

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

Garden: North Beach Community Garden

Submitted by: Marla Streator

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<p>Q1: How is your garden group organized? How many members?</p> <p>What is the leadership -- core group of volunteers with lots of energy or natural leadership/organizing skills? and/or professional gardener who runs the day to day operations? other?</p> <p>What if any committees are there?</p>	<p>The North Beach community garden is in transition from one person taking on almost all organizational responsibilities to one in which each gardener will be in charge of all aspects of growing one or more crops that group want to grow. In the past six years a volunteer coordinator, (me) did everything from garden layout and fund raising for infrastructure to soliciting new members, from communications regarding when and where things need to be done to sending out pre work day emails about the needs of plants, harvesting tips and whatever else needed attention in the garden. This proved to be an overwhelming task. Yet in retrospect I think it served a function of establishing a cohesive plan. The two years prior to my stepping into a volunteer coordinator role our garden did not plan. We had no deer fence or rabbit fence so had much of what we grew devoured by wildlife; we had people planting on top of beds that had already been planted; we grew way too much of some things and not enough of others; and we had no coordinated harvesting so food was wasted because no one was sure if it was okay for them to pick.</p> <p>That was then. Now our infrastructure is in place. So coordination needed has mainly to do with growing and harvesting crops. At this time there are only six of us committed to our community gardening effort but we may have new folks join us in the spring. We have had more than a dozen people participate when we had a looser drop in system but that means a whole lot more work for the person doing the coordinating. Having five people at the same time asking you what to do is very stressful. And if people who don't know what has already been done jump in and start working before they know what needs doing it could be problematic.</p> <p>We have no committees. Committees sound like meetings. None of us are big on meetings. Rather we email each other using the "reply all" function on our computers.</p>
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<p>Q2: Describe your Member - Host agreement. Are there Member - Host agreements you think are critical to success over time?</p>	<p>We have no written agreements but agree we want to use organic growing methods. We always grow corn for our longest standing community tradition year corn feed that has been taking place every year for 26 years and was started by the people who gardened the land on which the North Beach Community Garden now stands before it became a community garden.</p>
<p>Q3: How do you handle damage/injury/liability insurance for members and host?</p>	<p>We do not have insurance.</p>
<p>Q4: What are the conditions to becoming a member? belonging to the neighborhood? other?</p>	<p>Our garden is open to people who live in North Beach and next to the Jefferson County Fairgrounds.</p>
<p>Q5: Do you have guidelines or rules about when new members can join the group, i.e., limited windows of opportunity during the year? ..</p>	<p>We take in new gardeners in the fall after we are done harvesting and In the spring at planting time.</p>
<p>Q6: Do you have a philosophy, guidelines, rules, and/or by-laws? What are they?</p>	<p>We strive to use organic gardening methods and have thirteen 25' raised beds and permanent walkways. In this system we try not to step on the beds.</p>
<p>Q7: What is the one-time new member financial commitment? What are the continuing dues, and how often are they collected?</p>	<p>New members pay \$25 which goes toward infrastructure maintenance. This year each gardener will spend up to \$25 additional to the new member fee in costs for seed and inputs. This will not be collected. If you save seed for your crop or find free sources of things like straw or fertilizer then there may be no additional costs. This is because two households are donating water and the land owner also has donated use of his land.</p>
<p>Q8: How much, how often, and for what one-time expenses have you collected special dues?</p>	<p>Last year we had to put in a rabbit fence for which we spit the costs.</p>
<p>Q9: Do you pay a gardener to organize and oversee member work? Why?</p>	<p>We do not pay a person to organize the North Beach Community Garden but unless you have a willing volunteer coordinator I would highly suggest hiring someone who is knowledgeable about vegetable gardening. You are likely to have much greater return for you labor and if you want to learn gardening tips such a person would be able to impart their knowledge.</p>
<p>Q10: To what extent has your</p>	<p>Our membership expands and contracts. However</p>

<p>membership grown after the initial garden was established, eg. after clearing, rototilling, major soil amendments, fencing, irrigation were completed?</p>	<p>membership has contracted now that responsibilities are divided which may be a reason to hire a coordinator if you want more participation.</p>
<p>Q11: Do you have ‘categories’ of membership where quantity of produce and work are ‘graduated’ -- similar to some CSAs where one can purchase, or work for, small (couple) or large (family) shares?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>Q12: Do you offer the option of garden members having a p-patch (an individual plot)? If so, are there common garden resources that are shared with the p-patch gardeners?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>Q13: How are organizational functions such as bookkeeping and purchasing handled? Other non-gardening activities?</p>	<p>So far I have done it all.</p>
<p>Q14: What forms of community service does your membership perform -- food bank donations? community education? assisting new/startup community gardens? other?</p>	<p>We have made donations of excess kale and parsley when we are clearing beds for spring planting but mostly we try to grow what we will be able to use ourselves. For two years The North Beach Community has had a booth at Earth Day to show what we have accomplished and how our garden has evolved through the years. My goal was to find more people interested in participating in our garden but also to be able to share the knowledge we have gained through experience with other people wanting to start a community garden. On a couple of occasions I set up a display in the alcove at the Coop with much of the same information and photos that were on display at Earth Day.</p> <p>The North Beach Community Garden grows corn for the community corn feed, which is our neighborhood’s longest standing tradition. But part of how we serve the neighborhood is not tangible. We serve as a focal point for neighborhood identity. I’ve been in the garden when people passing by proudly point out the garden to their friends. And let us gardeners know that even though they are unable to participate they appreciate what we are doing.</p>

GARDEN DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION	
Q15: What is the typical? the ideal? garden size? How have you taken advantage of exceptionally small/large garden plots, less than ideal amount/duration of sun, and 'difficult' soil types?	I have no idea about what is typical or ideal. We have planted raspberries as a windbreak on the side of the garden that gets the most wind.
Q16: Describe your overall garden design/layout and what factors influenced it? Has it changed over time and why?	The original garden was rototilled for about 20 years before it became a community garden. The soil was pulverized and lacking structure. There was no deer or rabbit fence. Since none of the gardeners live next door to the North Beach Community Garden keeping an eye on it was difficult. We needed to protect it from wildlife and dogs so put up fences. We installed an automatic watering system and have permanent raised beds with permanent walkways. We do not rototill because it creates tiller pan and the aforementioned pulverized soil. We have 25' beds because soaker hoses come in 25' .and 50' lengths. With permanent walkways covered with wood chips we do not have to weed as much nor are the walkways fertilized or watered.
Q17: Does your garden include art? Describe.	No.
Q18: Describe what "organic" means in your garden. Does it apply to non-chemical insecticides, pesticides, herbicides? and non-chemical fertilizer? other?	For us organic means using compost, green manure crops and organic fertilizers like fish emulsion as fertilizer. For us it means using non chemical pesticides if any and using such things as floating row cover as an insect barrier and Sluggo to keep slugs at bay. We rotate to keep pathogens from increasing that might damage a crop when planted in the same place for too long. Building soil tilth is one of the other big components of our approach.
Q19: What if any invasive and vining crops do you prohibit (ex. Mint)?	We have never discussed prohibitions. Calendula and nasturtiums reseed readily but we like them. The only plant we have in the mint family is marjoram and we just reduce it's size every year
Q20: What produce have you chosen to grow -- perennial/annual vegetables? fruits? flowers? What season(s) have you chosen to grow -- spring-summer-fall, or winter garden also?	We grow things our gardeners like to eat in quantities we have time to harvest and maintain. Most of us have home gardens so we leave high maintenance out of the mix. We mostly grow vegetables but also have raspberries. We always grow garlic, onions, kale, corn, potatoes, Swiss Chard and peas. We have had trouble with aphids on broccoli and

<p>What types of food use have you chosen -- immediate consumption? food preservation? Do you grow for seed production?</p>	<p>Brussels sprouts so don't grow them any more. We have few winter crops. We don't grow for seed although we use our own potatoes and garlic as seed for the next year.</p>
<p>Q21: What materials and methods of irrigation/watering and why? What suggestions regarding rain barrels?</p>	<p>We use two metal water manifolds and soaker hoses on a timer. The timer is crucial to our gardening success because we are all busy in the summer and it is the only way to insure that plants get enough water. We have no rain barrels. I would imagine that water pressure would be inadequate to function on a timer and having a self watering garden is of the utmost importance to us.</p>
<p>Q22: Any advice or considerations in selecting a water meter (assuming there is a host-provided water source)?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>Q23: What infrastructure (fencing, hoop house, watering/irrigation, compost bins, tool shed, and other) did you put into place initially? How has it grown? What approximate costs?</p>	<p>We have a deer fence with a rabbit fence installed along the bottom, a tool chest that is also a seat, A communication center on the gate for the garden log and leaving messages, a garden sign, compost bins, raspberry trellis and wood chips on the walkway</p>
<p>Q24: What methods do you use for managing compost -- bins, heaps, sheet-composting, other? How many households contribute compost material? Does the garden accept neighborhood waste? What kinds of problems have you experienced and how were they solved?</p>	<p>One of our gardeners just built a three bin compost system out of pallets. We have one person in charge of the composting activity. We haven't been accepting neighborhood waste. It When the compost was in a heap we were getting rats. Rats also like burrowing under any straw bales. Our compost person is shooting for a hot compost pile which seems to keep out the rats.</p>
<p>Q25: What is a good lab for soil testing? What kinds of soil test do you recommend?</p>	<p>We have only done a little ph testing and watched for indicator plants that signal whether the soil is becoming too acidic.</p>
<p>Q26: What suggestions do you have for getting low-cost, free, donated, or loaned equipment and materials for garden startup activities?</p>	<p>One idea is to put up a notice on the chalkboard at Cenex. When I was looking for manure I got so many calls in a week I had to go down to Cenex and erase my notice. Cenex also allows you to sweep up loose hay for free. I understand Fiskars gives grants for garden tools but have no personal experience getting tools this way. Mattress boxes from Peninsula Floor Coverings. Wood chips from Asplundh or tree trimmers.</p>

Q27: What grant sources are available?	The Master Gardeners.
Q28: For what projects/materials has your garden received grants?	None.
Q29: What methods have worked to develop your garden incrementally? Do you have suggestions for starting with a small section and developing the garden as infrastructure and membership grows?	Fencing only those things that deer eat first leaving alliums and artichokes outside the deer fence. Using mattress boxes to cover the walkways until we could locate enough wood chips to do the job.
OPERATIONS	
Q30: How does membership communicate (other than gardening together) -- phone trees, email list, at-garden message board, regular meetings?	We use group email lists using the “reply all function” as well as a message center at the garden.
Q31: Do members meet regularly? For what purpose? How frequently? What location? What is your meeting format (committee reports? problem solving? social/food? other?)	We are too busy to have meetings although we have a couple planning meetings to figure out what we want to grow. We have met at my house in recent history.
Q32: How are decisions made -- by leader(s), by member consensus? both? other?	Up until now I have made most of the decisions other than what to plant and how much we want to, plant.
Q33: How are work parties organized -- around a special task (ex. fence building)? or regular, weekly sessions for ongoing gardening (planting, weeding, watering, etc.)?	The system that worked best from my point of view was when work parties are organized around tasks and different gardeners take turns checking up on things during the week. Plants have needs that are not on a schedule. Sometimes there is a lot to do sometime very little. Last year we had a set garden day. I dislike this system immensely because if the garden day does not coincide with warm weather when you are planting warm weather crops it can make or break the success of germination for plants like beans, corn or squash. Also at harvest time for onions and garlic you want them to be dry.
Q34: How is work shared and/or assigned?	This year we are choosing what we will be willing to manage and each person will figure out for himself or herself how

	<p>this will be done. In the past people would ask me what needed doing. Sometimes there was a choice and sometimes not.</p>
<p>Q35: How do you harvest so that produce is shared equitably and that produce use is maximized?</p>	<p>First of all we find out what people like to eat and how likely they are to harvest them. We plant quite a few keeper crops like potatoes, garlic and onions and harvest all together dividing the harvest among ourselves an making sure we give a share to the person whose is letting us garden on his land. All of the corn goes to the community corn feed. The harvest is in no way equitable because some of us work more than others. Some of us harvest more of one thing than another. The only time we do any degree of measurement is with keeper crops. We divide it in approximately equal amounts. Somehow self regulation has worked.</p>