

## Create Your Own Park & Recreation-Community Garden!

While edible gardens produce lots of nutritious vegetables and fruits, they also serve as a gathering point that brings communities together and offers a place for kids and adults to experience hands-on lessons on the origins of food. An edible garden is a great way for everyone to de-stress, get in touch with nature, and practice healthy living. This sheet includes tips for creating your own park-community garden!

### What form should our park's garden take?

An edible garden can be created *in many forms*, based on the open space available at your location. Some parks have lots of green space, others have none. The only true limiting factor to take into consideration is to make sure that what you are planting in (ground, container) is nontoxic (so no tires or plastics that leach chemicals if in the sun, and you may want to do a soil test if planting in the ground):

- Planting in the ground, find a spot, till/turn over the dirt, mix in compost, and you are on your way!
- Planting in raised beds, those you make and/or kits you buy, are always a fun gardening method!
- Planting in containers of all sizes, on the ground or on walls, and mixing a variety of sizes and colors of containers makes a beautiful, artsy presentation, and is a great solution if you have only concrete space available! And, in winter, you can move some containers inside and continue the harvest!



In ground



Raised bed



Container garden



Wall container garden

**What gardening activities can people of all ages do together?** Everything, that is why gardening is so great!

- Designing the garden,
- Turning over/preparing the soil,
- Growing seedlings,
- Planting seeds and seedlings,
- Thinning (carrots for example!),
- Weeding,
- Harvesting,
- Composting,
- What else can you think of?!

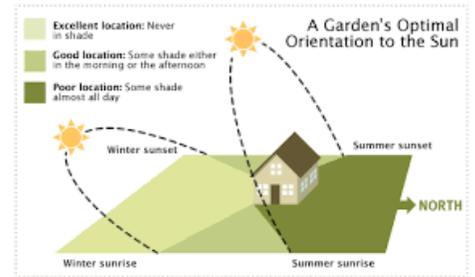


# Quick tips for installing a garden at your park!

## 1. Location. Where is the sun, and what kind of garden can I plant?

Walk around your park to find out where you get the most sun. Check out the location a few times throughout the day to make sure it has sun the majority of the day because most vegetables and fruit require the most sun they can get!

On page 1, different types of gardens are described. Walk around your park to determine if you can plant in the ground, or if you need to create some sort of container garden.



**2. Good dirt!** After making sure the garden will get enough sun, and figuring out what kind of garden you will plant, the next most important thing is the soil in your garden. Whether you are planting in the ground or in containers, you likely need to mix in some good compost to provide nutrients and break up dense soil. Check out this link for a few “recipes” for edible garden soil: <http://bit.ly/CHGgoodsoil>; <http://bit.ly/CHGgoodsoil2>. If you are planting in the ground and suspect contaminants may be present, contact your local Extension Office to find out how to get your soil tested: <http://bit.ly/CHGextension>.



**3. Plant!** After the hard work of preparing your garden is done, it is fun-time - time to plant! Picking the plants for your edible garden can be a bit daunting. If you're not sure about what you want to plant, there are some easy to grow, delicious vegetables and fruits you can try out first! Lettuce, radishes, and snap peas all prefer the cooler temperatures of spring and fall and so are **perfect to plant now**. Tomatoes, beans, basil and squash prefer the summer heat and sun, so wait for those till next year. Determine your garden zone (<http://bit.ly/zonegarden>), then check out this or another planting schedule (<http://bit.ly/plantschedule>) to pick what you want to grow.



**4. Protect.** In most locations, gardens need to be protected from animals who seek your produce- rabbits, squirrels, and deer just to name a few. Find out which are in your park, and put up barriers to keep them out!

**5. Tend!** Tending your garden may be the least favorite garden activity of most in your group, but it has to be done! Regular schedules for watering, weeding, thinning, and pruning need to be established to ensure the success of your park garden. Sit down with your group and write down the assignments, dates, times, and persons responsible. Post this where everyone will be reminded about what they need to do!

**5. Harvest!** Yes, harvesting is the favorite garden activity of most people, but it deserves some attention here. Keeping up with harvesting can be tough, at first it is fun, watching the bounty of your hard work appear and be ready for picking. However, for many plants, regular harvesting will be required in order for the fruits/vegetables to continue to grow. So check the labels of the seed packets, and read online, about recommendations for harvesting the plants you selected to include in your park garden!