

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: Rosewind Community Garden
Submitted by: Dan Post
Date: 12/15/2008

<p>Q1: How is your garden group organized? How many members? 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? What if any committees are there?</p>	<p>We have 12 households that garden together (called the “Rosewind Community Garden” or RCG below) and another 2 household have p-patches in the same area. The 12 households that garden together pay a garden manager to work with us for 4 hours a week and to do the overall planning.</p>
<p>Q2: Describe your Member - Host agreement. Are there Member - Host agreements you think are critical to success over time?</p>	<p>The land we garden on is owned in common by the members of Rosewind Cohousing. Major issues with the garden, such as allocating more space, are taken up at Rosewind business meetings.</p>
<p>Q3: How do you handle damage/injury/liability insurance for members and host?</p>	<p>Rosewind’s homeowner’s association insurance covers guests and visitors to the garden. Members would have to carry their own insurance, but are not required to.</p>
<p>Q4: What are the conditions to becoming a member? belonging to the neighborhood? other?</p>	<p>Currently all members live at Rosewind, but we have agreed that we would consider accepting neighbors who are not residents.</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>New members can join at any time.</p>

Q6: Do you have a philosophy, guidelines, rules, and/or by-laws? What are they?	Organic gardening practices are required in the association's CC&Rs.
Q7: What is the one-time new member financial commitment? What are the continuing dues, and how often are they collected?	One time new member fees are determined at the time they join. If it's over the winter, it is usually nothing. Continuing dues for the RCG have been \$30/month for couples and families, and \$15/month for singles.
Q8: How much, how often, and for what one-time expenses have you collected special dues?	None for members of the RCG. However, major capital expenses (like the fence and water systems) are paid for by the Rosewind Cohousing Association.
Q9: Do you pay a gardener to organize and oversee member work? Why?	Yes. We have many members who are physically unable or very limited in their ability to work. We realized 5 years ago that we did not have the energy and expertise to make a successful large garden without expert help.
Q10: To what extent has your membership grown after the initial garden was established, eg. after clearing, rototilling, major soil amendments, fencing, irrigation were completed?	The area has been gardened for about 12 years, with P-patches. 5 years ago, eight households pooled their resources and paid for a manager. We now supply food for 12 households and our twice a week community meals.
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?	Everybody must pay the dues (\$15/month for singles and \$30 for couples or families), but there is no work requirement. So the amount of work people put in varies widely.
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?	There are 2 p-patches within the fenced area. Water and fencing are shared.
Q13: How are organizational functions such as bookkeeping and purchasing handled? Other non-gardening activities?	One member acts as Treasurer. Another coordinates seed and supply ordering.

Q14: What forms of community service does your membership perform -- food bank donations? community education? assisting new/startup community gardens? other?	As we have surpluses of food, we bring the surplus to the Food Bank. Dan Post participates in the L2000 Food Action Group, the Yahoo discussion group and other activities.
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?	We have a large sunny area in which to garden and the ok from Rosewind to expand into more unfenced area as needed. However, the space is located in a low lying area and gets very early frosts. We have about 3000 sq ft of fenced annual beds, another 2000 sq ft of unfenced beds for potatoes, alliums, squash and brassicas, and a separate deer and bird protected space for berries.
Q16: Describe your overall garden design/layout and what factors influenced it? Has it changed over time and why?	The garden started small and has expanded significantly over the last five years, as members increased and as energies permitted. The layout is rather freeform, which is a disadvantage for row covers and irrigation lines.
Q17: Does your garden include art? Describe.	There is some decorative art, and more is encouraged.
Q18: Describe what “organic” means in your garden. Does it apply to non-chemical insecticides, pesticides, herbicides? and non-chemical fertilizer? other?	We apply no pesticides – organic or chemical. We find that row covers protect plants sufficiently. We use organic fertilizers that we mix ourselves from bags ordered from the Food Coop.
Q19: What if any invasive and vining crops do you prohibit (ex. Mint)?	We had a minor problem with mashua becoming invasive, so we pulled most of it (since nobody was eating it). We do not have mint in the garden.
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	Perennial asparagus, rhubarb, artichokes, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and about 20 various fruit trees. There are many flowers grown in the garden for accent and cut flowers. We garden year round. We plan to sow about 70 different seed varieties, representing about 35

<p>garden also? What types of food use have you chosen -- immediate consumption? food preservation? Do you grow for seed production?</p>	<p>annual crops. We've been planting larger quantities to extend the season and facilitate preservation (onions, squash, potatoes, tomatoes, basil, etc). We do a little seed saving (beans, lettuce) and plan to do more.</p>
<p>Q21: What materials and methods of irrigation/watering and why? What suggestions regarding rain barrels?</p>	<p>We have an agricultural well. We use T-tape to water annual beds, and 1/4" soaker dripline tubing for perennials, all connected to 1/2" feeder tubes, timers, filters and pressure regulators, from Dripworks http://www.dripworksusa.com/.</p>
<p>Q22: Any advice or considerations in selecting a water meter (assuming there is a host-provided water source)?</p>	<p>n/a</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>Our fencing has grown as our garden has grown. Our fenced area is about 3 times what it was 4 years ago. We use row covers ("remay") extensively, some with supporting polyvinyl tubes, but most without. We have a large tool shed / pump house. Our most recent fence cost about \$1200 to install.</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>We use freeform compost piles, about 4' x 4'. Residents are asked to put kitchen waste in a garbage can near the piles, and at garden work parties the waste is added to the heaps with other materials by our compost "specialists". We receive waste from about 8 households, plus our Common House. We do have ongoing rat problems, which we have not addressed.</p>
<p>Q25: What is a good lab for soil testing? What kinds of soil test do you recommend?</p>	<p>We had a soil test done in 2008 by U. Mass Amhest. http://www.umass.edu/plsoils/soiltest/brochlink1.htm</p>
<p>Q26: What suggestions do you have for getting low-cost, free, donated, or loaned equipment and materials for garden startup activities?</p>	

Q27: What grant sources are available?	Master Gardener.
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?	Try to fence in as large an area as you can, even though you might be developing a small amount at a time. Come up with a standard bed size, say 25' x 3', with 18" paths, and lay out you entire are that way. If you are on a slope, position the beds across the slope. Get something planted as fast as you can, like successive greens, since new people are attracted to something they can see.
OPERATIONS	
Q30: How does membership communicate (other than gardening together) -- phone trees, email list, at-garden message board, regular meetings?	Emails, discussions during work party, and rare meetings a couple of times a year.
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 meet to discuss the successes of the previous season and talk about the next. We'll usually have a potluck celebration. Other meetings are rare.
Q32: How are decisions made -- by leader(s), by member consensus? both? other?	We usually go with the recommendation of our manager, who listens to inputs from others. If we have differences of opinion, we let the manager decide.
Q33: How are work parties organized - around a special task (ex. fence building)? or regular, weekly sessions for ongoing gardening (planting, weeding, watering, etc.)?	Work parties are twice a week for 2 hours or so, year round weather permitting. We show up and prioritize the work on the spot.
Q34; How is work shared and/or assigned?	The manager makes the assignments according to priorities, abilities, and interests.

Q35: How do you harvest so that produce is shared equitably and that produce use is maximized?	For most things we grow enough so that first come first served usually works. For things that get harvested all at once, like garlic and winter squash, we divide them into equitable shares.