Creating a Community Garden
Tips from The Backyard Produce Garden, Poway, CA
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Reasons to Start a Garden
- Improve nutrition & access to healthy foods
- Encourage exercise / purposeful work
- Create beauty / care for the environment
- Create a sense of community
- Serve others
- Teach children / adults

Getting Started -- Early Decisions

- What kind of garden?
  - Individual plots - gardeners keep their own harvest
  - Neighborhood garden - gardeners divide up harvest
  - Food bank garden - gardeners donate harvest
  - School garden - goal is education over harvest

Early Decisions - 2

- Where to site the garden on your land?
  - Access to water
  - Access for people
  - Access for vehicles
  - Access to storage
  - Slope of the land

Early Decisions - 3

- How big to make the garden? Considerations:
  - Initial costs: fencing, irrigation, tools, other supplies
  - Ongoing costs: water, fertilizer, plants, etc.
  - Labor available create it
  - Labor available to maintain it

Early Decisions - 4

- Physical layout of the garden?
  - In-ground beds?
  - Raised wooden beds?
  - Width of beds and paths?
  - Direction (east-west/north south?)
Getting Started

- Mark out the plot
- Clear debris
- Rake
- Weed whack
- Rake again

Deal with Terrain, if Needed

- Leveling
- Terracing
- Retaining walls
- Rainwater ditches/berms

Rototill and Rake Smooth

- Borrow or rent a rototiller
- Go a little beyond your planned border

Install a Fence

- What kind of fence?
  - Decorative or functional?
  - Keep out rabbits or people?
  - One fence, or multiple fences for multiple plots?
- Tips to foil critters
  - 1/2" galvanized HW cloth
  - Bury it 6-12," bend outward

Install a Gate

- What kind of gate?
  - Decorative or functional?
  - Keep out rabbits or people?
  - One gate for the whole garden?

Lay Out Beds and Paths

- Mark off in-ground beds
- Mark off paths
- Build raised wooden beds
Assemble Soil Amendments

Approx. recipe for a 50x2 bed:
- Soil from adjacent paths
- 10 cubic ft compost
- 50 lbs chicken manure
- 2 20-qt bags worm castings
- 10 cups organic veg fertilizer

Mix in the Soil Amendments

- Haul to each bed
- Dump / distribute along the bed
- Mix and rake in

Install Irrigation

- Need to bring water lines to the garden?
- Decide kind of irrigation
  - Spigots with hoses?
  - Soaker hose?
  - Drip irrigation?
  - Automatic timer?
  - Separate for each plot, if you have plots?

Garden Amenities

- Potting bench or other work surface
- Storage for tools and other supplies
- Trash / recycle containers
- Compost bin?
- Trellises?

Assemble Garden Tools

- New / used?
- Buy at yard/estate sales?
- Donated tools?
- Gardeners bring their own?
- Where to store?
- What’s the plan for sharing?

Meanwhile -- Plan Your Crops

- What to grow?
  - Who are the crops for?
  - What do they want?
  - What season is it?
  - What grows in your area?
- Lay out your planting plan
  - What will go in each bed?
  - How close to plant? How many plants needed?
Assemble Seedlings

- Start early so they’ll be ready
- Seek donated plants?
- Raise your own?
- Where will they be kept?

Plant!

- Can be gradual
- Be ready with tending plan
- Start your tending plan

It's All Worth It!