

# ESTABLISH A COMMUNITY GARDEN OR LOCAL FOOD INSTALLATION



City of St. Louis Sustainability



Gardening internship with Grace Hill Settlement House

## DESCRIPTION

A community garden is most often a single piece of land, tended collectively by a group of people to grow herbs, vegetables, fruits, flowers, shrubs, and trees. A local food installation is a smaller and more tactical method of growing food in your neighborhood that can be implemented if a community garden is not feasible. These projects are smaller and either in the public right of way or on private property. Some examples include the **Fruit Fence**, a **Roof Top Garden**, or a **Window Farm**.

## NEIGHBORHOOD BENEFITS

### Environmental

- Improved biodiversity, local habitat, soil quality, and neighborhood greening
- Reduced stormwater runoff
- Reduced waste from food purchasing and transportation
- Reused and cleaned abandoned properties

### Social

- Increased access to healthy, nutritious, and local food
- Engaged, active, and healthier neighbors
- Educational opportunities
- Reduced crime
- Encouraged inter-generational relationships

### Economic

- Reliable source of local food and increased food independence
- Improved and stabilized property values
- Food can be sold at local restaurants or farmers markets

Clemens Community Garden in University City, MO



Garden Internship Program through Grace Hill Settlement House in St. Louis, Missouri

## RELATED TOOLS

When paired with other tools, this strategy can make an even greater and more holistic move toward sustainability in your neighborhood. Think about garden to table programs, healthy cooking and eating courses, local restaurants, farmers markets, and youth and seniors programs to create a larger positive impact. Try combining this tool with:

- **Start a Shop Local or Green Business Campaign**
- **Use Native Plants for Habitat or Biodiversity**
- **Convert Hardscape Areas to Pervious Surfaces**

## EXAMPLES

### 13th Street Community Garden, Old North St. Louis, Missouri

Started in 2008 to grow fresh food for the North City Farmers Market

### Urban Harvest STL Food Roof, St. Louis, Missouri

Urban Agriculture, Education, and Community in Downtown St. Louis.

### McKinley Meadows Edible Forest

A community garden under construction on a vacant LRA lot.



Eastside Garden Project at Jones Park in East St. Louis  
<http://helmlamp.com/2011/09/05/featured-post-three-2/>

## GET STARTED

- 1. Resources** For how to create a community garden in St. Louis visit the websites [Missouri Botanical Garden](#), [American Community Gardening Association](#), [CommunityGarden.org](#), the [EPA](#), [Missouri Extension](#), and [Gateway Greening](#).
- 2. Choose a Location** Find and secure a site for your garden or installation. Go by foot or by bike to see which site suits your needs. Consider who owns the land, such as the [City of St. Louis Land Reutilization Authority \(LRA\)](#) (which leases land for \$1 for urban gardens), churches, non-profit organizations, or businesses; these groups may be able to sell, rent, or donate land or may want to be a partner in your garden or installation. Consider site conditions and soil quality to inform clean up or prep work that may be necessary. Tips can be found at [Gateway Greening](#) and the [EPA](#). Consider access to sunlight and water - you can get access to water by talking to an Alderman, Block Captain, or NSO, or applying to the City of St. Louis for a grant to get water access. A good list of other things to consider is at [Rebel Tomato](#).
- 3. Budget** Identify resources needed to start your garden or installation. This includes design and construction costs, site clean up costs, tools, infrastructure (such as a water source), equipment, plants, and seeds. Information on additional funding, tools, learning materials, plants, or seeds is at [Gateway Greening](#), [Missouri Botanical Garden](#), and [Rebel Tomato](#).
- 4. Plan** Design the garden. Accommodate children, the elderly, and people of all abilities. Raised beds, wider paths, and benches can be used to create a more usable space. Ensure safety and security in your garden as well (tips can be found through [Missouri Extension](#)). Create a planting, care, and maintenance plan that meets the needs of all your neighbors. Identify resources for acquiring plants through any of the above resources, including [Gateway Greening](#) and [Rebel Tomato](#).
- 5. Organize** Develop the garden membership structure. Decide whether and how many beds are available, how they will be assigned, and how the garden will be managed overall. Identify space for storing tools, making compost, and pathways. Plant flowers or shrubs around the garden's edges to promote good will with non-gardening neighbors, passersby and municipal authorities. Create clear Gardener Guidelines, Garden Rules, or Contract in writing. Work with your planning group to revise and refine your guidelines. Look at [Missouri Extension](#) for a good list of issues to consider.
- 6. Gather Support** Build community support with ongoing community meetings or events to get the participation and investment of your neighbors.
- 7. Construct** Build the garden or installation. This usually takes place over a few regularly scheduled workdays. It is helpful if one or more people can lead various projects and coordinate equipment, supplies, and volunteers.
- 8. Share** Determine how the products of the garden will be distributed. Will they be divided equally? Will each grower eat their own? Will any be sold at market or to other neighbors? See [www.nolo.com](http://www.nolo.com) for suggestions.
- 9. Participation** Ensure ongoing participation and communication. Create a bulletin board, mailer, phone tree, email list, or website for sharing information, events, tips, and ongoing maintenance for your garden or installation.



Young girl working on the Tire Garden, East St. Louis

### RELATED SUSTAINABILITY PLAN CATEGORIES

This tool supports the following goals and strategies:

#### Urban Character, Vitality & Ecology

Strategies: D9-Utilize existing park and greenspace improvements to drive economic and community development; H3-Provide special lot-purchasing programs and encourage creative temporary and permanent land uses; H8-Enhance community cleaning and beautification efforts; Objective I-Build Vibrant Community-Based Urban Agriculture Industry

#### Empowerment, Diversity & Equity

Strategies: C3-Provide early-education and supplemental youth education programs; C2-Provide affordable after-school, summer enrichment, and volunteer programs; C3-Develop supervised entertainment, recreation, and commercial areas for youth; C7-Develop a green jobs program for youth; C10-Ensure youth and families have access to healthy food; F1-Address blighting and environmental health hazards; F4-Ensure equal distribution of healthy food options.

#### Health, Well-Being & Safety

Strategies: C1-Eliminate food deserts and improve access to fresh produce; C2-Connect food growers with food eaters; C3-Support urban agriculture opportunities in the City; C5-Make farmers markets and other local access systems readily available for everyone; C6-Make healthy food options the most convenient choice.