

Community Harvest

Many communities struggle to provide fresh and healthy food to their residents. Starting a community garden can help bring people together and foster sustainability through growing nutritious fruits and vegetables locally. Community gardens will help connect the community, get residents outdoors and provide fresh foods to those in need.

Engage your Community - Hold a meeting for all interested parties to discuss logistics. Develop a plan of action to get people energized and organized.

Choose a Site - Decide on where a garden can be placed (i.e. local park, building rooftops, school yards). Find a location that receives at least six hours of direct sunlight per day with easy access to water. Check if the land you would be growing on has proper drainage. Once you identify an ideal site, **find out who owns the land**. Contact the landowner and discuss next steps that may include obtaining permission through a written agreement such as a joint-use agreement.

Design your Garden - Every community garden is different based on its specific size, location and mission. Design your garden to fit the needs of the community it serves. Consider factors such as age-appropriate design, accessibility, protection from animals or vandalism, storage of tools, and space to gather.

Get Growing - Start implementing your community garden program. Decide what to grow and get the community involved in planting. Once the project is up and running, let everyone know. Gain greater community support by welcoming visitors and sharing updates on how the neighborhood is benefiting from the garden. You can even hold educational sessions and teach others in the community about how to grow healthy in their homes.

Resources –

[Community Gardens: Lessons Learned From California Healthy Cities and Communities](#)

[American Community Garden Association](#)

[10 Steps to Starting a Community Garden](#)

[American Heart Association Teaching Garden](#)

[Isles Urban Agriculture](#)

[Master Gardeners](#)

MWC Success Stories:

For the 2nd consecutive year, Hillsborough Township Library along with other SCLSNJ branches celebrated National Agriculture Month in March. A vegetable garden planted at the Township has painted murals attached to planter boxes built and installed by the Somerset County Planning Division and F & S. The planter boxes are maintained by Hillsborough Department of Public Works. All produce harvested is donated to the Hillsborough Food Pantry.

