

Suggested Timeline for Dig In! Community Gardens

Adapted from Food Share Community Gardening 101 (www.foodshare.net)



WINTER: DECEMBER, JANUARY, AND FEBRUARY

- ORGANIZE! Get a group of gardeners together
- Develop partnerships within the community
- Establish a leadership team or Garden Committee
- Garden Planning and Design
- Review your Budget
- Fundraise and approach local businesses for donations
- Plan what you want to plant in the spring
- Begin ordering seeds if starting seeds indoors

MARCH

- Hold an orientation meeting with your gardeners and explain the garden rules
- During this meeting, also review the gardening skills and gardening needs of each member
- Have gardeners complete a Garden Agreement
- Begin assigning plots for the gardeners (if applicable)
- Finalize seed orders and start seeds indoors (if preferred)
- Visit your local plant nursery and purchase seedlings that you will plant in early April
- Arrange or attend your first education workshop through the Dig In! program
- If possible, organize a community garden build day (or garden work date)

APRIL

- Make a list of all the tools and equipment you will require
- Prepare your tool shed
- Display your garden sign
- Begin construction of new garden areas (raised beds, plots, fences, etc.)
- Add a fresh topsoil-compost mix to your raised beds
- Plant SPRING crops such as lettuce, spinach, kale, collards, etc.
- Arrange your compost bin (if applicable)
- Add woodchips to the pathways (if applicable)

MAY

- If not completed in April, prepare the garden beds after the soil has warmed up
- Begin harvesting the spring crops you planted in April
- Arrange a mid-May work day to make sure all the plots are assigned and prepared
- Begin planting SUMMER crops after the last day of frost (around May 15). Direct seeding for some crops (such as beans, carrots, lettuce, peas). Transplant other crops (such as tomatoes, broccoli, squash, onions, swiss chard, and eggplants).
- Have an official opening day party for the garden!

JUNE

- ALL gardens should be planted by the date the group has decided
- Any plots not planted by that date should be reassigned
- Harvest the spring crops you planted in April
- Ensure that the water system is adequate and available to gardeners
- Be on the lookout for pest and disease problems
- Plant succession crops

- Place support for beans and other vines and stake tomatoes
- Maintain the site (special attention to borders and pathways)
- Begin composting!
- Keep the weeds controlled in common areas and refresh pathways
- Fertilize your crops (using fish emulsion, compost tea, etc.)
- Gardeners may have to meet to discuss vacation schedule so that another gardener or coordinator will look over plants
- Arrange another educational workshop (composting, insect and disease control)

JULY AND AUGUST

- Harvest your summer crops
- Donate surplus produce to food pantries
- Celebrate the garden by having a potluck or community party!
- Continue maintenance chores (keep up with the weeds, reapply mulch, if needed)
- Hold a work day to remove weeds in common areas and refresh pathways, etc.
- Ensure that gardens are adequately watered during the hottest months and water during the cooler parts of the day (in the morning and the evening)
- Continue monitoring for insect and disease problems
- Hold a presentation on food preserving techniques
- Continue to fertilize (fish emulsion, compost tea, etc.)
- Continue planting cool season crops

SEPTEMBER

- Plant the last of the cool season crops
- Order bulbs for late September/early October planting
- Hold a Harvest Party for the gardeners, their families and other community members!

OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER

- Hold a workday with all gardeners to clean up plots and the common areas, after everyone has finished harvesting
- Remove and compost any remaining plant materials
- Plant cover crops (such as peas and oats mix)
- Plant bulbs and garlic
- Prepare the raised beds/plots for the winter (cover with cardboard, leaves or hay)
- Draft final report
- Hold an organizational meeting with gardeners to evaluate the garden, suggest changes and improvements and choose next year's priorities
- Clean, repair and store tools for the winter
- Arrange any end-of-year educational workshops
- Garden Committee should also meet to prepare for the next year's garden

CONGRATULATE YOURSELF ON ALL YOUR HARD WORK IN BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY GARDEN!!

City Green can help you coordinate educational workshops, provide technical expertise and a site visit, and lend tools for larger workdays.