

*Sustainable Maryland Wednesday Webinars*

# How to Start a Community Garden

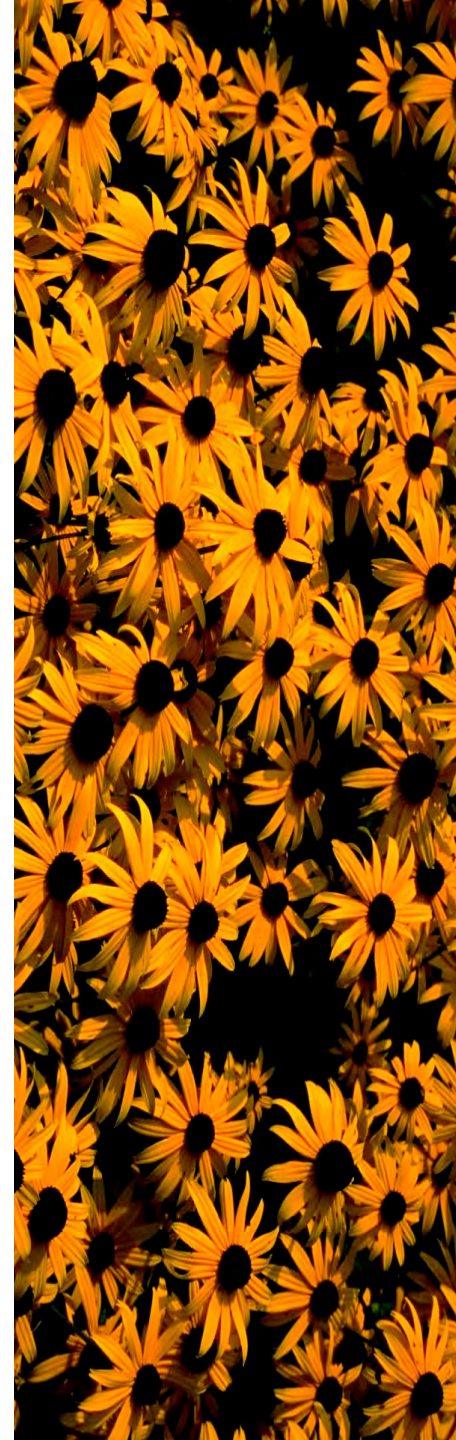
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ENVIRONMENTAL  
FINANCE CENTER



# Sustainable Maryland

- Free & Voluntary program for communities that want to go green and save green!
- We help communities
  - Choose a direction for their sustainability efforts
  - Improve access to resources
  - Measure their progress
  - Share success with other communities



## Actions for Sustainable Communities:

To become Sustainable Maryland Certified, municipalities must complete and document actions from the list below. To achieve certification, municipalities will need to complete actions worth a total of 150 points, including two Mandatory Actions (M) and two of six Priority Actions (P), and submit the appropriate documents as evidence that the requirements have been satisfied.

| ACTION ITEM  | POINTS                    |
|--|---------------------------|
| <b>COMMUNITY ACTION</b>                            |                           |
| <b>Green Team</b>                                  |                           |
| Participate in SMC Green Team Training             | 5                         |
| Create a Green Team                                | 10 M                      |
| Complete a Green Team Action Plan                  | 10 M                      |
| Conduct Community Barriers and Benefits Assessment | 15                        |
| Build SMC Resource Center                          | 5                         |
| Participation in MD Green Summit                   | 10                        |
| Innovative Demonstration Projects                  | 5 to 20                   |
| <b>COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS</b>                      |                           |
| <b>Local Food Connection</b>                       |                           |
| Local Food Connection                              | 10                        |
| Local Food Connection & Preservation Classes       | 5 per class               |
| Establish Farmers Market                           | 15                        |
| Promote Farmers Market                             | 5                         |
| <b>Local Food Distribution</b>                     |                           |
| Community Gardens                                  | 15 P                      |
| Spring Transplants                                 | 10                        |
| Fall Transplants                                   | 10                        |
| Establish CSA Drop-off                             | 10                        |
| Innovative Demonstration Projects                  | 5 to 20                   |
| <b>ENERGY</b>                                      |                           |
| Municipal Energy Audits                            | 10 (1st bldg), 5 (others) |
| <b>Residential Energy Efficiency</b>               |                           |
| Wind Energy Project                                | 10                        |
| Innovative Demonstration Projects                  | 5 to 20                   |
| <b>GREENHOUSE GAS</b>                              |                           |
| Municipal Carbon Footprint (pre-requisite)         | 15 P                      |
| Community Carbon Footprint (pre-requisite)         | 15                        |
| <b>Climate Planning</b>                            |                           |
| Climate Action Plan                                | 10 to 25+                 |
| Climate Change Adaptation Element                  | 5                         |
| Innovative Demonstration Projects                  | 5 to 20                   |
| <b>HEALTH &amp; WELLNESS</b>                       |                           |
| <b>Let's Move</b>                                  |                           |
| Let's Move   | 15                        |
| <b>Workplace Wellness</b>                          |                           |
| Join Healthiest Maryland Businesses                | 5                         |
| Workplace Wellness Program                         | 5 to 15                   |
| Living Well Program                                | 5 per class               |
| Innovative Demonstration Projects                  | 5 to 20                   |
| <b>LOCAL ECONOMIES</b>                             |                           |
| <b>Buy Local</b>                                   |                           |
| Establish Local Business Directory                 | 10                        |
| Promote Local Business Directory                   | 5                         |
| Buy Local Campaign                                 | 15                        |
| Local Business Roundtable                          | 5 per roundtable          |
| Local Business Procurement Notices                 | 10                        |
| Economic Analysis of Procurement Practices         | 15                        |
| Local Purchasing Preference Policy                 | 10                        |
| <b>Green Business Recognition</b>                  |                           |
| Join Maryland Green Registry                       | 5                         |
| Promote Maryland Green Registry                    | 5 points per 2 businesses |

Please note: Sustainable Maryland Certified actions and points may be subject to change. Printed on 50% recycled & 30% post-consumer waste paper.

| ACTION ITEM   | POINTS      |
|---|-------------|
| <b>LOCAL ECONOMIES (CONTINUED)</b>  |             |
| Green Business Certification Program  | 15          |
| <b>Green Purchasing</b>   |             |
| Green Purchasing Policy (pre-requisite)   | 15 P        |
| Evaluate Current Purchasing Practices (pre-requisite)                                   | 10          |
| Vendor Preference Statement (pre-requisite)   | 10          |
| Purchase Recycled Products  | 10          |
| Purchase Environmentally Preferable Products  | 10          |
| Implement Waste Reduction Program   | 10          |
| Innovative Demonstration Projects   | 5 to 20     |
| <b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b>  |             |
| <b>Watershed Stewardship</b>  |             |
| Implement Watershed Stewardship/Pollution Prevention Outreach Programs                  | 10          |
| Facilitate Engagement in Existing Watershed Stewardship Opportunities                   | 5 per event |
| Provide Voluntary Opportunities for Citizen Engagement in Watershed Stewardship         | 10          |
| Provide Incentives for Watershed Stewardship on Private Lands                           | 15          |
| Create a Watershed Plan   | 20 P        |
| <b>Stormwater Management</b>  |             |
| Stormwater Management Program   | 15 P        |
| Stormwater Manager/Coordinator  | 15          |
| Stormwater Fee Structure  | 20          |
| <b>Septic Management</b>  |             |
| Septics System Assessment and Inventory   | 15          |
| Septics System Management Plan  | 20          |
| Consolidated Septic System Fund   | 20          |
| <b>Water Conservation</b>   |             |
| Develop a Water Conservation Plan   | 15          |
| Develop a Water Conservation Outreach Program   | 10          |
| <b>Tree City USA</b>  |             |
| Tree City USA   | 15          |
| <b>Pet Waste</b>  |             |
| Implement a Pet Waste Education Program   | 5           |
| Develop a Pet Waste Program   | 5           |
| Adopt a Pet Waste Ordinance   | 5           |
| Innovative Demonstration Projects   | 5 to 20     |
| <b>PLANNING AND LAND USE</b>  |             |
| <b>Participation in DHCD Sustainable Communities Housing and the Comprehensive Plan</b> |             |
| Participation in DHCD Sustainable Communities Housing and the Comprehensive Plan        | 10          |
| <b>Land Preservation</b>  |             |
| Conduct Easement Outreach that Encourages Inspection, Evaluation, and Stewardship       | 15          |
| Build Easement Inventory  | 10          |
| Innovative Demonstration Projects   | 5 to 20     |

P denotes Priority Action; M denotes Mandatory Action

To learn more visit  
[www.sustainablemaryland.com](http://www.sustainablemaryland.com)



Environmental Finance Center  
[www.efc.umd.edu](http://www.efc.umd.edu)



June 2015



# SM Actions related to today's webinar

| COMMUNITY BASED FOOD SYSTEM              |         |
|--|---------|
| <b>Local Food Production</b>             | 15      |
| Community Gardens                        | 15P     |
| Spring Transplant Sale                   | 10      |
| Fall Transplant Sale                     | 10      |
| <b>Establish CSA Drop-off Location</b>   | 10      |
| <b>Innovative Demonstration Projects</b> | 5 to 20 |

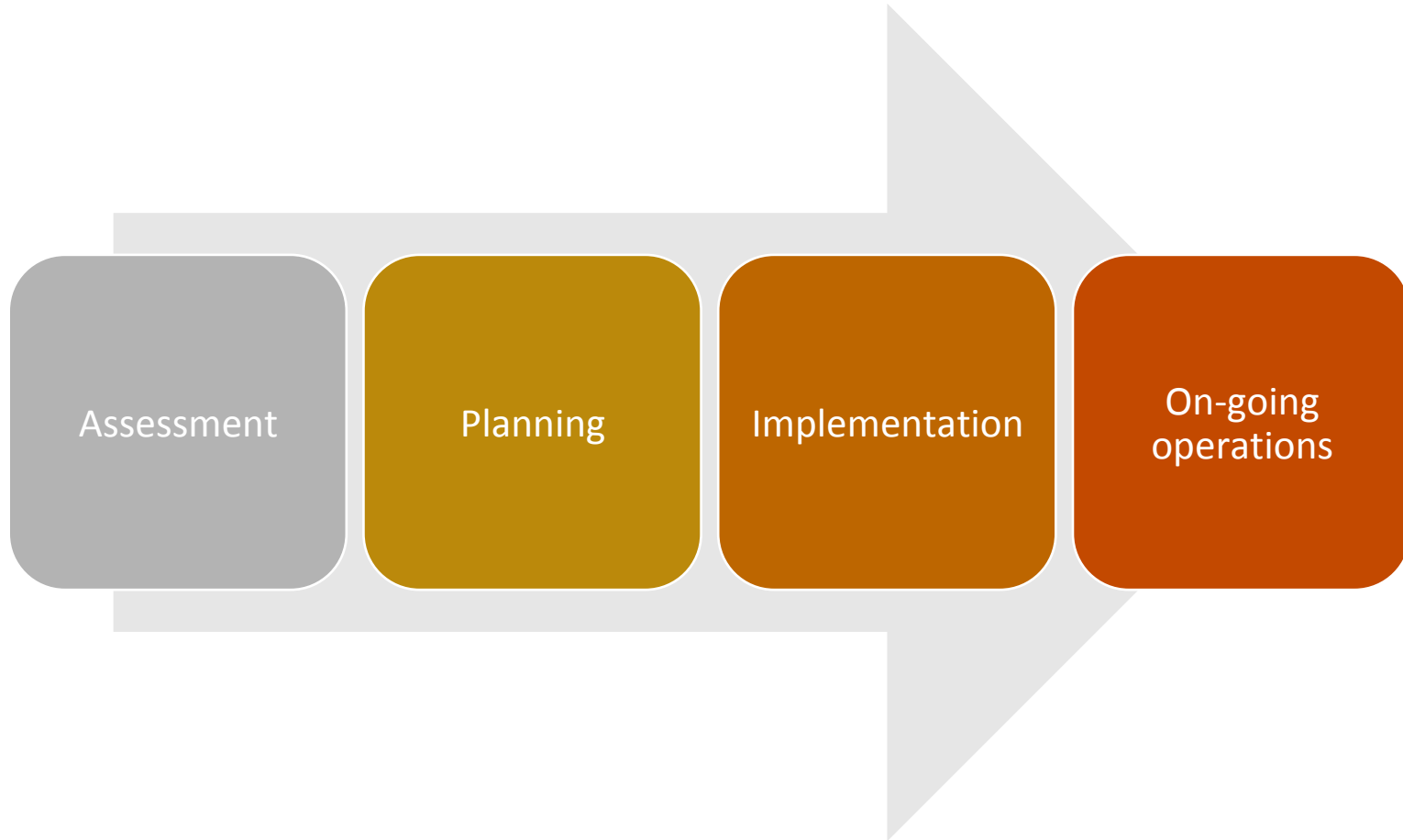


# Overview: key questions

- What are the steps to create a community garden?
- What are the major obstacles?
- What are tips for having a successful garden?
- Where can I find additional resources?



# Key steps



# Assess community need

- Determine need/desire for a community garden; build support and excitement
  - Formal (survey) and informal (discussion with friends, residents, community groups)
- Gain support from local officials
  - Land
  - Financial resources
  - Town staff assistance



# Begin planning process

- Establish community garden planning committee
  - Outreach, skill set/roles, size
- Develop implementation plan/timeline
- Visit other community gardens
- Identify site
- Design site
- Prepare budget/proposal





# Develop implementation plan (BH example)

| Activities                              | Timeline              |
|---|-----------------------|
| Conduct site visits                     | Aug. 2013             |
| Identify site, meet with key experts    | Sept. 2013            |
| Develop site plan                       | Sept. – Oct. 2013     |
| Research resources, pricing options     | Oct. – Nov. 2013      |
| Brief Town Council                      | Nov. 2013             |
| Prepare site, purchase items            | Nov. 2013 – Apr. 2014 |
| Solicit donation/apply for grants       | Ongoing               |
| Finalize rules/regulations, application | Dec. 2013 – Jan. 2014 |
| Conduct outreach                        | Ongoing               |
| Rent plots, conduct training            | Spring 2014           |
| Open garden                             | Apr. 2014             |



# Conduct site visits

- Contact coordinator
  - List of gardens, contact information:  
<http://extension.umd.edu/growit/community-gardens>
- Obtain valuable information on garden design, resources, best practices, challenges, rules/regulations



# Site visits: questions

1. How many plots do you have?
2. What is the size of the plots?
3. What shared resources do you provide?
4. What are your major expenses?
5. What are your major revenue sources?
6. What have been your biggest challenges?
7. How did you solve those challenges?
8. How much do you charge for plots?



# Site visits: questions

9. What are your application procedures and participant requirements?
10. Do you utilize a contract, written agreement?
11. Do you use a “Hold Free of Harm” or at-risk, no litigation clause? If so, have there been issues associated with that?
12. What type of fencing (if any) do you have? How well does it work, or if it does not work well, why? How much did the fencing cost?



# Site visits: questions

13. How do you communicate with participants?
14. What type of information/training do you provide?
15. What is your water source? What are the advantages/disadvantages of your method?
16. What assistance, if any, did you receive from the town, city, county, or state?
17. Any other things we should consider?



# Identify Site

- Size
- Terrain
- Sun
- Water source
- Location
- Land ownership, potential partnerships
- Parking availability
- Soil testing



# Identify Resources Needed

- Will the site need to be fenced?
- Will the site need to be cleaned (trees trimmed, debris cleared, trash removed)?
- What shared resources will be provided?
  - cistern, compost bin, shed, picnic table, tools, seeds/transplants, herb garden, bulletin board
- Is compost and mulch available?
- Others: tilling, raised beds, perennial bed, liability insurance



# Community Garden Resources





# Design site

- Location and size of beds
- Location for water source
- Location of other shared resources
- Common or shared gardens (herb garden, perennial bed)
- Garden sign, name
- Gates, driveways, pathways, and open spaces



# BH Community Garden



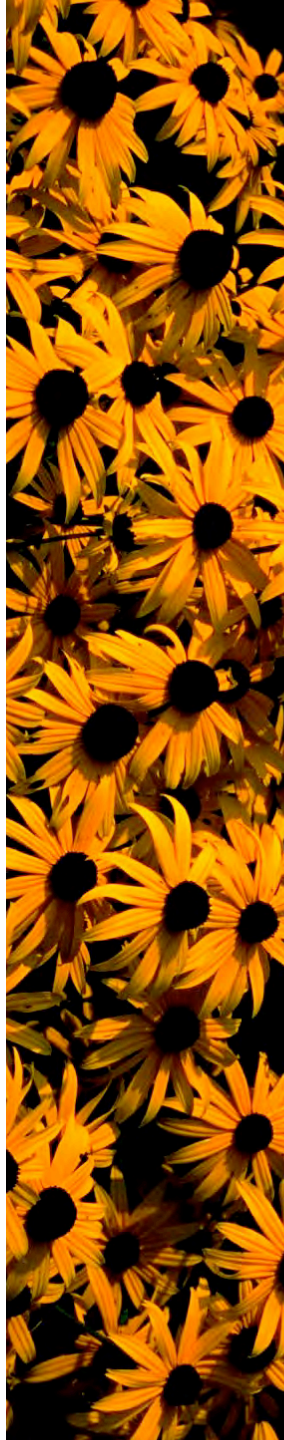
# Solicit support

- Local government
- Donations/discounts from local businesses
- Grants
- Donations from residents
- Master gardeners, other experts
- Eagle scouts, students needing community service hours
- Mulch from Pepco



# Prepare site

- Install fence
- Clean site
- Add compost
- Till beds
- Build raised beds, add more compost
- Install cistern, piping
- Mulch pathways
- Build shed, compost bin



# Prepare garden regulations

- Application fee: How much? Will there be a sliding scale? When is the fee due?
- Plot maintenance: What is the standard? What happens if a plot is not maintained?
- Garden maintenance: Are gardeners expected to volunteer for certain chores?
- Planting restrictions: Are there restrictions on which types of plants can be grown?
- Pesticides/fertilizers: What types will be allowed?
- Compost: What materials may be composted?



# On-going maintenance

- Add compost to plots
- Schedule regular clean up days
- Develop schedule for filling cistern, mowing lawn, watering shared beds
- Establish goals/enhancements each year
- Ensure garden is winterized



# Obstacles

- Communicating with gardeners that don't have or check email
- Ensuring plot renters take care of shared resources
- Keeping garden secure
- Plot maintenance/harvest, especially during vacations
- Garden pests
- Participation at work days; meetings



# Tips

- Visit neighbors by garden to encourage participation
- Create a welcome packet
- Utilize multiple means of communication
- Create a garden roster/map
- Celebrate and invite neighbors; have table at town events
- Provide regular training
- Ask for feedback



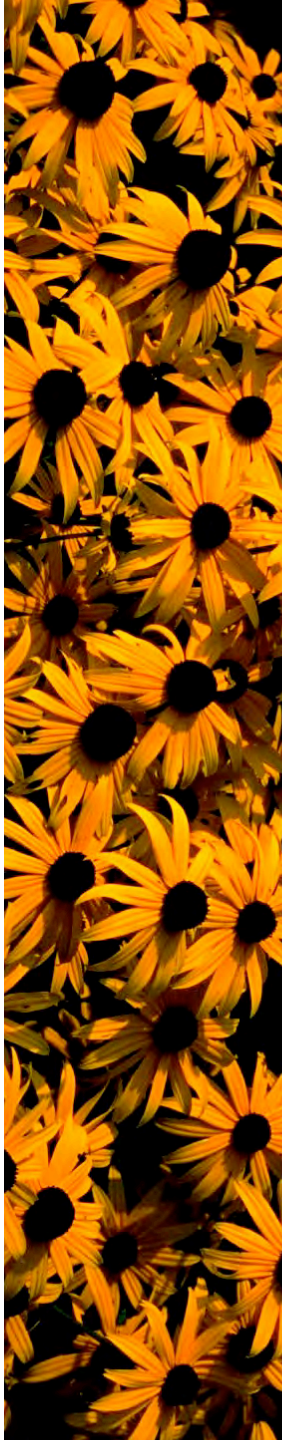


# Tips

- Add a perennial bed (great for attracting beneficial insects)
- Inspect plots for garden pests, provide information based on common problems
- Provide row covers
- Donate excess to a food bank
- Evaluate your progress
  - <https://communitygarden.org/resources/sample-evaluation-tools/>



# Community Involvement



# Resources

| Useful resources  | Grants   |
|---|--|
| Information for community garden organizers:<br><a href="http://extension.unh.edu/Gardens-Landscapes/StartingMaintaining-Community-Garden">http://extension.unh.edu/Gardens-Landscapes/StartingMaintaining-Community-Garden</a> | SeedMoney Garden Grants Program: <a href="http://kgi.org/grants">http://kgi.org/grants</a>   |
| Vegetable gardening resources:<br><a href="https://extension.umd.edu/growit">https://extension.umd.edu/growit</a>   | Fiskars – Project Orange Thumb:<br><a href="http://www2.fiskars.com/Community/Project-Orange-Thumb">http://www2.fiskars.com/Community/Project-Orange-Thumb</a>   |
| Community garden management:<br><a href="https://communitygarden.org/resources/category/community-garden-management/">https://communitygarden.org/resources/category/community-garden-management/</a>                           | Home Depot:<br><a href="https://corporate.homedepot.com/CorporateResponsibility/HDFoundation/Pages/ComImpactGrant.aspx">https://corporate.homedepot.com/CorporateResponsibility/HDFoundation/Pages/ComImpactGrant.aspx</a> |



# Questions?

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