh from the fields!

Support Helena area farmers and enjoy a
sumptuous meal!

Dinner Reservations are suggested 443-0105



For more information please contact: Rachel (WEEL) 495-0497 or Kathryn (AERO) 443-7272





Earth Day
Sunday April 22

The Real Food Store is located at
1096 Helena Avenue

Growing Community Fundraiser

The Real Food Store has generously agreed to help the Growing Community Project fundraise for materials for our first community garden!

Please join our fundraising effort and save your shopping for Earth Day, Sunday, April 22nd!

Think about the Earth! Make Helena and the world a little greener one garden at a time...

At the Real Food Store

For more information about the Growing Community Project:

Please call:

Rachel Conn (WEEL) at 495-0497

Or

Kathryn Hutchison (AERO) at 443-7272

INTERESTED IN GARDENING?

**Please Respond by
April 30th**

A community garden is being started in your neighborhood!

The new community gardening plots will be next to the YMCA on the corner of East Chance Gulch and Lyndale Ave.

The Growing Community Project is expanding the gardens near the YMCA to include community gardening plots. If you are interested in having one of these plots please contact us!

Free gardening classes will be available if you need help getting started!



Phone Rachel (WEEL) at 495-0497
or

Kathryn (AERO) at 443-7272

E-mail: rconn@mtlsa.org or

k_hutchison@aeromt.org

The Growing Community Project is a collaboration between Working for Equality and Economic Liberation (WEEL) and the Alternative Energy Resource Organization (AERO)

real food market & deli



Celebrate
Earth Day
and shop
for a cause
that fits
the day!

Sunday, April 22,
we're donating our day's profit*
for community gardens.

Working for Equality and Economic Liberation (WEEL) and the Alternative Energy Resource Organization (AERO) are developing the Growing Community Project to bring community gardens within walking distance to every neighborhood in Helena.

For more information, please contact

Kathryn Hutchison, at 443-7272, k_hutchison@aeromt.org, or
Rachel Conn at 495-0497, rconn@mtlsa.org.

*3% of our day's sales goes to WEEL.

1096 Helena Ave. • 443.5150 • Mon-Sat 8-8, Sun 9-7

Join the **Earth Day Helena 2007** festivities

Sunday, April 22, at Carroll College

noon to 4 pm! See our ad on page 13 for more details.



real food market & deli



plant a seed

Nothing's more local than your own back yard.

If you're looking for good answers to global climate shock, one solution is in your own back yard. A lot of good things are being done to use more local foods, but nothing beats growing your own.

Think about it. Berkeley's famous Chez Panisse restaurant—once honored as the best in America—recently quit serving bottled water, because it's hard to imagine a greater transportation waste than shipping water from Italy. When you ask yourself what would be the opposite extreme, garden seeds should pop to mind. Not only are they practically weightless, but they become something much larger. They grow into foods that are miraculously fresh, nourishing, beautiful and yummy.

We've chosen with care the seeds we sell: exotic, heirloom, traditional, suited to our climate. The Seeds of Change line is certified organic, and the Seed Savers Exchange preserves the richness of the genetic heritage we leave to our children.

For those of us who lack the soil or prefer to share the load, the Real Food Market is supporting the Growing Community Project, whose goal is to have a community garden within walking distance of everyone in Helena. We donated our Earth Day profit (and then some) to that effort. You can get more information on community gardens from Kathryn Hutchison at 443-7272 or Rachel Conn at 495-0497.

You can work on your garden any time of year, but there's no time like now, when the land comes alive. Gardens, like kids, sound like a lot of work; but once you have one, you wouldn't want to think of giving it up.

earth day,
mother's day,
every day,
love your
mother





real food market & deli help support community gardens

In honor
Earth Day we'll
be selling our
canvas bags
with original
artwork by classes
from Hawthorne
Elementary School
as a fundraiser
for the Growing
Community Project.



Special thanks to Ben Franklin for donating the paint.

For only **\$12.99** you can buy a
colorful canvas bag and:

- support the community gardens
- keep plastic bags out of our landfills
- **SAVE 1%** on your Real Food purchases
every time you use this bag!

406-443-5150 1096 helena ave helena

open mon-sat 8-8; sun 9-7 www.realfoodstore.com

feed your dreams



The Growing Community Project is a collaborative effort between AERO and WEEL, to develop community gardens within walking distance of every neighborhood in Helena. Visit helenagcp.wikidot.com for more info.





real support community gardens
food market
& deli

Buy one a canvas shopping bag decorated with original artwork in Earth Day themes

- Proceeds of sales go to support the Growing Community Project
- Keep thousands of plastic bags out of our landfills
- SAVE 1% on Real Food store purchases every time you use our canvas shopping bag!

• **ONLY \$12.99 • LIMITED QUANTITIES LEFT!** • CHECK WITH CUSTOMER SERVICE

feed your dreams

1096 helena ave helena open mon-sat 8-8; sun 9-7 www.realfoodstore.com



real food market & deli

ONLY
\$12.99

support
community
gardens

Buy one of the 83 canvas shopping bags decorated with original artwork in Earth Day themes!

- Proceeds of sales go to support the Growing Community Project*
- Reusable bags keep plastic bags out of our landfills
- You SAVE 1% on Real Food store purchases every time you use our canvas shopping bag!

**Meet the Artists Reception on
Earth Day, April 22 from 4-6 pm**



*The Growing Community Project is a collaborative effort between AERO and WEEL, to develop community gardens within walking distance of every neighborhood in Helena. Visit helenagcp.wikidot.com for more info.



feed your dreams

406-443-5150 1096 helena ave helena
open mon-sat 8-8; sun 9-7 www.realfoodstore.com

WELCOME TO THE GARDEN CITY HARVEST NETWORK OF COMMUNITY GARDENS!

The Garden Organizer for this site is _____ phone # _____. You can also reach the Garden City Harvest, Community Garden Director at 550-3663.

RENTAL FEES: The plots are 15'X15' and cost \$25 (+ \$15 refundable deposit) for the season. Money from the rental goes back into upkeep and supplies for the garden.

COMMUNICATION: A bulletin board is located at each garden to assist with questions and answers for the Garden Organizer and as a means for community gardeners to communicate information to each other. Please feel free to use it. Leave notes to other gardeners on the blackboard, check for notices about garden potlucks, learn about composting, potato bug patrol, and special workshops this season. The garden map will help you identify other gardeners. Please feel free to contact GCH with any questions, issues or concerns at any time throughout the season.

HOLD HARMLESS CLAUSE: I understand that neither Garden City Harvest nor owners of the land are responsible for my actions. I therefore agree to indemnify, defend and hold harmless Garden City Harvest and owners of the land for any liability, damage, loss or claim that occurs in connection with use of the garden by me or any of my guests. Each gardener must sign a garden contract including the Release of all Claims before any work in the garden can begin.

NO TOLERANCE POLICY: I understand that harassment and threatening behavior is unacceptable at any Garden City Harvest affiliated site and will not be tolerated. Reports of such activities will be acted on quickly. Continued unacceptable behavior will be grounds for immediate eviction from the site and loss of all plot rental fees and deposits.

ABANDONMENT POLICY: You are responsible for keeping your garden plot weeded and watered all season long. If for any reason you need to discontinue your gardening mid-season, you must tell the Garden Organizer or Garden City Harvest, immediately. Plots that are neglected for two weeks or more will be reassigned to another gardener. The negligent gardener will receive one warning call before the plot is reassigned. If you are going to be out of town on vacation, tell your Garden Organizer and ask one of your fellow gardeners to weed and water for you. Otherwise you might come home to an unfamiliar plot.

TOOLS: Tools are stored in the tool shed and are for use at the community garden only. Let the garden organizer know if a tool breaks or if you think we need a particular kind of tool. The garden organizer will inventory the tools periodically.

WATERING: GARDENERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR WATERING THEIR OWN PLOTS. Please wind up the hoses when finished. This helps extend the life of the hoses. If you notice a hose leak, let the garden organizer know. **Practice water conservation and courtesy.** This means waiting patiently for free hoses, looking out for plants as you move hoses, watering only as much as you need, mulching to conserve water in hot months.

WEEDS: A weedy abandoned plot can be a serious source of invading weeds and consternation for other gardeners. You are expected to keep your plot reasonably free of weeds. Ask, if you're not sure what this means. Gardeners with plots going to seed will receive a warning call, and will be expected to weed within one week.

SAFETY: Safety guidelines for the gardens are posted on the bulletin board. Make yourself familiar with them and check out the first aid kit in the tool shed.

(Continued on other side)

ORGANIC GARDENING: The Community Gardens are organic. No synthetic pesticides, herbicides, or chemical fertilizers are allowed. The garden organizer would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Garden City Harvest also has a lending library at our main office (103 Hickory St, Msl.) with a few good books on the topic. If you are not sure, please ask!

VOLUNTEER PLOTS: There will be a few plots set aside to produce food for garden volunteers and Missoula feeding agencies at larger community gardens. Talk to your garden organizer if you wish to volunteer in exchange for vegetables.

KID'S GARDENING: Children are welcome at the gardens, and with a little supervision can be a great help. Children must be accompanied by an adult and supervised at all times.

COMPOST: The compost bins are for everyone's use. Please talk with the garden organizer about how the composting system works and communicate with your fellow gardeners if they seem confused. Bring your kitchen scraps (no cooked food with oils or meat) from home if you like. Finished compost is available to everyone to use at the gardens, but only take from the finished bin.

ROCKS and TWINE. Please help by placing rocks you find in the designated rock pile. Please do not use rocks as borders or decorations in your garden and do not toss rocks into the field (lest they mangle a mower blade!). You may use string, sticks or low fences to mark of your garden but no fishing line! All string and twine must be detached from stakes and removed from the plot at the end of the season.

PERENNIALS: Check with the Garden Organizer about major plans. It is OK to plant perennials in your plot, but it is your responsibility to dig out the perennials at the end of the season if you do not plan to return.

VANDALISM: The best defense against vandalism is taking care of the gardens and maintaining a presence at the gardens. If plots look taken care of and vegetables are harvested when ready, vandalism is less likely to occur. Watch the gardens while you are there and talk with people who appear to be taking vegetables or damaging plots. Let kids know what is and is not appropriate (invite them to the kids garden). **Please contact GCHP if you are having trouble, or suspect vandalism.**

CLEAN-UP: In early October we will set a closing day for clearing out the gardens and putting them to bed for the winter. This is a chance to celebrate the end of the growing season and prepare for next season. **All gardeners need to attend this end of the year workday to be eligible for plots next year and to have your plot site deposit returned.** Talk to your organizer if this date and time does not work for you.

This is your garden! Let us know if you have questions and ideas, suggestions for workshops and events or concerns about how the season is going. Happy planting!

www.gardencityharvest.org, 550-3663.

GARDEN COURTESY AND COMMUNICATION

One of the main goals in community gardening is to work together or next to each other in harmony. Please be courteous in all interactions and work together to resolve any disagreements. Contact the Garden Master or Chair for guideline clarifications

ORGANIC ONLY:

- Herbicides and insecticides made from synthetic chemicals are *not* permitted. Organic fertilizers are preferred (fish or kelp fertilizer, alfalfa meal, etc.) however MiracleGro will be permitted.

MAIN GATE & SERVICE GATE:

- Please keep the Main Gate closed at all times.
- If you need to use the service gate, please contact the Garden Manager in a timely manner.

PLOT MAINTENANCE

- **Plots Must Be Reasonably Maintained:** Reasonably maintained means weeds under control and plants are regularly cared for, watered and harvested. Plants must not exceed plot boundaries. By the end of the gardening season, all non-wintering plants must be removed as well as stakes, walls of water, row covers, etc. You may not store black plastic bags of leaves/organic matter over the winter.
- **Plot Neglect/Abandonment:** Plots must be prepared and ready to plant by June 1st (weather permitting). Abandoned or unattended plots will be reassigned. Please notify the Garden Manager if you are no longer able to tend your plot; will be absent for a long period of time; or have asked a friend to tend your garden.
- **Individual Delineation:** Separation of individual plots is allowed, e.g. with rocks.
- **Weeds:** There will be many weeds in the community garden. Weeds compete with other plants in your garden and can quickly become invasive. If weeds are left to go to seed they will affect your neighbors' gardens as well. Gardeners are responsible for keeping their plot weed-free by planting a cover crop or mulching. Weedy plots are subject to warning and cancellation

PATH MAINTENANCE

- Pathways around each plot are to be 4 feet wide.
- It is each gardener's responsibility to keep the paths on each side of his/her plot clear, weed-free, and well mulched.

USE OF COMMUNITY WATER:

- Please conserve the use of water. Mulch with leaves, grass clippings, or straw to reduce water evaporation.
- Water in the gardens will be available May 15th through October 1 (weather permitting).
- Unattended watering is not permitted. Notify the Garden Manager of any leaks in the water line.
- Make sure all faucets are off when you leave the garden. Keep hoses neatly rolled up near the water bib. Check hoses for leaks.

(Continued on other side)

COMPOSTING & MULCH:

- Manure, mulch, and compost are available for everyone to share. Please take a moderate amount so we all may benefit.
- Please dispose of weeds and plant materials in designated compost areas. Chopping of material is preferred before putting it in the piles.

DISPOSAL OF TRASH:

- No debris of any kind should be left at the site. Please dispose of trash in the receptacle in the alley by the service gate.
- Please recycle your glass and plastic in the appropriate bins in the garden.

PARKING:

- Parking is allowed on 6th Street in the designated spots. Please observe the *Disability Only* spot.

VANDALISM:

- Most gardens experience occasional vandalism. The best action you can take is to replant immediately. If you suspect any acts of vandalism, please notify the Garden Manager immediately.

NOT ALLOWED IN THE GARDEN:

- tires
- pressure treated wood
- carpet
- barbed wire
- uncovered black plastic
- smoking and use of alcoholic beverages
- amplified music (use headphones please)
- selling produce is not allowed at garden site
- pets are not welcome inside the fenced area. Please park your pets outside.
- young children should be supervised so they don't disturb other gardens or gardeners.

I agree to respect the above guidelines of the Big Timber Community Garden.



SIGNED _____ PRINTED NAME _____

DATE _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

Helena Community Garden Contract
 Growing Community Project
 32 S. Ewing St.; Suite 109
 Helena, MT 59601
 (406) 495-0497

1. I will pay a fee of \$25, or I will volunteer 5 hours to the Volunteer for Veggies program, for the use of my plot.
2. I will have something planted in the garden by June 1st and keep it planted all summer long.
3. If I must abandon my plot for any reason, I will notify the garden leadership.
4. I will keep weeds at a minimum and maintain the areas immediately surrounding my plot if any.
5. If my plot becomes unkempt, I understand I will be given 2 week's notice to clean it up. At that time, it will be re-assigned or tilled in.
6. I will keep trash and litter out of the plot, as well as from adjacent pathways and fences.
7. I will participate in the fall cleanup of the garden.
8. I will plant tall crops where they will not shade neighboring plots.
9. I will pick only my own crops unless given permission by another plot user.
10. I will not use non-organic fertilizers, insecticides or weed repellents.
11. I agree to volunteer hours toward community gardening efforts.
12. I will use water wisely.
13. I will be responsible for pets and guests I bring to the garden.
14. I understand that neither the Growing Community Project nor the city of Helena is responsible for my actions. I therefore agree to hold harmless the Growing Community Project and owners of the land for any liability, damage, loss or claim that occurs in connection with use of the garden by me or any of my guests.

I have read and understand the application and accept these rules, terms, and conditions stated above for the participation in the Exploration Community Garden.

Signed : _____ Date: _____
 Gardener

Approved: _____ Date: _____
 Garden Manager

Helena Community Garden Contract
Growing Community Project
32 S. Ewing St.; Suite 109
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 495-0497

1. I will pay a fee of \$25, or I will volunteer 5 hours to the Volunteer for Veggies program, for the use of my plot.
2. I will have something planted in the garden by June 1st and keep it planted all summer long.
3. If I must abandon my plot for any reason, I will notify the garden leadership.
4. I will keep weeds at a minimum and maintain the areas immediately surrounding my plot if any.
5. If my plot becomes unkempt, I understand I will be given 2 week⁹ notice to clean it up. At that time, it will be re-assigned or tilled in.
6. I will keep trash and litter out of the plot, as well as from adjacent pathways and fences.
7. I will participate in the fall cleanup of the garden.
8. I will plant tall crops where they will not shade neighboring plots.
9. I will pick only my own crops unless given permission by another plot user.
10. I will not use non-organic fertilizers, insecticides or weed repellents.
11. I agree to volunteer hours toward community gardening efforts.
12. I will use water wisely.
13. I will be responsible for pets and guests I bring to the garden.
14. I understand that neither the Growing Community Project nor the city of Helena is responsible for my actions. I therefore agree to hold harmless the Growing Community Project and owners of the land for any liability, damage, loss or claim that occurs in connection with use of the garden by me or any of my guests.

I have read and understand the application and accept these rules, terms, and conditions stated above for the participation in the Exploration Community Garden.

Signed : _____ Date: _____
Gardener

Approved: _____ Date: _____
Garden Manager

**Garden City Harvest, Missoula
Community Gardener Contract - 2008 Season**

I, (print your name) _____ agree to the following guidelines at the Community Garden.

- I agree to pay the required \$25 rental fee for each garden plot (\$30 for non-UM affiliation at ASUM garden).
Gardeners are required to pay a \$15 deposit, refunded after the garden season is complete and your plot is prepared for winter. **Check here if you wish to donate your deposit back to GCH_____.**
- I will promptly inform the sites Garden Organizer if I will be out of town for any extended period of time and unable to tend my garden plot. **If the plot is neglected and attempts are made by GCH to contact you, the plot may be reassigned to another waiting gardener and you will forfeit your rental fee and deposit.**
- I understand that neither Garden City Harvest nor owners of the land are responsible for my actions. I therefore agree to indemnify, defend and hold harmless Garden City Harvest and owners of the land for any liability, damage, loss or claim that occurs in connection with use of the garden by me or any of my guests.
- I understand that harassment and threatening behavior is unacceptable at any Garden City Harvest affiliated site and will not be tolerated. Reports of such activities will be acted on quickly. Continued actions will be grounds for immediate eviction from the site and loss of all plot rental fees and deposits.
- I will respect and maintain all shared tools, hoses and other community property at the garden.
- Children are welcome in the garden but must be accompanied by an adult and must be supervised at all times.
- I will garden using **only organic methods.**
- I will not smoke, chew tobacco or drink alcohol in the garden area.
- I understand that all watering, weeding and general upkeep of my rented plot(s) is my responsibility.

By signing this contract I agree to adhere to the guidelines and rules listed above.

Signature _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

Email Address _____

PLEASE COMPLETE THE INCOME SURVEY ON THE BACK OF THIS CONTRACT

GCH Use only

Rental fee paid: \$ _____ Deposit: \$ _____

Garden City Harvest Household Income Survey 2009

All surveys are strictly confidential and are required for grant qualifying purposes

The income information requested below is *vital* to receive assistance under grant programs which intend to assist low and moderate income families. Your individual responses will not be associated with your name but will be compiled and used in summary form for grant reports and applications.

Please indicate, using the chart below, your total household income for 2008. See Sources of income below for a thorough description of annual income.

	Low Income	Moderate Income
Number in Household	Annual Income	Annual Income
1	\$19,400	\$31,000
2	\$22,150	\$35,450
3	\$24,950	\$39,850
4	\$27,700	\$44,300
5	\$29,900	\$47,850
6	\$32,150	\$51,400
7	\$34,350	\$54,950
8	\$36,550	\$58,500

Based on the number in my household our income falls:

_____ at the low income level or below

_____ at the moderate level or in between the moderate and low income levels

_____ above the moderate level amount

 **signature or initials:** _____ **date:** _____

Sources of income include:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wages and salaries, overtime pay, commissions, fees, tips and bonuses; • Rental or personal property income; • Interest and dividends; • Social security, annuities, insurance policies, retirement funds, pensions, disability or death benefits and other similar types of periodic receipts; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public assistance; • Alimony and regular contributions by persons not residing in the dwelling; and • All regular pay, special pay and allowances of a member of the armed forces (whether or not living in the dwelling) who is head of the family or spouse. |
|--|--|

END-OF-SEASON COMMUNITY GARDEN SURVEY

Thank you for your time and participation in this garden. These surveys help us to improve the gardens and your experience. All answers to these questions will be kept confidential. In addition, this will allow us to contact you next season prior to Opening Day.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Please Circle the community garden where you had a plot.

ASUM Northside 2nd Street River Road Orchard Gardens Meadow Hill

Please Answer All the Questions

1. How would you rate your overall experience in the garden this season?
 ___ Great ___ Good ___ Fair ___ Poor

2. In terms of your participation in the Community Gardens how do the following statements best indicate your experience.

I ate more fresh vegetables.	Yes / No
I shared food with friends, family, other gardeners, neighbors, or hunger agencies.	Yes / No
I shared gardening knowledge with others in the community garden.	Yes / No
My gardening skills improved over the summer.	Yes / No
Participation in the garden increased my interest in what was happening in my local community.	Yes / No
I have become more active in my community.	Yes / No
I have become more self-sufficient and gaining knowledge around growing my own food.	Yes / No

3. Did your gardening harvests decrease your grocery bill? Yes / No
 If so, by how much? \$ _____ per week (give your best estimate)

4. With the increasing costs of food likely in the future, will you need to
 grow more of your family's food next season? Yes / No

5. How many persons did your garden consistently feed? For how long?

continued on next page

6. Have you ever visited the Missoula Food Bank or another local food pantry to help make ends meet? **Yes / No** If yes, how often?

7. What were the primary reasons for participating in the community gardens program? **Please choose your 3 most important reasons and rate them on a scale of 1,2,3. Number 1 being the primary reason.**

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> participate in the production of your food | <input type="checkbox"/> save money on food, |
| <input type="checkbox"/> no space at home | <input type="checkbox"/> improve neighborhood character (beautification), |
| <input type="checkbox"/> therapeutic elements of gardening | <input type="checkbox"/> cultural/ethnic heritage, |
| <input type="checkbox"/> control the quality of the food you eat | <input type="checkbox"/> family activity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> gain gardening experience/knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> social interaction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> connect to nature | <input type="checkbox"/> for fun |
| other (list) _____ | |

8. What do you feel is the primary benefit of the Community Garden to this community?

9. What was the best part of your community gardening experience?

10. What problems did you encounter at the community garden this summer?

11. How well do you feel the community garden organizer did his/her job this season?
☐ very well ☐ well ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor

12. Do you have any ideas or requests for specific programs or informational sessions that are of interest to you and/or will help you be a better gardener? If so, what topics?

13. Do you have any suggestions for the community garden for next year?

14. Are you planning on returning to this community garden next year? **Yes / No**

Thanks! We hope to see you next year.

Growing Community Project Master Event Planning Timetable

1 Month out

- Work out details of event: What are the goals of the event? What is the message we want to present? What will your role be during the event?
- Create a budget: What do you need for the event? How much money do you want to make? Should you get other organizations or businesses to co-sponsor the event? Do you need to pay a childcare provider?
- Create a schedule: What do you need for the event? How many volunteers do you need to recruit? Do you need to get permits or make reservations? Where will the event be held?
- Write a press release: who, what, where, when, why
- Post event to community calendars and email press release
 - Queen City News: Cathy Siegner 443-3678 editor@queencitynews.com
 - YourTime: irarts@helenair.com
 - Independent Record: Larry Kline 447-4075 larry.kline@helenair.com or Alana Listoe 447-4081 Alana.listoe@helenair.com
 - HCTV: hctv@bresnan.net
 - Beartooth NBC: Brooke Boone 457-1212 bboone@ktvh.com
 - KRTV: Kay Rossi 442-4641 krtvnews@krtv.com or kay@kxlh.com
 - MT Public Radio: http://www.mtpr.net/send_a_psa.html
 - Church Bulletins
- Email to WEEL and GCP lists
- Create flyers and postcards

2 to 3 Weeks Out

- Send out a Mailing
- Email to other organizations' lists
 - MHRN: Kim Abbott, kim@mhrn.org or Becky, organizer@mhrn.org
 - AERO: aero@aeromt.org
 - MWV: Becky, organizer@mhrn.org
 - MCA: Cedron Jones, corp@mhrn.org
 - MEIC: meic@meic.org
 - Policy Institute: Bob Decker, bdecker@mhrn.org
 - Peace Seekers: Rachel Carroll, research@mhrn.org
 - SAVE: Matt E, recycle@savemobile.org
 - Farmer's Union
 - Grow MT: Nancy Matheson, nancym@ncat.org
 - FCH: Angela, aazure@florencecrittenton.org
 - MCC: Ory Sparks, oryana@mtcorps.org
 - MSWNA: M.C. Beeby, tennis@mt.net
 - BBBS: Tiffany, tiffany@bbbs-helena.org
 - YWCA

continued on next page

- ExplorationWorks: Becca, beccal@explorationworks.org
 - MLSA: Kelly Hart, khart@mtlsa.org or Tera Veazey, tveazey@mtlsa.org
 - Indian Alliance: Shawn White Wolf, shawnwhitewolf@yahoo.com
 - UM-Helena: Alan Thompson, thompsona@umh.umt.edu
- Put up flyers around town
- Create a volunteer sign-up sheet. How many people are needed for each position?
 - Volunteer Coordinator
 - Childcare
 - Mailings
 - Flyering
 - Lit drops in neighborhoods
 - Press Contact (to speak with press during event)
 - Emcee
 - Information table staff
 - Food coordinator
 - Set-up
 - Clean up

1 Week Out

- Re-email to GCP and WEEL lists
- Create press-kit
- Train press contact
- Schedule preview interviews with press and media
- Have the volunteer coordinator send out reminder calls
- Make a to-do check list

Day Of

- Keep in touch with media, and Press Contact
- Keep in touch with Volunteer Coordinator
- Enjoy yourself!

You will want to follow all directions outlined by the IRS and the Montana Secretary of State. However, these are the basic steps:

1. Create your Articles of Incorporation. Articles of Incorporation outline the name, location, the purpose of your organization, the names of the initial trustees or individuals starting the corporation, as well as important information about earnings and assets of the corporation. There is a detailed example of Articles of Incorporation on the IRS website at:

<http://www.irs.gov/publications/p557/ch03.html#d0e3480>

2. Create your Bylaws. Bylaws are essentially the purposes stated in the Articles of Incorporation in greater detail. Bylaws outline how to operate the organization that you have created. They cover, among other things, qualifications of membership, board member titles and terms, voting and meeting procedures, and duties of officers. Examples of community garden bylaws can be found in Appendix G.

3. Complete the necessary IRS tax-exempt forms, usually form 1023. See:

<http://www.irs.gov/publications/p557/ch03.html#d0e2823>

4. Complete the necessary Montana state forms. See:

http://sos.state.mt.us/css/BSB/Filing_Forms.asp#CORPORATIONS

5. Complete annual forms for IRS and state.

For complete and current information be sure to contact the IRS and the MT Secretary of State:

Internal Revenue Service

1-800-829-4933

<http://www.irs.gov/publications/p557/ch03.html#d0e2823>

Montana Office of the Secretary of State

Room 260, Capitol Building

P.O. Box 202801

Helena, MT 59620-2801

Tel: 406-444-2034

Fax: 406-444-3976

E-mail: sos@state.mt.us

Web: http://sos.state.mt.us/css/BSB/Filing_Forms.asp#CORPORATIONS

RESOURCES IN MONTANA

Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO)

AERO is a Montana-based, grassroots membership organization dedicated to sustainable resources use and community vitality. AERO nurtures individual and community self-reliance through programs that link people, sustainable agriculture, and energy solutions.

432 N. Last Chance Gulch, Helena, MT 59601

Tel: (406) 443-7272

aero@acromt.org • www.acromt.org

Montana State University Extension

Visit the MSU Extension website for a directory of county extension agents, relevant publications and programs. The extension service has a wealth of information on local soil conditions, sources for soil testing, and other regional gardening advice.

Extension Personnel

110B Culbertson Hall, MSU, P.O. Box 172230,
Bozeman, MT 59717

Tel: (406) 994-1752

<http://extn.msu.montana.edu>

Montana Cooperative Development Center, Inc.

Provides project planning and facilitation, legal document assistance, and grant writing assistance.

300 River Dr N # 4, Great Falls, MT 59403

Tel: (406) 727-1517

www.mcdc.coop

Appropriate Technology Transfer to Rural Areas (ATTRA)

ATTRA National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service, funded by USDA, is managed by the Montana-based National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT). With offices in Butte and Missoula, as well as Fayetteville, AR and Davis, CA, NCAT provides information and technical assistance to farmers, ranchers, Extension Agents, educators, and other involved in sustainable agriculture in the U.S.

ATTRA/NCAT

P.O. Box 3838, Butte, MT 59702

Tel: (800) 346-9140

<http://attra.ncat.org>

Garden City Harvest

Based in Missoula, Garden City Harvest believes that we need to revive our regional tradition of producing their own food for their community, including the 20% of Missoulians who live in poverty. Since receiving a USDA Community Food Project grant in 1996, Garden City Harvest has been planting the seeds for a diverse and fruitful community effort.

103 Hickory Street, Missoula, MT 59806

Tel: (406) 523-3663

gardencityharvest@gmail.com

www.gardencityharvest.org

Growing Community Project

The Growing Community Project is a diverse group of individuals and organizations that are working together to develop community gardens within walking distance of every neighborhood in Helena, Montana. The GCP aims to build community gardens, based on community support, which bring together diverse neighborhoods in order to create community while addressing food security issues. GCP believes that everyone should have access to healthy, affordable food.

32 S. Ewing, Helena, MT 59601

<http://helenagcp.wikidot.com/>

Sweet Grass Food

Creating a self-sustaining food system in Big Timber and Sweet Grass County, whereby basic, essential, and nutritious food products are grown, raised, processed, bought, sold, traded, and consumed locally.

P.O. Box 71, Big Timber, MT 59011

info@sweetgrassfood.org

APPENDIX K: RESOURCES

GENERAL RESOURCES

America Community Gardening Association

www.communitygardening.org

The ACGA is an organization of professionals, volunteers, and supporters of community greening in urban and rural communities. ACG has a thorough guide to starting a community garden, and provides many resources, such as advocacy letters, e-lists and tips for gardeners who join as members of this national network.

Community Garden Startup Guide, University of California

http://celosangeles.ucdavis.edu/garden/articles/start-up_guide.html

GARDEN PLANNING AND DESIGN RESOURCES

Montana State University Extension is offering two revised and one new publication to help Montanans finish garden preparation for winter and plan for spring.

Harvesting and Saving Garden Seeds is a newly revised MontGuide that explains how to harvest and save garden seeds. This free and downloadable publication defines terms and explains which cultivars do best when reseeded. The MontGuide provides basic instructions on how to save and preserve viable seed for different types of plants, and contains a table of average storage times. The guide can be ordered by phone at (406) 994-3273, or downloaded from:

www.msuextension.org/publications/YardandGarden/MT199905AG.pdf

Using Manure as Fertilizer is a free and downloadable brochure that offers tips for people using manure from animal feeding operations. It includes information about the basics of using manure as fertilizer; nutrient content, application information, and the impacts of manure use. To order the brochure, call (406) 994-3273, or find it online here:

www.msuextension.org/publications/agandnaturalresources/eb0184.pdf

The newly revised *Montana Planter's Handbook: Tree and Shrub Growers Guide* is designed to help Montanans identify and care for woody ornamentals. This guide, which is a companion to the Tree and Shrub Selection Guide, includes 48 pages, with hundreds of illustrations and detailed descriptions of Montana trees and shrubs. It also features information on how to identify woody ornamentals and tips on fertilizing and pruning. The book costs \$10 and can be ordered by calling (406) 994-3273, or online at www.msuextension.org/publications.asp

RESOURCES ON DESIGNING GARDENS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

"Accessible Gardening for People with Physical Disabilities: A Guide to Methods, Tools, and Plants," by Janeen R. Adil, 1995.

Covers a wide variety of design ideas and practical building plans for accessible gardens, such as raised beds and vertical gardening.

"Accessible Gardening: Tips & Techniques for Seniors & the Disabled," by Joann Woy, 1997.

Covers the specifics of thorough garden design with appropriate access to those in wheelchairs. Diagrams illustrate average measurements for standard wheelchair size and average reach measurements. The included overview of designing paths and garden layout for accessibility is also helpful.

PRINT RESOURCES

Urban Gardening Program: The Coordinator's Book, The Pennsylvania State University/Cooperative Extension Service; Wasatch Community Gardens, 1990.

www.wasatchgardens.org

A useful guide for sample documents and practice advice.

The Community Garden Book, Larry Sommers; Gardens for All, Inc., 1984.

180 Flynn Ave., Burlington, VT 05401 (802) 863-1308

This book includes chapters on finding sponsoring organizations and designing your garden site.

Creating Community Gardens, Dorothy Johnson and Rick Bonlender; Minnesota Green.

1755 Prior Avenue North Moderate, Falcon Heights, MN 55113 (800) 676-MSHS

A handbook that covers all aspects of planning and developing a community garden.

A Handbook of Community Gardening, Susan Naimark (ed); Charles Scribner's Sons, 1982.

This book includes the basic steps of organizing a garden and finding resources.

How Does Our Garden Grow? A Guide to Community Gardening Success, Laura Berman; FoodShare Metro Toronto, 1997.

This handbook covers such topics as group committee structures, leadership, effective meeting strategies, fundraising and community relations, vandalism and safety, and gardening for people with disabilities. It also includes an extensive list of seed companies, reference books, master gardener groups, and community food advisor groups.

Starting a Community Garden, Helen Harrison and Steven Brachman; University of Wisc., 1984.

A twelve-page publication issued by the Cooperative Extension Program of the University of Wisconsin.

Square Foot Gardening: A New Way to Garden in Less Space with Less Work, Mel Bartholomew.

How to Grow More Vegetables, Fruits, Nuts, Berries, Grains, and Other Crops on Less Land Than You Can Imagine, Ten Speed Press; Berkeley California, 1995.

Rodale's Illustrated Gardening and Landscape Technique, Barbara Ellis (ed); Rodale Press, Inc.

The Kitchen Garden: A Passionate Gardener's Comprehensive Guide to Growing Good Things to Eat, Sylvia Thompson; Bantam Books, New York, 1995.

Organic Gardener's Handbook of Natural Insect and Disease Control: A Complete Problem-Solving Guide to Keeping Your Garden and Yard Healthy without Chemicals, Barbara Ellis and Fern Marshall Bradley (eds).

GRANT RESOURCES

Community Development Block Grants

Federal Funds given to cities to meet local needs, with \$550-\$50,000 available. Contact your local Mayor's of-

APPENDIX K: RESOURCES

for information.

USDA: Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program

The CFPCGP has existed since 1996 as a program to fight food insecurity through developing community food projects that help promote the self-sufficiency of low-income communities.

Community Food Projects are designed to increase food security in communities by bringing the whole food system together to assess strengths, establish linkages, and create systems that improve the self-reliance of community members over their food needs.

www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/food/in_focus/hunger_if_competitive.html

Project Orange Thumb, Fiskars Garden Tool Company

Within the U.S. and Canada, 20 grant recipients are selected each year. Each receives up to \$1,500 in Fiskars garden tools and up to \$1,000 in gardening-related materials.

www.fiskars.com/content/garden_en_us/Garden/ProjectOrangeThumb

National Gardening Association's Youth Garden Grants, sponsored by Home Depot

Each year, the National Gardening Association accepts applications for the Youth Garden Grants program.

Five programs receive a \$1,000 award consisting of a \$500 gift card to Home Depot and a \$500 gift card to NGA's Gardening with Kids catalog and online store

70 programs receive a \$500 gift card to Home Depot

50 programs receive a \$350 gift card to Home Depot

All grantees receive educational materials and curricula from NGA, and NGA supporter benefits for one year

www.kidsgardening.com/YGG.asp

seed saving, seed saving education and permaculture.

www.seedsave.org

Seeds Trust

Seeds Trust is a 25 year old family operation dedicated to delicious home gardens, stunning native landscapes and saving seeds. Providing heirloom vegetable, wild flower, native grass and herb seeds for a sustainable future.

www.seedstrust.com

Seeds of Change

Seeds of Change offers over 1,200 certified organic seed varieties

www.seedsofchange.com

America the Beautiful, Operation Green Plant Program

A non-profit group which receives large seed donations from major seed companies, and supplies community and school garden projects nationwide with seeds at a minimal cost. Sets of 50 mixed packets of seeds, including vegetables, flowers, and herbs are available for the cost of postage and handling. Larger quantities can also be obtained. Download the application from their website:

www.america-the-beautiful.org/free_seeds/index.php

SEEDS

International Seed Saving Institute

The non-profit, educational organization dedicated to