

Presentation Statement

“Community gardens are vital in increasing localized foods in highly developed urban centers and, as such, should be mandated and funded by city governments.”

The Presentation

- History and background
- Benefits of community and school gardens
- How and why to set up a garden
- Current successful gardens
- Problems and solutions
- Local thoughts

Presented by : Carisa Barnett, Jarad Lyons and Molly Watson

Historical Background

- In existence for hundreds of years
- 1649—English peasants, known as the “Diggers,” began to cultivate common land
 - eventually, peasants were driven away, but did inspire a new attitude towards food production and distribution

■ Historic Bethabara Park

--has been in existence since 1759

--oldest community garden in the country

--the root of many modern community gardens

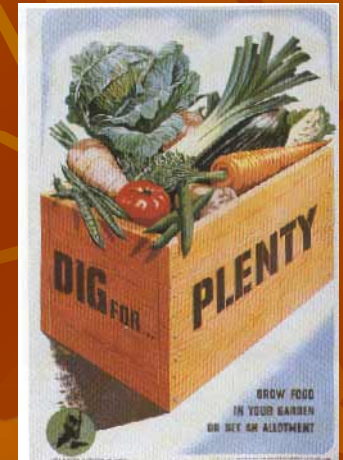
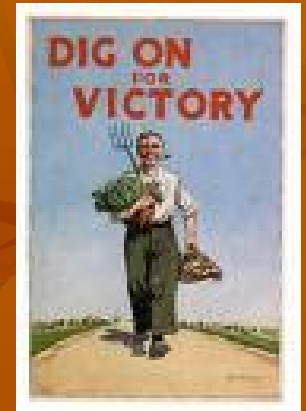
Bethabara Park
North Carolina



■ Victory Gardens

--planted during the world wars
--allowed for more supplies to be shipped to troops around the world

--During WWII, millions of gardens were worked, in both rural and urban areas—nearly 20 million Americans planted victory gardens



■ Urban Sprawl

- overall loss of agricultural land in US
- has caused a loss of community gardens
- increased poverty has caused a decrease in food accessibility

Benefits

- Compensation for lack of green space
 - beautify neighborhoods
 - create shade
 - improve air quality
 - act as windbreaks

- Allow for Supplemental Income
 - reduce food costs
 - excess produce can be sold
 - *boosts family incomes
 - *allows families to save money for other necessities
- Improve Health and Nutrition
 - allow access to locally grown foods
 - allow access to fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs

- Improve Community Relations
 - create social meeting places
 - allow for the exchange of news, skills and stories
 - create a sense of community pride
- Provide People without Space or Soil a Chance to Garden
- Improve Food Security
- Provide Recreation and Therapeutic Benefits

Community Gardens and Schools

- Allow children to learn about nutrition, growing seasons and the environment
- Can teach children about history, economics, poetry and math
- Promote healthy nutritional habits and lifestyles
- Increase physical activity
- Bring community members and children together
- Provide healthy, locally grown food for schools and communities

How Urbanites Garden:

- The different ways to garden in urban areas:
 - Lease a lot that is vacant or buy a lot that is for sale
 - Have the govt. provide you with some type of subsidy to help aid the endeavor
 - Or even plant a small garden in your backyard or on the rooftop of your apartment building
 - EXAMPLE:
Michael Rendon's rooftop garden in Durango

Why Urbanites Garden:

- The simple act of planting a garden can create positive environmental, economic, and social impacts on a neighborhood
- Community gardens foster cultural understanding and an awareness of the environment around us



Starting a Community Garden

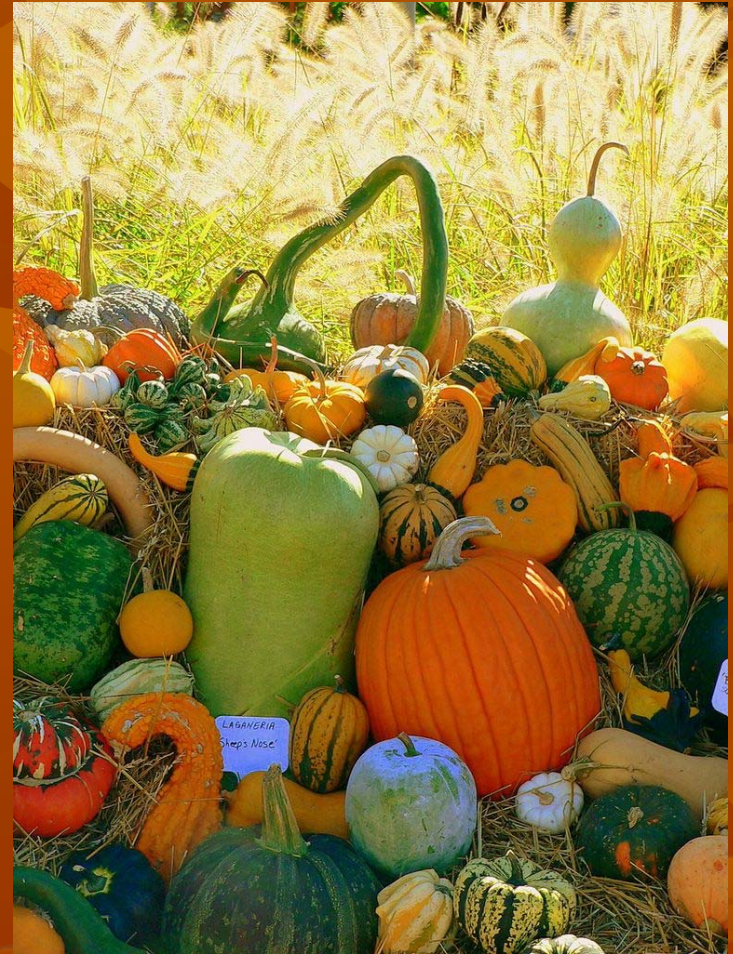
- FORM A PLANNING COMMITTEE
- CHOOSE A SITE
- PREPARE AND DEVELOP THE SITE
- ORGANIZE THE GARDEN
- AND GET INSURANCE!

<http://www.communitygarden.org/Starting%20a%20Community%20Garden7-06.pdf>

Within the State:

- Denver had 60+ community gardens
- These gardens range from schools and parks to elderly homes or institutions

Squash and pumpkins harvested from a Denver garden



Successful Examples



Success

- Large cities are getting large amounts of money provided by the govt. to support this newfound love for community gardens
- As well as a larger following from communities that wish to be a part of new developments

Local Community Gardens...

- There have been quite a few community gardens in the past
- Few have succeeded
- All community gardens require a lot of work, lots of people and even more time: this has been the downfall of many local gardens
 - Miller Middle School
 - Nursing Home
 - Churches

Who uses community gardens

- Community gardens can be very beneficial to many different people
- Studies have proven that these gardens bring communities closer and make people more aware of food production in general
- The people who benefit are not only the ones who actively participate but the elderly of the communities and the youth who are learning valuable lessons from gardening

If community gardens
are *so* beneficial,
why don't they work?

Cost prohibitive

In areas of the greatest need (low-income),
it can be too expensive...

- To buy the land
 - To acquire insurance
 - To purchase seeds and tools
-
- Suggestion: write for a grant

No interest, despite the need

In low-income areas, other needs and problems take precedence:

- Housing
- Crime
- Jobs/Unemployment

People predicaments

Like many cooperatives, conflicts arise between participants:

- Over who is supposed to do the work
- Over who is harvesting more than their share
- Over practices and policies for the garden

EXAMPLE: Will the garden use chemicals to control insects and weeds?

-
- Suggestion: Set up by-laws/ Have rules in place

Vandalism

- Often gardens face destruction of plants and greenhouses or have food stolen
- Suggestions:
 - plant a thorny bush around the perimeter
 - have kids involved
 - trade vegetables for neighborhood watch
 - plant less desirable crops on the edges

LOCAL STORIES:

- Durango Early Learning Center:
 - smashed their pumpkins on display
- Miller Middle School:
 - broke into greenhouse, destroyed the roof and all glass

Conflict over land use

- For city-owned land, no protection against selling land to developers
- Often land is deemed too valuable for a garden and used for commercial reasons
- Private property concerns and taxpayers' dollars concerns

No one to weed... a loss of interest:

- Interest can wane in the garden once it is time to weed
- For school projects, students and teachers leave after class is out for the summer and don't want to come back over the summer to weed

LOCAL STORY: Miller Middle School

Seventh-grade class project

PROBLEMS:

1. Limited growing season
2. Limited by school year (summer)
3. Limited by politics (from the school)
4. Limited by water availability
5. Limited by geography and rocks
6. Oh, deer

LOCAL STORY: Miller Middle School

■ Benefits:

- “Most rewarding work I have done.”
- Donate food to Manna Soup Kitchen
- Ties together community beyond the school to include neighbors and other students
- Educational for students



**What do our
City Councilors
think?**

“Must be considered in the context of community needs because community gardens can only be funded at the expense of something else.”

“A great idea:

- serves as a fabric for the community
- brings together the community
- great teaching tool”

-Dale Garland

“I would love to see the city support and encourage community gardens.”

“The community needs to organize in support of community gardens. Only then will elected officials be responsive to the community.”

-Renee Parsons

“As a concept, worthy of considering. We have to look at the economics and with the price of land so high, it would be an inappropriate use of city taxpayers’ dollars.”

“How do we put a dollar value on aesthetics?”

-Sidny Zink