

Atlanta Regional Commission

# *Senior Community Gardening Manual*



*Created by*  
The Atlanta Urban Gardening Program

Dear Readers:

The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension/The Atlanta Urban Gardening Program (AUGP) would like to thank the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund and the Atlanta Regional Commission for creating the Senior Community Garden Initiative and inviting us to partner with them to establish 11 community gardens across metro Atlanta. We are also deeply grateful to Kaiser Permanente for their support of the initiative.

The focus of these gardens was two-fold: to provide fresh vegetables within the community to help increase access to fresh produce among older adults and to provide a place for social interaction. Because of their excitement and the knowledge and skills they gained, many garden participants have started gardening at home and getting more exercise in the process.

As president of the American Community Gardening Association and coordinator of the Atlanta Urban Gardening Program, I believe that community gardening and inner-city agriculture can play a major role in addressing some of our health issues and disparities in this country.

The American Community Gardening Association has always been a strong advocate for community gardening as ways to strengthen communities. The association knows that through community gardening, participants learn much more than how to grow vegetables. They learn how to sustain themselves and their communities to have a happier, cleaner, healthier, productive future in all aspects of their lives. Community gardening is not just about teaching people how to grow something to eat, but about growing as people and expanding their minds; all the time wanting more for themselves and their communities.

It is our hope that information in this booklet will enable you to start a garden in your community, at your church, school or other areas in your community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bobby L. Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Bobby L. Wilson



## Introduction

Encouraging healthy lifestyles is a major goal of the **Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), Area Agency on Aging**, and few things are more important to good health than proper nutrition and exercise.

With generous support from Kaiser Permanente, ARC began the **Senior Community Garden Initiative** in 2010 which established 11 community gardens throughout the Atlanta area and provided nutrition education and cooking classes using fresh produce. The **Senior Community Garden Initiative** is designed to improve seniors' health by increasing their access to fresh fruits and vegetables and providing opportunities for older adults to remain active and engaged. In this endeavor, we worked with the Federation of Southern Cooperatives Land Assistance Fund, University of Georgia Cooperative Extension and Open Hand.

The 11 community gardens are located throughout the Atlanta area:

- 🍃 Center for Pan Asian Services Rainbow Heights, Snellville
- 🍃 Cherokee County Senior Services, Canton
- 🍃 Clarkston Community Center, Clarkston
- 🍃 Cobb Mableton, Mableton
- 🍃 DeKalb Atlanta Senior Center, Atlanta
- 🍃 Douglas Senior Services, Douglasville
- 🍃 Marian Road High-rise, Atlanta
- 🍃 North Cobb Senior Center, Acworth
- 🍃 Northside Shepherd Senior Center, Atlanta
- 🍃 Scottdale Senior Center, Scottdale
- 🍃 Vivian T. Minor Adult Day Care Center, Atlanta

The **Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), Area Agency on Aging** is pleased to provide this guide to implementing a community garden. It offers information for other individuals and organizations interested in learning more about how to start and sustain participation in a community garden.

Our hope is that the information in this manual will lead to the creation of more community gardens throughout the region. Additional copies of this manual can be downloaded at [www.atlantaregional.com/communitygardenmanual](http://www.atlantaregional.com/communitygardenmanual).





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## CHAPTER 1

# *How to Start a Community Garden*

This chapter is designed to give many different groups the basic information they need to get their gardening project off the ground. These lists are in no way meant to be complete. Each main idea will probably trigger more questions, so an assortment of ways to carry out that idea are presented; pick and choose those that seem to apply to your own situation.

### **Benefits of Community Gardening**

- 🍃 Improves the quality of life for people in the garden
- 🍃 Provides a catalyst for neighborhood and community development
- 🍃 Encourages self-reliance
- 🍃 Beautifies neighborhoods
- 🍃 Produces nutritious food
- 🍃 Reduces family food budgets
- 🍃 Conserves resources
- 🍃 Creates opportunity for recreation, exercise, therapy, and education
- 🍃 Reduces crime
- 🍃 Preserves green space
- 🍃 Creates income opportunities and economic development
- 🍃 Reduces city heat from streets and parking lots
- 🍃 Provides opportunities for intergenerational and cross-cultural connections

The American Community Gardening Association offers a wealth of information about how to get a community garden up and running. The information in this section of the manual comes from the ACGA website, [www.communitygarden.org](http://www.communitygarden.org). Follow the link to “Start a Community Garden.”

## Form a Planning Committee

- ☛ Determine if there really is a need and desire for a garden.
- ☛ What kind of garden—vegetable, flower, trees, a combination?
- ☛ Who will the garden serve—youth, seniors, special populations, people who just want an alternative to trash?
- ☛ If the project is meant to benefit a particular group or neighborhood, it is essential that the group be involved in all phases.
- ☛ Organize a meeting or social gathering of interested people.
- ☛ Choose a well-organized leadership team.
- ☛ Make a list of what needs to be done.
- ☛ Decide on a mailing address and central telephone number(s). Try to have at least 3 people who are very familiar with all pertinent information. Form a communication system either phone or electronic.
- ☛ Find a garden site.
- ☛ Obtain lease or agreement from owner.
- ☛ Determine a source of water.
- ☛ Form committees to accomplish tasks: Funding & Resource Development; Youth Activities; Construction; Communication.
- ☛ Approach a sponsor. A sponsor is an individual or organization that supports a community garden. Site sponsorship can be a tremendous asset. Contributions of land, tools, seeds, fencing, soil improvements or money are all vital to a successful community garden.
- ☛ If your community garden has a budget, keep administration in the hands of several people.
- ☛ Choose a name for the garden.

## Choose a Site

- ☛ Identify the owner of the land.
- ☛ Make sure the site gets at least 6 full hours of sunlight daily (for vegetables).
- ☛ Do a soil test in the fall for nutrients & heavy metals.
- ☛ Consider availability of water.
- ☛ Try and get a lease or agreement that allows the space to be used at least for 3 years.
- ☛ Consider past uses of the land. Is there any contamination?
- ☛ Will you need insurance?

## Prepare and Develop the Site

- 🍃 Clean the site.
- 🍃 Develop your design.
- 🍃 Gather your resources — try to gather free materials.
- 🍃 Organize volunteer work crews.
- 🍃 Plan your work day.
- 🍃 Decide on plot sizes, mark plots clearly with gardeners' names.
- 🍃 Include plans for a storage area for tools and other equipment, as well as a compost and event areas.
- 🍃 Have a rainproof bulletin board for announcing garden events and messages.
- 🍃 Arrange for land preparation—plowing, etc—or let gardeners do their own prep.
- 🍃 Will the garden be organic?
- 🍃 Lay out garden to place flower or shrub beds around the visible perimeter. This helps to promote good will with non-gardening neighbors, passersby, and municipal authorities.

## Organize the Garden

- 🍃 Are there conditions for membership (residence, dues, agreement with rules)?
- 🍃 How will plots be assigned (by family size, by residency, by need, by group i.e., youth, elderly, etc.)?
- 🍃 How large should plots be (or should there be several sizes based on family size or other factors)?
- 🍃 How should plots be laid out?
- 🍃 If the group charges dues, how will the money be used? What services, if any, will be provided to gardeners in return?
- 🍃 Will the group do certain things cooperatively (such as turning in soil in the spring, planting cover crops, or composting)?
- 🍃 When someone leaves a plot, how will the next gardener be chosen?
- 🍃 How will the group deal with possible vandalism?
- 🍃 Will there be a children's plot?
- 🍃 Will the gardeners meet regularly? If so, how often and for what purposes?
- 🍃 How will minimum maintenance (especially weeding) be handled both inside plots and in common areas (such as along fences, in flower beds, and in sitting areas)?
- 🍃 Will there be a set of written rules which gardeners are expected to uphold?

## Insurance

It is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain leases from landowners without obtaining liability insurance. Garden insurance is a new thing for many insurance carriers and their underwriters are reluctant to cover community gardens. It helps if you know what you want before you start talking to agents. Two tips: you should probably be working with an agent from a firm that deals with many different carriers (so you can get the best policy for your needs) and you will probably have better success with one of the 10 largest insurance carriers, rather than smaller ones.

## Setting Up a New Gardening Organization

Many garden groups are organized very informally and operate successfully. Leaders “rise to the occasion” to propose ideas and carry out tasks. However, as the work load expands, many groups choose a more formal structure for their organization.

A structured program is a means to an end. It is a conscious, planned effort to create a system so that each person can participate fully, and the group can perform effectively. It’s vital that the leadership be responsive to the members. Structure will help an organization to last; it will promote trust; it will help your group and create new opportunities for leaders to develop.

If your group is new, have several planning meetings to discuss your program and organization. Try out suggestions raised at these meetings, and after a few months of operation, you’ll be in a better position to develop bylaws or organizational guidelines. A community garden project should be kept simple as possible, whether large or small.

Bylaws are rules that govern the internal affairs of an organization. They are required when you form a nonprofit corporation but are useful even if your group is a club or a group of neighbors. Many battles are won simply because one side has more pieces of paper to wave than the other. It’s helpful to look over bylaws from other similar organizations if you are incorporating. Guidelines and Rules (see TROUBLESHOOTING for examples) are less formal than bylaws, and are often sufficient for a garden group that has no intention of incorporating.

### *Organizational Considerations:*

- 🍃 What is your purpose? What are your short- and long-term objectives?
- 🍃 How are decisions to be made? Who chooses leaders and how?
- 🍃 How will work be shared? Who does what?
- 🍃 How will you raise money? Membership dues, fundraising, grants, sponsors?
- 🍃 Are you open to change? Flexibility is important when goals and members change. Do you want to be incorporated or act as a club?

### *What goes into formal bylaws:*

- 🍃 Full official name of organization and legal address.
- 🍃 The purpose, goals and philosophy of the organization.
- 🍃 Membership categories and eligibility requirements.
- 🍃 When and how often regular or special meetings of the membership are to be held, as well as regular and annual meetings of the board of directors.
- 🍃 What officers are necessary for the group, how they are chosen, length of term, their duties and how vacancies are filled.
- 🍃 Identification of special committees, their purpose and how they operate.
- 🍃 Process for rescinding or amending bylaws can be rescinded or amended, maybe by a simple majority.
- 🍃 Any official policies or practices; e.g. garden group will avoid the use of hazardous substances; group will agree to keep all adjacent sidewalks in good repair and free of ice and snow in season; group will make all repairs necessary to keep equipment, fences and furniture in good order and repair.

- 🍃 A Hold Harmless clause: Sample — “We the undersigned members of the (name) garden group hereby agree to hold harmless (name 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.”

For more information on whether to incorporate as a nonprofit corporation (a state function) or to apply for tax-deductible charitable (501(c)3) status (a federal IRS function), go to the following websites:

- 🍃 [www.fdncenter.org/learn/faqs/starting\\_nonprofit.html](http://www.fdncenter.org/learn/faqs/starting_nonprofit.html)
- 🍃 [www.nolo.com/index.cfm](http://www.nolo.com/index.cfm) (in the Business & Human Resources section, select nonprofit organizations)
- 🍃 [www.tgci.com/magazine/96summer/tobe1.asp](http://www.tgci.com/magazine/96summer/tobe1.asp)

## *How to Manage Your Community Garden*

In order to offer a high-quality community garden program, good management techniques are essential. Below are the main ideas to consider in management, along with many different ways to carry them out.

Having written rules is very important with older groups as well as new gardens, since they spell out exactly what is expected of a gardener. They also make it much easier to eliminate inactive gardeners with abandoned plots should the need arise.

## **Sample Guidelines and Rules**

Some may be more relevant to vegetable gardens than to community flower gardens or parks. Pick and choose what best fits your situation.

- 🍃 I will pay a fee of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to help cover garden expenses.
- 🍃 I will have something planted in the garden by (date) and keep it planted all summer long.
- 🍃 If I must abandon my plot for any reason, I will notify the garden leaders.
- 🍃 I will keep weeds down and maintain the areas immediately surrounding my plot, if any.
- 🍃 If my plot becomes unkempt, I understand I will be given 1 week’s notice to clean it up. At that time, it will be reassigned or tilled in.
- 🍃 I will keep trash and litter cleaned from the plot, as well as from adjacent pathways and fences.
- 🍃 I will participate in the fall cleanup of the garden.
- 🍃 I will plant tall crops only where they will not shade neighboring plots.
- 🍃 I will pick only my own crops unless given permission by another plot user.
- 🍃 I will not use fertilizers, insecticides or weed repellents that will in any way affect other plots.
- 🍃 I agree to volunteer hours toward community gardening efforts (include a list of volunteer tasks which your garden needs).
- 🍃 I will not bring pets to the garden.
- 🍃 I understand the neither the garden group nor owners of the land are responsible for my actions. I therefore agree to hold harmless the garden group 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.





## CHAPTER 2

# *Sustaining a Community Garden*

For a community garden to succeed, a certain amount of organization among its members is needed. In the Atlanta area, most community gardens form a garden club which meets at least once a month. Garden club officers are selected by club members. The purpose of the garden club is to bring together all the people who are gardening in the community to form a cohesive group that will work together on common projects and problems in the garden.

One of the first tasks of a new garden club is to develop rules for the garden. A clearly defined set of rule will help prevent future conflict. The rules should be agreed upon by all the members of the club before they take effect. See Chapter 1: Sample Guidelines and Rules, page 5. Once the rules are agreed upon, each gardener should be given a copy of them when he or she signs up to get a garden plot. If a conflict arises the rules can be cited as a way of resolving the conflict.

Another useful tool to help keep the community garden running smoothly is to draw up a list of tasks that need to be performed on a regular basis. Depending on the nature of the garden, these tasks might include picking up litter, turning the compost pile, weeding and mulching any perennial beds or other common areas, oiling and maintaining garden equipment, and mowing the lawn or maintaining the areas around each individual garden plot. At the beginning of each garden year, a timetable might be drawn up to indicate when these tasks should be performed. This timetable can be used to help plan work days or to assign tasks to individuals who may have to miss a work day. An example of such a timetable is included in the section on forms in this manual.

It is a good idea to draw up a list of garden club members, their addresses and phone numbers to give to each gardener. That is a good way for gardeners to get to know each other and to feel part of the group.

## Responsibilities of Gardening Officers

Good leaders are key to the success and long-term stability of a community garden. Lack of strong leaders results in confusion and conflict. You can help solve problems by learning to be a good leader and officer in your community garden group. Knowing what your responsibilities are is the basis for good leadership.

Most community gardeners elect officers in the spring at the start of a new gardening season. Usually, a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and garden manager are the only officers you will need to elect. Anyone with a willing attitude and desire to serve makes a good officer candidate.

Here are the responsibilities of each garden club officer:

### *President*

Sets up and leads all meetings of the community garden group, especially the regular monthly meeting. The president is a good listener and does not try to take over the meeting. He or she knows how to run a meeting efficiently and how to deal with conflict appropriately. The president helps make decisions when it is not possible for the whole group to make them.

### *Vice President*

Takes the president's place when he or she is unable to attend a meeting. The vice president is responsible for reminding everyone when and where the next meeting is to be held. He or she makes phone calls, mails postcards or distributes flyers to all gardeners as meeting reminders. The vice president also backs up the president with information and advice to help him or her make decisions.

### *Secretary*

Occupies one of the most important positions because he or she keeps records of all the group's business, writes and reads minutes at each meeting and handles all correspondence for the club (thank you letters, donation requests, etc.)

### *Treasurer*

(You may not need this position if you do not charge dues. You can also combine it with the secretary position). The treasurer handles the community garden group's money. The treasurer should be someone people trust and who is responsible with money he or she collects and keeps records of dues at each meeting, reports on how dues were spent, keeps track of what the current balance is, and handles donations the group might receive.

### *Garden Manager*

Oversees the community garden itself, making sure gardeners have what they need and are keeping up with their garden as they agreed to do. The garden manager should be someone who has a fair amount of gardening experience. He or she does not take care of individual gardens. (You could also elect an assistant garden manager).

## Can You Lead?

Garden clubs do best when they are run by effective leaders. People often hesitate to accept leadership positions because they say they don't know how to lead. Many people, however, have leadership qualities without knowing it. When you see someone using a tool in your community garden and stop to demonstrate a better way to use

it, you are being a leader. If you have an idea of how planting and weeding can be done a little better and you share your idea with others, you are also being a leader without even knowing it.

What is good leadership? A good leader is enthusiastic, fair, honest and friendly. He or she is willing to work, cares about others, keeps the group on track and is a good listener. He or she can recognize tension in a group and tries to eliminate it if possible. He or she is able to channel a group's desires into workable goals and keep the group motivated to achieve those goals, even in hard times. Setting the example of hard work is especially important in a garden leader. A good leader accepts failure when it happens and is able to turn the failed experience into a positive one to keep the group going.

Not everyone is a born leader, but most leaders become effective through practice. Don't shy away from leadership. Offer to hold a garden club office. You will learn a lot and may soon find yourself in other positions of leadership. We can all benefit from your leadership skills.

## How to Run Better Garden Club Meetings

One of the most important places for gardeners to communicate, talk about successes, bring up concerns, iron out problems and have some plain old-fashioned fellowship is at the garden club meeting. Good meetings don't just happen. You will have to carefully plan them out. A well-run meeting will not only help you feel positive about what you're doing, but it will leave the other members feeling that their time was well-spent.

It's important to establish a monthly date for your club. For example, your group might plan to meet every first Monday of the month at 6 pm at a designated place. Be sure the meeting place is open and accessible to everyone (including those with disabilities). Before the meeting, make some preparations:

1. Decide the purpose of the meeting.
2. Prepare a simple agenda so that everything you need to get done during the meeting will get done.

Your agenda might be something like this:

Call to order . . . . .	President
Roll call/reading of minutes . . . . .	Secretary
Treasurer's report/dues collection . . . . .	Treasurer
Garden Report. . . . .	Garden Manager

- Is the garden being maintained by everyone?
- Are there any insect, disease or fertility problems?
- What should be planted/harvested next?
- Should we set up a clean-up workday?
- Other concerns?

Old business  
New business  
Meeting adjourned

3. Make sure you've planned for enough time to cover each topic on the agenda.
4. Remind participants about the meeting (usually the vice president's job). Call folks on the phone, pass out flyers or hang notices on their door handles.

5. Think about the participants and imagine what they'll need, what their interests are, how you can get their input and still keep the meeting on track.
6. Make sure the meeting place has everything you need. Check the room temperature and seating arrangement to make sure they're okay. If possible, provide refreshments so people will enjoy the meeting and have a chance to talk informally with each other.

The leader of a meeting should always try to keep it alive and moving along at a steady pace. Make people feel comfortable. Keep the meeting informal. Show people you listen and value their input. At the end of the meeting, thank everyone for attending.

It helps to write the meeting agenda on poster board, a large sheet of paper or a chalkboard. Or you can have it written up ahead of time and make copies for everyone. Help the group members stick to the agenda by always 'steering' back to the agenda item being discussed.

Summarize what's been discussed every so often. Make sure everyone understand before moving on to the next topic. Make it clear what the next steps will be and who will do what.

Here are some other helpful tips for you as you plan garden club meetings:

- 🍃 Start and finish on time.
- 🍃 Know what you want to say.
- 🍃 Have any materials you'll need ready.
- 🍃 Speak clearly, simply and to the point.
- 🍃 Be confident and enthusiastic.
- 🍃 Take a break if the meeting runs too long.
- 🍃 Always close on a positive note.

Don't do these:

- 🍃 Dominate a meeting.
- 🍃 Let people get way off subject.
- 🍃 Get upset when people disagree with you.
- 🍃 Allow arguments.
- 🍃 Make fun of anyone.

## Managing Conflict

Conflict is a common occurrence in our lives. We encounter it at home, at work, in church and in informal gatherings of friends and acquaintances. Learning to deal with it makes life smoother and more enjoyable.

What causes conflict? Two basic causes account for most conflict: limited resources and differences in values or personalities

When there is not enough of something to satisfy everyone, i.e. limited resources, conflict often arises. In the community garden setting, this could mean not enough seeds, transplants or fertilizer for everyone, not enough gardening space or only one hose and water outlet for use at a time. Differences in values or personalities frequently occur in the garden or any group setting. Some people may view 'community garden' as being for everyone in the community to help themselves while others insist that the garden plots they planted and tend are strictly for them to harvest. In all the above instances, rules regarding the garden and its operation can help avoid conflict before it arises.

Should conflict arise, however, it is important for the garden leaders to know how to handle it. Several steps can be followed to help resolve the conflict:

1. Determine the type of conflict, why the conflict is happening (is it due to a lack of resources or to personality differences?)
2. Face the conflict situation. Don't ignore it. Acknowledge that it exists.
3. Listen to all parties and to their conflict. Gather all points of view. Don't prejudge the situation.
4. Finally, use one of the methods described below to solve the conflict.

## Methods to Manage Conflict

People deal with conflict in different ways, some more successful than others. Below are some of the more common ways to manage conflict.

**Avoidance** – Many people avoid conflict situations. They repress emotional reactions to a situation, they look the other way or they physically walk away from the situation in order not to have to face it. This method may keep the conflict from surfacing, but does not provide much satisfaction to one avoiding it. It also tends to leave doubts and fears in that person that another similar situation will arise.

**Diffusion** – Similar to the “avoiders,” many people try to diffuse a conflict situation rather than tackle it head on. They do this by resolving minor points or putting off decisions regarding the conflict. Basically, they delay the conflict, hoping it will go away. Oftentimes, diffusion works to reduce conflict, but it can also cause the person who diffuses the situation to feel dissatisfied or anxious about future similar conflicts.

**Confrontation** – A confrontation strategy is a head-on approach to conflict. This strategy usually involves win/lose situations and, frequently, anger in an effort to get one's way. One party wins; the other loses. This type of situation usually results in the loser feeling abused and vowing to continue the fight at a later time. The conflict is not really resolved.

**Arbitration** – Arbitration involves the use of a third party to help settle a conflict between two equally powerful sides. Arbitration, especially when done through the legal system, generally settles the conflict formally and thus reduces social costs, but it does not necessarily leave both sides happy. If one side continues to feel wronged, the conflict inevitably will crop up again at some point.

**Vote** – Voting is the civilized way of resolving a conflict. Rather than openly fighting to decide who the winner is, participants vote to decide. In a setting where all support the voting process, the results of an election are usually abided by. Indeed, some parties may be persuaded to join the other side during the course of the election process. For voting to be successful, however, all parties trust each other and the electoral process.

**Compromise** – Compromise involves the use of negotiation and bargaining to reach a solution to the conflict that is tolerable to all sides. That solution may not be the best one for each side, but it is one that all can agree to. Generally, in a compromise each side gives up something in order to achieve a higher goal that is satisfactory to all concerned.

**Win/Win Strategy** – Unlike the confrontation method which leads to win/lose situations, the win/win situation means both sides come away as winners. This strategy involves resolving a conflict with a solution that is satisfactory to all sides. Reaching a win/win situation may require lots of discussion and openness to new solutions from all parties. Through this discussion a solution may be reached that actually benefits the parties in ways that do not require them to give up anything, as in a compromise.

## Effective Groups

Every group makes decisions. The way a group makes decisions has a lot of influence on how the people feel about the group. It also determines how well the group members support the decision. A good decision for the group is one that is **understood, carried out,** and **supported** by group members.

Listed below are components that make up an **effective group**:

1. Know what it is that the group wants to accomplish. Make sure communication is clear on the why, where and when of the issue at hand. Identify the problem or concerns; search for ways to solve the problem and to evaluate the solution or action. Are the results those desired?
2. Be willing to work and care about others.
3. The decision-making process should include input from all members. Ask questions that will stimulate dialog.
4. Learn to understand the developmental stages of group members and the difference between **task and process** (what, how). Learn how the other person feels.
5. Be tactful and respectful of values, differences.
6. Develop action plans that will resolve the issues.
7. Maintain a discipline (an agenda is a road map, guide). Be flexible and open, but keep group members on track (don't get away from main purpose, goals).
8. Separate people from problems.
9. Be a good listener.
10. Be willing to eliminate group tension (watch for facial expressions, body language, what is being said and how it's being said).
11. Be cautious of time once issues have been resolved.

12. Be able to close meeting with a sense of accomplishment!
13. Effective groups must have an effective **leader**!!
14. Always thank members for their time, efforts, and respect for each other at close of meetings.
15. Make sure that if there is a follow-up meeting, let members know at end of meeting when, where, what time, and what the agenda will consist of.

**Teamwork** is another essential aspect of group action. A team is a body of people coming together to accomplish a desired task. The team concept refers to a developmental or participating process allowing individual work/efforts to form a group of specific tasks. In a team approach, each member must be interdependent; that is, every member needs the other members' experience, energy and expertise to achieve mutual goals. The team-centered roles help keep a group moving toward creativity and problem-solving.

Listed below are components needed for a team to achieve positive or desired results:

1. Teamwork is a sharing process. All members are needed to reach specific goals.
2. Listening is necessary to get input from all involved or the various perspectives.
3. Being supportive and encouraging others strengthens confidence in the group.
4. It is necessary for a team to have a competent leader who is able to guide and reinforce positive efforts of the group, being able to see ahead and direct the group when the time comes.
5. The group should be clear on what it wants to accomplish and what is necessary to achieve positive results.
6. Time should be allowed for feedback. Be flexible, but stay on course.

The following lists contain items that build or block successful group efforts:

## Elements that Build a Group

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Humor   | 14. Consensus-based decision-making.            |
| 2. Starting on time  | 15. Respect                                     |
| 3. Short meetings  | 16. Defined roles                               |
| 4. Fun   | 17. Commitment                                  |
| 5. Compromise  | 18. Flexible structuring                        |
| 6. Similar backgrounds   | 19. Support from others                         |
| 7. Common goals  | 20. Facilitation rather than leadership         |
| 8. Enthusiasm  | 21. Initiative                                  |
| 9. Cooperation   | 22. Sensitivity to people's differing needs     |
| 10. Assigning a leadership role on a temporary basis<br>(rotating facilitator)   | 23. Trust                                       |
| 11. Taking an extreme absurd position to help others<br>realize where they stand | 24. Being process-oriented, not task-oriented   |
| 12. Having clear goals understood by all   | 25. Listening                                   |
| 13. Alternative ideas  | 26. Follow through and accepting responsibility |

## Elements that Block a Group

1. Not listening
2. Unclear issues
3. Disorganization
4. No facilitator
5. No defined goals and objectives
6. Not buying into goals and objectives
7. Not being involved in decision-making
8. Impatience with the group decision-making process
9. Being afraid to speak up at a meeting because of what others might say
10. Using words and jargon that some members might not understand.
11. Lack of information
12. Not listening to what others have to say
13. Suppressing conflict
14. Rejecting others' ideas without hearing them out.
15. Animosity and dislikes in the group
16. Time pressures
17. Outside pressures
18. Ego
19. Pushy people
20. Hidden agendas
21. Lack of well-defined roles
22. False humor or too much humor
23. Inflexible group structure
24. Self-interest
25. Lack of planning
26. No prepared agenda
27. Age group differences

## Challenges and Solutions

Listed below are some problems that frequently occur in community gardens. Others might be added. Solutions to these problems may vary from garden to garden, but many solutions are also the same. Following the list of problems, then, are some suggested solutions and tips on resolving conflicts in the garden.

### *Problems:*

- ☛ Lack of interest
- ☛ Lack of time
- ☛ Lack of participants
- ☛ Lack of resources/funds
- ☛ No nearby water source
- ☛ Vandalism and theft
- ☛ Lack of good leaders
- ☛ No rules
- ☛ Lack of commitment
- ☛ Weeds
- ☛ Fire ants/other pests
- ☛ Personality conflicts/communication problems
- ☛ Unhealthy plants/poor soil
- ☛ Compost not properly managed
- ☛ No regular garden club meetings
- ☛ Heat and drought

## Suggested Solutions

All problems related to the growing of plants in the garden, including weeds, insect and other pests, and plant diseases, can be referred to your local county extension service or the Atlanta Urban Gardening Program at 404.762.4077. In Fulton County the Extension number is 404.730.7000 and in DeKalb County the number is 404.298.4080. Individual gardeners can call about a problem in their own garden, or a garden club officer could call about a problem gathering the entire garden.

As indicated earlier in this manual, it is important for each garden club to draw up some rules that are distributed to all members. If a conflict arises that is covered by a rule, such as someone ignoring his plot for months at a time, the garden club president can cite the rule about maintaining the garden on a regular basis and tell the person that his plot will be given to someone else unless he cleans it up. It should be acceptable to all that rules are established to help the organization, in this case the garden club, to function smoothly. Rules can always be altered if they prove to be unworkable.

If a problem arises that does not concern horticulture or is not covered by a garden rule, it may be necessary to practice some of the methods of conflict resolution mentioned earlier. Generally, it is advisable to get all parties involved in the conflict together and hear all sides of the problem. Many problems arise out of mistaken perceptions by one or both parties. If, for example, Joe complains that Jim is stealing out of Mary's garden plot, he might bring his complaint to the garden club president. Jim might then defend himself by saying that Mary told him he could do it. Mary can back him up or explain that she only meant for him to harvest the greens in the spring, not the tomatoes and okra in the summer. Thus, Jim is put on notice not to take anything else out of Mary's garden.

It is important for the garden club president to anticipate problem areas and try to avoid conflicts before they arise. Thus, designating plots must be done fairly. If two people want the same plot, perhaps drawing straws is the fairest way to decide who gets which plot. If there are seeds or transplants to give out, make sure **every** gardener knows when and where they will be distributed so that everyone has a chance to get some. If someone cannot be present, set aside some seeds or transplants for that person.

Garden club officers play an important role in ensuring the success of the garden. They all need to make sure that members know about and attend the meetings and that the meetings are worth their while. They also need to keep an eye on the garden and "come to the rescue" of those gardeners who are having some trouble maintaining their plots. If someone seems to be struggling, for example, they might suggest that another, more experienced gardener be assigned to share that plot for a year and help keep it going. Getting gardeners to commit to maintaining their plots throughout the year can be a problem, especially if many of the gardeners are new to gardening. It is, therefore, essential for the experienced gardeners to help those with less experience. Nothing makes a gardener more committed than producing a bountiful garden.





## CHAPTER 3

# *Growing a Garden*

### **A Checklist of Things to do in the Garden Each Month to Keep it Looking and Producing Its Best**

#### *January*

- ✓ Take soil samples, if you haven't already done so, to determine what nutrients need to be added to your soil.
- ✓ Apply lime, sulfur and fertilizer according to the soil test results. Use 5-10-10 (5 parts Nitrogen, 10 parts Phosphorus, 10 parts Potassium) or 6-12-12 fertilizer at a rate of about 50 pounds per 1000 sq. feet or whatever your soil test analysis indicates (about 2 pints per 4x16 foot raised bed).
- ✓ Add compost or manure to soil and till it under to improve the soil structure.
- ✓ Gather tools and equipment for the upcoming season.
- ✓ Start planning your garden for the year. Choose vegetables that you and your family like to eat.
- ✓ Order seeds.
- ✓ On a nice day, turn compost pile if it hasn't been turned in a few months.

#### *February*

- ✓ Draw up a garden plan for the spring and summer so you know where in the bed to plant the first seeds and transplants.
- ✓ Start planting cool season crops such as carrots, collards, lettuce, mustard, English peas, Irish potatoes, radish, spinach, Swiss chard and turnips.
- ✓ Start your garden transplants at the end of the month (4-6 weeks before they are to be set out) for warm season crops (tomatoes, peppers, eggplant)
- ✓ Start a journal of your garden; include your plan, planting dates, insect problems, etc.

## *March*

- ✓ Make second plantings of turnips, mustard, radish and spring onions.
- ✓ Thin plants that you seeded last month so they have room to grow.
- ✓ Prepare the beds that will be used for summer crops. Planting of summer crops can begin at the end of March or early April depending on the weather.

## *April*

- ✓ The last frost is usually around April 15, so don't plant anything that hates cold (tomatoes, okra).
- ✓ Plant transplants of warm season crops weather permitting. Be sure that transplants you are started from seed have a chance to harden off, or become accustomed to cool outside weather, before being planted out in the garden.

## *May*

- ✓ Make additional plantings of beans, corn and squash. Plant as much as you think you will eat and enough to preserve for eating next winter.
- ✓ Install trellises and stakes for pole beans, tomatoes, and vining crops to climb and thereby save space in the garden.
- ✓ Be on the lookout for insect and disease problems.
- ✓ Finish mulching around all plants.

## *June*

- ✓ Harvest crops as they are ready. Harvest onions and Irish potatoes when two-thirds of the tops have died down.
- ✓ Rip out any spring crops that are spent. Compost disease-free plants.
- ✓ Plant sweet potatoes.
- ✓ Keep garden mulched and weeded.
- ✓ Water as needed being sure to water deeply once or twice a week.
- ✓ Continue keeping your journal. Record what grew well, when you harvested, weather conditions, etc.

## *July*

- ✓ Make additional plantings of crops that will grow through to cool weather, such as tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, beans.
- ✓ If you have the space, plant pumpkins for Halloween.
- ✓ Keep harvesting crops that are ready so they'll keep producing.
- ✓ Side-dress heavy-feeding vegetables with fertilizer as needed.
- ✓ Continue to water as needed and weed.
- ✓ Start planning your fall garden.

## *August*

- ✓ Plant snap beans, cucumbers and squash seeds by August 15 for a fall harvest.
- ✓ Start seeds for cool season transplants, such as broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, collards, kale and onions in a half-shaded, cooler area.
- ✓ Prepare soil for fall planting of cool season crops.
- ✓ Continue harvesting, weeding and watering.

## *September*

- ✓ Plant fall garden seeds and transplants during mild weather. Transplants will do best if planted on a cloudy day or shaded for a few days until they are adjusted.
- ✓ Add more mulch as needed around plants.
- ✓ As summer crops die, pull up and add to compost pile. They will decompose faster if cut up into small pieces rather than put in whole. Turn compost as needed
- ✓ Start collecting leaves to add to compost pile.
- ✓ Make notes in your journal regarding what produced well, what you had problems with.

## *October*

- ✓ Continue pulling out spent summer crops and adding them to the compost pile.
- ✓ Remember that although the first frost date is not usually until mid-November, an early frost could occur. Be prepared to harvest all peppers and green tomatoes before frost.
- ✓ Sow a cover crop in beds that are not planted.

## *November*

- ✓ Harvest fall crops as they are ready.
- ✓ Fall is a good time to build up the soil for next year. Add lime, manure and organic material to the soil and turn it under. Cover crops should be planted in all empty beds to help improve soil structure and fertility.

## *December*

- ✓ Clean up the garden.
- ✓ Turn the compost pile if needed.
- ✓ Clean all tools and note which ones need to be replaced.
- ✓ Review your journal and make notes about what you would do differently next year. It's not too early to think about next year's garden.

## Crops for Georgia Gardens

Not all vegetables grow well under the same conditions. Some grow only when the weather is cool and are therefore called cool season crops. Others grow only when the weather is hot and are called warm season crops. In the Atlanta area, spring and fall are considered cool seasons. The planting of cool season crops in the spring can begin as early as February or March. Our last frost date is mid-April, so don't plant any warm season crops before then that may be hurt by cold weather. Crops like okra demand that the soil be warm before germinating, so wait until May to plant them. Cool season fall crops can be planted when night temperature start falling into the 60s, generally in September. Some of these crops must produce before the first frost which is usually in mid-November. Others, like kale or brussel sprouts, will survive a light snow. It's not usual in Atlanta to harvest collards and leaf lettuce all winter, if the weather is mild. Below is a list of warm and cool season crops.

### Warm season crops that you can plant in the spring and harvest in the fall:

Artichokes	Corn	Peanuts
Beans	Eggplant	Peppers
Broccoli	Field Peas	Pumpkins
Carrots	Gourds	Sunflowers
Cauliflower	Okra	Sweet Potatoes

### Cool season crops that you can plant and harvest during the school year:

Beets	Irish Potatoes	Radishes
Brussel Sprouts	Kale	Spinach
Collards	Kohlrabi	Turnips
Garden Peas	Onions	

**Artichokes** – Plant in April, harvest in late August early September. For best results, plant artichokes in the ground as soon as the weather warms up. Artichoke seeds look like cantaloupe seeds, and they sprout vigorously. The only trouble with growing artichokes is helping them survive the winter. Prior to the first frost, prune the leaves and put sand and saw dust around the base.

**Beans** – It is very important when planting beans not to plant them prematurely. It's best to plant them in late April or early May. Beans are a part of the legume family and can fix nitrogen for themselves. Organic fertilizers such as manure and compost are recommended with planting beans.

**Beets** – Beets are cool weather plants that can be planted in the early spring and fall. Beets can tolerate the frost and have no problem germinating during cold weather. The roots of beets should be harvested when they are the size of a ping pong ball. Be sure not to leave them in the ground too long or they will have a displeasing taste.

**Broccoli** – Broccoli can be grown in both fall and spring. When preparing to plant broccoli, you can either plant the seeds indoors and transplant them when they have six leaves or plant them in rows in a prepared garden bed. Broccoli can be planted in February and harvested in May or June.

**Brussel Sprouts** – Begin cultivating seedlings indoors in the presence of sunlight in large Styrofoam cups. It is very important that seedlings receive light evenly on all sides. Therefore, you must rotate the seedlings each day when they begin to grow. Before transplanting the Brussel sprouts to the garden, make sure you have adequate spacing. Individual holes should be filled organic fertilizers and watered.

**Carrots** – Carrots are planted during the warm season. Carrots are usually planted in a loose, sandy, loamy type soil or in a clay soil fertilized with organic material. For best results carrots should be planted in a raised bed no more than two and a half feet wide. Carrots need an abundance of potassium; a good source of this nutrient is wood ash.

**Cauliflower** – Cauliflower is another one of those crops that can be planted in the fall and in the spring. Timing is important because cauliflower likes a little cool land and a little warm weather. Therefore, you must plant by mid-March in the spring and early September in the fall.

**Collards** – Collard greens are very heat tolerant and require a lot of nutrients. For good growth, mix compost into the soil bed where you will be planting. Collard greens can be planted twice a year, once in the spring and once in the fall.

**Corn** – The best time to plant corn is in April or May. Corn requires a lot of space and fertilizer. It needs a large amount of nitrogen and micronutrients. Manure is a good organic fertilizer to use when planting. Corn should be altered with other crops like squash or beans so that it does not deplete your garden of essential nutrients.

**Eggplant** – Seeds should be started inside, just before the last frost in mid- to late March. Once seeds germinate they need plenty of sunlight. Eggplants should be transplanted outdoors in late April or early May. This crop is harvested in late summer.

**Garden Peas** – Peas are cool season crops that endure cold weather. Peas usually germinate when the temperature drops down to about forty degrees. There are three varieties of peas 1) snow peas, 2) English peas and 3) sugar snaps. Peas have the ability to create nitrogen for themselves from the air and require little or no fertilizer at all.

**Field Peas** – Field peas are warm season crops that should be planted in late May or early June. Field peas are very sensitive to cool weather and require warm nights for survival. Field peas are also drought resistant and able to absorb nitrogen from the air and store the nitrogen in its root system.

**Gourds** – Plant gourd seed in late April or early May. They should be planted alongside a fence to support the vines. Large amounts of fertilizers will increase the yield at harvest time. Use manures and compost to fertilize the soil. Mulch the plants with straw or newspaper to reduce weeds. Gourds have a long growing season and need to be in the ground by the middle of May to harvest by the end of September.

**Irish Potatoes** – Irish potatoes grow best during the cool, wet season. March is probably the best time to plant while it is still cool. However, potatoes can also be pre-planted in the fall if the weather is too wet in the spring. Seed potatoes should be cut into pieces and planted. Once potatoes begin to mature, they should fall to the ground. Potatoes swell in the area where the main stem turns to roots. This is the area that should be protected by covering with mulch.

**Kale** – Kale is a fall crop that can be harvested in the winter. Seeds should be cultivated in late August and planted in areas where other brassicas (cabbage, broccoli, and collards) were previously planted. Add an inch of compost to the planting bed to increase nutrient availability. During the middle of winter, kale will receive some damage from frost. However, do not be alarmed. Kale will eventually grow new leaves.

**Kohlrabi** – Kohlrabi is a member of the brassica family. These plants mature in a short period of time. Spring planting can be done in February to late March. These seeds can be planted into the ground or grown from seedlings. Kohlrabi does not require special attention because it can adjust to poor conditions. However, to ensure a good harvest you should spread a little compost in the planting area.

**Okra** – Okra is a warm season crop that requires Mother Nature to do all of the work. Okra thrives during the summer when it is hot and muggy. Crops should be planted in mid-May or early June. Small amounts of compost or manure should be worked into the soil. Plant okra in rows to ensure a good harvest.

**Onions** – Onions grow best in the northern states due to cooler temperatures. However, onions can grow in the southern states but they require careful preparation. There are seven different categories of onions that one can grow: 1) bulb onions grown from seeds or seedlings, 2) bulb onions grown from sets, 3) green onions or scallions grown from seeds, 4) leeks, 5) shallots, 6) Egyptian multiplying onions and 7) bunching multiplying onions.

**Peanuts** – Peanuts require a long hot growing season. Peanuts grow best on warm soils after the harvest of a spring crop. They have capabilities to absorb nutrients from the soil quite well. Therefore, if they are planted in a spot where a crop was well fertilized, the peanuts will not require any fertilization. Peanuts love warm soil for seed germination. The area where they are planted requires constant weeding. This crop is pretty drought resistant. However there are two crucial moments when watering is necessary: 1) just before flowering and 2) just after the pegs enter the ground. Peanuts grow best on sandy soil and can tolerate clay soils as well. They need to be planted in the month of May.

**Peppers** – Peppers are perennial plants that are easy to grow, providing that the grower has a great deal of patience. Peppers need warm, clay soils to retain moisture. Dig a hole for each plant. Make sure the hole is big enough to allow the roots adequate space. Fill each hole with compost or manure. Once peppers begin to grow, mulch with hay or straw.

**Pumpkins** – Pumpkins should be planted in a warm soil during the month of May. Pumpkins require a little more than one hundred days until they are ready to be harvested. Pumpkin seeds planted in May will be ready to harvest in late August. You can also wait until June before planting to allow the seeds to mature.

**Radishes** – In the South, radishes can be planted from mid-February to April. Plant them along with carrots and spinach. This crop matures fast and produces an abundance of seeds. They should be thinned at least two inches apart.

**Spinach** – Spinach can be planted three times a year, early-fall, mid-fall and the first of spring. Spinach is a water crop that likes cold weather. This crop should be planted in a well drained bed mixed with organic fertilizers. Sow seeds and plant them about ½ inch deep. Watering is required only if rain is scarce.

**Sunflowers** – Plant sunflower seeds in April or May. Stick them an inch deep into a soil mixed with compost or manure. This will enable the plants to grow taller and produce more seeds. Once the plants have sprouted, thin them so that each plant is at least 12 inches apart.

**Sweet Potatoes** – Sweet potatoes grow best in hot humid weather. Unlike most plants, they prefer acidic soils. They do not require large amounts of nitrogen. However, they do require large amounts of phosphorus. A good source of phosphorus comes from rock phosphate and wood ash. These fertilizers should be worked into the soil. Once the plants have become established, mulch them with hay or grass clippings to help retain moisture.

**Turnips** – Plant turnips in late August or early September. These plants love cool weather. Lower temperatures will even improve the taste and texture of the leaves and roots. Therefore, you may want to wait until the temperatures drop into the 40s before you begin to harvest them. Although turnips like cool weather, they cannot withstand a cold freeze. Thus, they should be picked before this occurs.

## Unwanted Pests in the Garden

**Aphids** – If there is a colony of ants present, you can almost be sure that aphids are too. Ants colonize aphids. The two insects depend on each other for survival. Aphids love to suck the juices from plants. They carry bacterial and viral diseases that could infect the plant. Using a spray made mostly of water and a few drops of detergent can control aphids.

**Blister Beetles** – This insect feeds on potatoes, tomatoes, eggplants, beans and other crops. Blister beetles are black with a yellow stripe. They usually feed in groups and leave a black deposit behind. Do not squash them on the plant because their body fluid can cause blisters on the plant. Freshly cut cedar branches can be used as a remedy for repelling the blister beetle.

**Cabbage Worms** – These worms feed on the brassica (cabbage, broccoli, collards, etc.) and other leafy vegetables. *Bacillus thuringiensis* is a common insecticide used to kill cabbageworms. This biological control is effective and harmless to humans. Spray weekly to kill the eggs that the cabbage worm has laid.

**Colorado Potato Beetles** – These insects are yellow with black stripes down their back. The adults feed on leaves. However, most of the damage comes from the larvae stage. The adults lay eggs on the underside of the leaves. After the eggs hatch, the larvae feed heavily on the leaves of the potatoes. *Bacillus thuringiensis* is fairly effective in controlling the insect during the larvae stage. However, the best way to control beetles is to hand pick them off the leaves every couple of days. Planting potatoes with beans reduces the presence of the beetle as well.

**Cucumber Beetles** – Cucumber beetles are the size of ladybugs. However, unlike ladybugs, these insects can severely damage cucurbits (melons and cucumbers). They are light green with yellow stripes or spots. Painting a yellow board and covering it with a sticky substance like honey or glue can trap the cucumber beetles. The yellow board will attract them to the sticky substance. Wet the leaves and the insects will fly away.

**Cutworms** – These worms live in the ground and eat green plant material. They include larva from over two hundred moths. At night they love to come out and feed on tender seedlings. Watering seedlings during the day will bring them to the surface and make them easy prey for birds. Furthermore, tilling the soil in the fall and leaving it exposed will help the birds find the worms easily.

**Flea Beetles** – Flea beetles thrive in hot humid weather. They feed on numerous garden vegetables and they love to destroy eggplants. They leave tiny holes in the leaves. Control these beetles by spraying the leaves of the plant with water regularly during drought periods and remove all dead foliage.

**Harlequin Bugs** – These bugs have a colorful black, red or yellow pattern on their backs. They eat mostly collards, turnips and potatoes. These bugs hide or hibernate in dead plant material, so maintain the garden area by removing all dead plant material.

**Japanese Beetles** – These beetles normally feed on peaches, blackberries and other fruits. However, they will feed on corn silks and leaves of various vegetables. These beetles are active during mid-June to the middle of August. Japanese beetles cannot tolerate hot dry summers and will not usually be a problem. Furthermore, dusting the leaves with rotenone during the morning, every two days will also prevent large outbreaks of Japanese beetles. These beetles are active during the mid-day and applying the dust in the morning will give the dust time to react.

**Mexican Beetles** – These beetles look like ladybugs, but they have pinkish brown color and they are slightly larger. They are not active each year, but this does not mean they are not present. Female Mexican beetles can lay up to 500 eggs on the underside of leafy plants. When the female lays her eggs, it is the larva that actually does the damage to the plants. Therefore, if you spot a Mexican beetle, move it from your garden.

**Nematodes** – These soil-inhibiting organisms that feed on the root of plants limit the plants ability to gather nutrients. If nematodes are present on your site, it is probably best to move your garden to another area.

**Spider Mites** – These insects only cause damage during very dry summers. Spider mites are microscopic and are hard to see with the naked eye. These insects cannot tolerate wetness, and watering with a forceful spray will help to alleviate the problem. These insects attack mostly eggplants, tomatoes, squash and peppers.

**Squash Borers** – Squash borers are larval worms that cause plants to wilt. These borers leave a greenish yellow substance as evidence on the stem of the plant. The most effective way of controlling squash borers is to inject bacillus thuringiensis into the holes that the squash borers left.

**Squash Bugs** – These bugs are about half an inch in length and are brown. Squash bugs attach to melons, cucumbers and sometimes tomatoes. Spraying the foliage of the plants with water will force the bugs to flee to the top of the plant where they can easily be hand picked. Also, rotenone is an effective control spray for squash bugs in the larvae stage.

## Beneficial Creatures

**Bats** – Bats do not come out during the day. However, at night they hunt for insects and other prey. Bats are helpful to gardens because they like to eat many of the unwanted pests present. If you have a lot of insects in your garden, you may want to build a house with a water supply to attract bats.

**Bees** – Although many people view bees as harmful because they may sting, bees are helpful in the garden. Bees assist in transferring pollen to other plants, which help fruit and vegetables to grow. If bees are present in your garden, this is an excellent sign that your garden will produce a good harvest.

**Butterflies** – Butterflies are beautiful creatures that help transfer pollen to fruits and vegetables, like bees. Children love to catch butterflies and keep them in jars.

**Earthworms** – Some people may view earthworms as yucky, but they are very beneficial to gardens. Earthworms help to aerate the soil by loosing soil particles. This makes it easy for the roots of vegetables to move through the soil and collect water and nutrients. Earthworms excrete waste called worm castings. This excretion is very fertile and is considered an organic fertilizer.

**Ladybugs** – Ladybugs are usually pinkish red with black spots. These bugs are helpful to a garden because they eat a large amount of aphids. This is one insect that is your friend, and you should be happy that ladybugs are present.

**Praying Mantis** – This insect acts like a policeman in the garden. This fellow patrols the garden and looks for insects that are harming vegetables and eats them.

**Snakes** – The sight of a snake frightens many people. However, most snakes found in the garden are harmless. Nevertheless, keep a safe distance from them. Snakes like to prey on some of the insects that are destroying the vegetables in the garden.

**Spiders** – Spiders are very helpful to gardens because they trap and eat many of the harmful insects. Spiders rest in the comfort of their woven web. Their web is very hard to see and many insects walk right into them. Therefore, if possible, try not to disturb a spider’s resting area.

**Toads** – Toads have long, snappy tongues and love to eat various insects.

## **Composting and Compost**

Broadly described, composting describes a method and an end-product in which organic debris is transformed into a valuable soil container. What compost does for soil is invaluable. Acted upon by microbes, fallen leaves and stalks pass on their nutrients to future plants. Composting methods may vary, but all use oxygen-consuming bacteria, fungi, actinomycetous, nematodes, millipedes and a multitude of other organisms to break down organic materials into what is often referred to as “brown gold.” It maintains general soil health, boosts growing power, makes optimal use of water and air, limits run off and erosion and limits chemical inputs.

A composting structure for a children’s garden can be as simple as a round wire bin or a four-sided bin made with whatever materials are available. If a four-sided bin is used, one side should be removable in order to facilitate the mixing. The bin must have sufficient holes to admit air into the pile. Almost any organic matter can be composted. Both carbon and nitrogen materials are layered in the pile. Turning the pile is important in order to allow for necessary air and moisture and to expose all parts of the heap to bacterial action. This information includes examples of materials to be used, ratio of materials and the size of the pile and identifies some of the organisms living in the composting community.

Contact your nearest Cooperative Extension Office for more detailed information on composting structures and methods.

Composting can be a part of good citizenship training for children in that it addresses many environmental concerns such as redirecting wastes from landfills, producing fertilizers of non-fossil fuel origin and conserving soil and water.





## CHAPTER 4

# *Gardeners' Resource Guide*

Below are some useful names, addresses and phone numbers of places community gardeners can contact for a variety of assistance.

### Soil Amendments

- Compost** – Call DeKalb County Extension at 404-298-4080. They will have information about where to get free compost in DeKalb County.
- Horse Manure** – Mountain Breeze Stables; 2888 Old Dallas Rd SW; Marietta, GA 30064. Call 404-558-1173 for information.

### Seeds/Transplants

Seeds and transplants can be purchased at many hardware and home supply stores. They can also be purchased by mail. Some of the major mail-order companies who will send a free catalog on request are:

**W. Atlee Burpee & Co.**  
Warminster, PA 18794

**Gurney's Seed and Nursery Co.**  
110 Capital Street; Yankton, SD 57079

**Henry's Field's Seed and Nursery Co.**  
415 North Burnett; Shenandoah, IA 51602

**Mellinger's Inc.**  
2310 W. South Range Rd.  
North Lima, OH 44452-9731

**Park Seed Co.**  
Cokesbury Road; Greenwood, SC 29647

Some of these companies will provide free seeds or seeds at a discount if they are for a low-income community or youth garden.

Seeds can also be purchased through the “Farmers and Consumers Market Bulletin” published by the Georgia Department of Agriculture. Individuals place their own ads for seeds of all varieties and plants to sell. A subscription to the Bulletin is available for \$10 per year. For more information, visit the Georgia Department of Agriculture website at [www.agr.georgia.gov/](http://www.agr.georgia.gov/) and follow the link to Market Bulletin.

## Volunteers

Atlanta Community Food Bank will provide volunteers for work day projects. Call Fred Conrad at 404.872.3333 ext. 1216.

To request help from those doing community service hours, call Cathy Walker, Atlanta Urban Gardening Program 404.762.4077.

## Atlanta Area Consultants/Garden Information

-  Walter Reeves, [www.walterreeves.com](http://www.walterreeves.com)
-  Bobby Wilson, Atlanta Urban Gardening Program/American Community Gardening Association  
BobbyW@uga.edu
-  University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service (look up county)

They will answer questions concerning: soil tests, native plants, raised beds, USDA Hardiness Zone Maps (state planting zones), etc.



## Urban Gardens Tracking Form

<b>Community Garden Name / Location</b>	<b>Date Established</b>	<b>County</b>
<b>Number &amp; Type Raised Beds / Containers / In-ground</b>		
<b>Fruits / Vegetables Date Planted</b>		
<b>Amount / Pounds Harvested</b>		
<b>Number of Gardeners Participating in Garden Club</b>		









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