

# Cultivating Community, Harvesting Health: Community Gardens

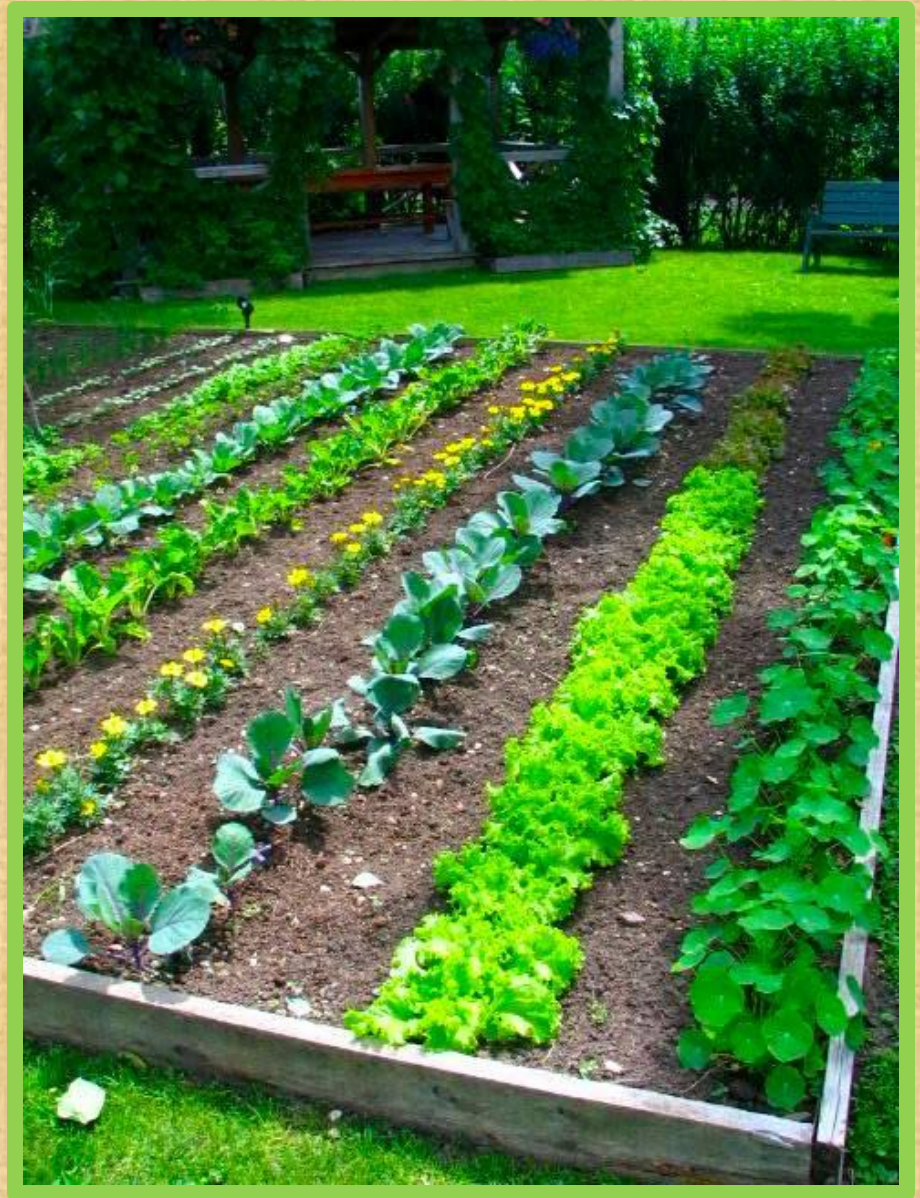


Callie Le'au Courtright  
City of Des Moines  
Parks & Recreation Supervisor



# City of Des Moines Community Gardens

- 2.65 acres of land
- Four Gardens
- 326 total plots
- 250 gardeners





## Ashfield Community Garden

Address: 1850 Hubbell Avenue

Acreage: .15

Number of plots: 22

Plot Size: 10'X15'

Started: 2011



# Downtown Community Garden

Address: SE 6<sup>th</sup> and Scott

Acreage: .5

Number of plots: 80

Plot Size: 8'X14'

Started: 2010



# Franklin Community Garden

Address: 55<sup>th</sup> & Franklin

Acreage: 1.65

Number of Plots: 180

Plot Size: 10'x15'





# Woodlawn Community Garden

Address: 3126 Twana Drive

Acreage: .35 acres

Number of plots: 42

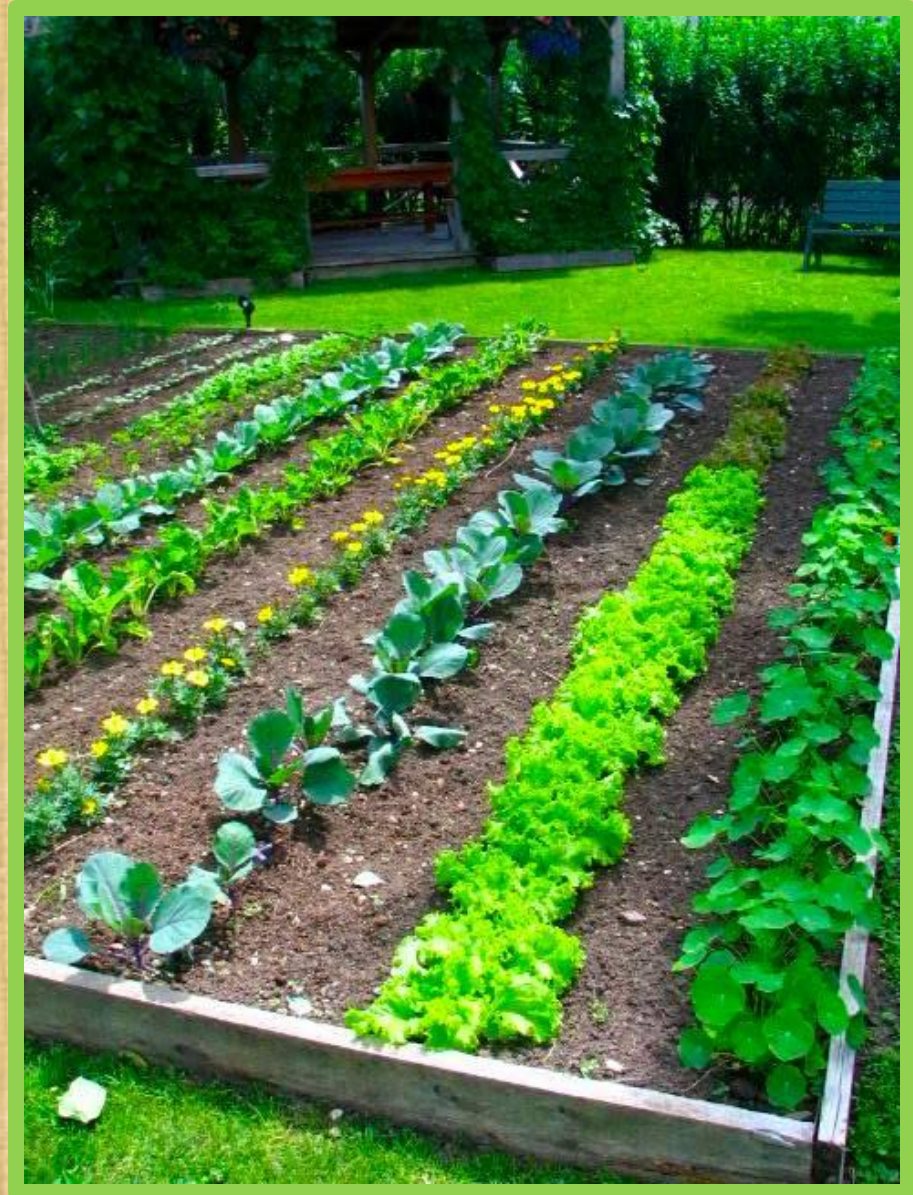
Plot Size: 10'X15

Started: 2011



# City of Des Moines Community Gardens

- Water
- Mulch for common areas
- Place to compost
- Restrooms
- Tool Storage





# 2013 Community Garden Application & Agreement

## City of Des Moines Community Garden Mission-

Our mission is to offer garden space to the people of Des Moines-

**Provide an opportunity to get to know your neighbors-**

**Expand and improve Des Moines' green spaces-**

**And be an inspiration for a healthier community-**

*"We abuse land because we see it as a commodity belonging to us.*

*When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may*

*begin to use it with love and respect." -Aldo Leopold*

## Individual Plot

- I understand I am responsible for my plot(s), unless it is reassigned.
- I will not modify size/dimensions of plot assigned to me. Plot size is approximately 10'x15' at all the community gardens except for the Downtown community gardens which is 8'x14'.
- I understand plot limits below and will not take over someone's plot without permission from staff.
  - One plot for first-time plot holders
  - Two plot limit per household
- I understand I am responsible for preparing my plot for gardening, which may or may not involve tilling my plot.
- I will remove debris, weed and plant my plot(s) by **May 19, 2013** (dependent of course on date of last frost).
- I will mulch one foot into the pathway around the plot(s) perimeter, using wood chips (if the garden I'm assigned to uses wood chip pathways, wood chips provided by the City of Des Moines) by May 30th. I agree to weed and maintain the mulch pathways the entire gardening season.
- I agree to use **only organic gardening methods** and **will not use chemical fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, and fungicides.**



- I will use seed-free mulch to conserve water and reduce weeds.
- I understand the City will provide only water and mulch.
- I agree if I am away for an extended period of time, I will make arrangements with someone to care for my plot.
- I will notify the Parks and Recreation staff if I am unable to harvest or care for my plot(s).
- I will not shade neighboring plot(s).
- I will not harvest produce from other plot holder's plot(s)
- I agree if I receive a notice for my plot(s) being unkempt or weedy, I will address and resolve the issue within one week or my plot(s) will be reassigned. IF I receive 3 plot notices in one gardening season my plot will automatically be reassigned.
- I will prepare my plot(s) for winter by the last work day as designated by Parks and Recreation staff, including removal of diseased plants to discourage the spread of plant diseases and pests.
- I will place dead plant material in the designated areas, containers, or trucks.
- I will keep trash and litter picked up in my plot(s) and adjacent areas, and deposit in proper receptacles. No organic matter in trash, and no trash in compost.
- I will leave numbered stakes in plot(s) where they have been placed so each plot is identifiable.
- I understand if I give up a plot(s), then ask for a plot(s) later, I will be placed on a *first come/first served* waiting list if a plot is not available.
- I understand plots are non-transferable.



I understand individual fencing cannot extend beyond plot borders into pathways.

Colored plastic

fencing is no longer allowed, nor is using twigs or branches as fencing allowed.

I understand that if I have multiple plots I will maintain the pathways between adjacent plots.

If you had multiple garden plots prior to 2012 the maintenance and accessibility to other garden plots is monitored by neighboring plot holders and Parks and Recreation staff, and if it is deemed that your plots are interfering with access to other plots you agree to immediately remedy the situation which may include mulching a new path through your garden plot(s) or risk losing plot.

#### **Common Area**

I will not use tools that are clearly marked with a name without obtaining the consent of that gardener. Please clearly mark tools you do not wish to share. The City is not responsible for any lost or missing tools.

I will share woodchips, water, and other garden materials fairly.

I will not take community tools or garden materials (woodchips) out of the garden for personal use or use in excess.

I will care for and respect community tools by cleaning and returning them to the designated community storage area. Please turn wheelbarrows upside down to prevent water from pooling.

**I agree to volunteer for four hours doing general garden maintenance in the common areas, this can be done in coordination with organized work days or by communicating with Parks and Recreation staff to identify common area tasks to be completed on your own time or risk losing plot. Staff will send notification of garden work days, expect one work day per month June through October.**

I will not obstruct walkways with fencing, unwound hoses, and plants, including vines.

#### **Community Principles**

I will help keep the garden site looking respectable.

I will use appropriate language and exhibit respectful behavior towards staff, gardeners & visitors.

I will notify Parks and Recreation of vandalism, theft, inappropriate behavior, or other questions or concerns.

I will receive permission before entering the other gardeners' plot(s) except for retrieving community tools.

I will harvest my plot(s) and only my plot(s) unless asked by another gardener for help.

I will keep pets outside of the garden area and leashed as per city ordinance.

I will be responsible for guests and/or children at the community gardens.

I understand I cannot use my plot for commercial activity.

There is no smoking in the community gardens.



#### **Definitions**

**Unkempt:** This can be, but is not limited to, weeds taking over my plot(s) or pathways, untended paths, debris not removed from my plot(s), rotting produce, etc. that create a gardening problem, nuisance or liability.

**Weeds:** Any plants not purposely planted or desired by the plot's gardener, and that is not a vegetable, fruit, flower, decorative plant, or wildlife support plant. Examples of weeds are thistles, dandelions, plantain, or any type of grass not planted or desired by the gardener of a particular plot.

**Organic:** Materials derived from 100 percent, all-natural sources which do **not** contain synthetic chemicals. (Resources: Iowa State University horticulture hotline, 515-294-3108 or [www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews](http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews))

# Partnerships

- Lutheran Services of Iowa
- YouthBuild
- Rock the Block
- Community Youth Concepts
- United Way of Central Iowa





**EAT GREATER DES MOINES**  
**PRESENTS**

**START IT UP!**



**CENTRAL IOWA'S OWN**  
**COMMUNITY GARDEN START-UP GUIDE**

JOIN THE SHOW AT:

**WWW.EATGREATERDESMOINES.ORG**

**MAKE GARDENING  
AN ALL AGES SHOW!**

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CITY OF DES MOINES  
PARKS AND RECREATION

**LIVE UNITED**  
United Way  
  
United Way of Central Iowa

# How to start your own community garden

INTERESTED PARTIES





# Get Your Neighbors Involved

- At least 10 interested people are needed
- Survey for interest
- Get people involved
- Hold monthly meetings of the interested group to develop and initiate plans, keep people involved in the garden's progress.



# Get Your Neighbors Involved

- Make sure your group has time to commit. Gardens involve mowing, picking up trash and lots of weeding.
- Remember a 20 ft x30 ft takes 1.5 hours of watering and weeding a week!





# Form a Garden Group

- Can be made anytime but earlier the better
- Formal organization
- Decision Making
- Division of Work/Tasks
- Creates Vested Interest
- Help with design, development, and maintenance.



# Form a Garden Group

## Typically garden groups:

- Establish garden rules
- Accept & review garden applications
- Determine plot assignments
- Collect garden dues (if any)
- Pay water bills
- Resolve conflicts







# GOT GREEN THUMB?

Help create a Community Garden!

## WHAT IS A COMMUNITY GARDEN?

An area used for growing plants, which has been created collaboratively and is maintained by the public.

## BENEFITS

- Plots would be offered to the surrounding neighborhood & community
- Positive social interaction in the community
- Produces nutritious food
- Beautifies Neighborhood
- Opportunity to grow & donate food
- Youth gardening & educational programs

## WHERE

Allen Park, northwest corner of SE 6th and Scott

## CONTACT

Nicole McLuen  
237-1451  
[communitygarden@dmgov.org](mailto:communitygarden@dmgov.org)

# First Meeting

1. [Develop a Vision](#)
2. Identify potential properties
3. Identify partners
4. Identify participants
5. Start Contact List
6. Hold Elections
7. Record results





# Mission Statement

## Des Moines Community Gardens

**Our mission is to offer garden space to the people of Des Moines-**

- **Provide an opportunity to get to know your neighbors-**
- **Expand and improve Des Moines' green spaces-**
- **And be an inspiration for a healthier community-**



# How to start your own community garden

## SITE LOCATION



# Site Location

- 6-8 hours of sun
- Relatively flat
- Got concrete/asphalt?  
Think about raised beds  
or removal but they will  
take more time and  
money.





# Site Location

- No more than a short drive from those that have expressed interest in participating.
- If the lot is not already being used, make sure the community supports establishing a garden there.
- Review [site checklist](#)





# Site Information

1. Look up property owner with [Tax Assessor](#)
2. If lot is vacant, call the County Auditor
3. If the city owns the lot, contact the City's [Real Estate department](#).
4. Does your site have water?



# Next Steps

1. Contact land owner
2. [Follow-up with letter](#)
3. Note the value of garden to community
4. [Negotiate Lease](#)
5. [Work on Waiver](#)
6. Purchase Liability Insurance
7. [Get Soil Tested](#)





# How to start your own community garden

## CREATING A PLAN



# Planning the Garden

- Measure the site and make a simple to-scale site map
- Hold 2-3 garden design meetings
- Use the [Community Garden Planning Worksheet](#) to guide design and operations discussion
- Generate ideas & visualize design with simple drawings, garden photos cut out of magazines representing different components (flower beds, compost bins, pathways, arbors, water, sidewalks) that can be moved around. Remember to draw in existing trees (and areas they shade)
- Record group decisions in official minutes



# Basic Elements

- Plots
- Water
- Shed
- Signs
- Seating
- Fence
- Compost



# Other Elements

- Bulletin board
- Food Pantry Plot
- Children's Area
- Water Fountain
- Fruit Trees





# Planning & Beyond

- [Create a budget](#)
- Develop an application
- [Set-up bank accounts](#)
- Write-up volunteer job descriptions
- Create a fee structure
- [Resources Available](#)



# Get Growing!

- Call before you dig
- Clean up the site
- Get water
- Stake out beds
- Create pathways
- Plant!
- [Continue Fundraising/ Friendraising & Communicating](#)





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