Description of Garden Committees

Community gardens run smoothly because of the work of many people, coordinated through garden committees, who each have small but important roles to organize the efforts.

In larger community gardens, the committee leaders can work together as a garden committee. They meet several times during the growing season to make plans and decisions between the spring and fall all-gardener meetings. Large decisions like changes in garden policy or plans to expand or build at the garden are often made democratically by discussions and voting at the all-gardener meetings.

In smaller gardens, committees can work independently and in team, sometimes without the need of election a leader per committee. A more organic and flexible way of organizing work can also be efficient, if communications between gardeners are transparent and regular.

What really matters in organizing the work in a community garden is that the load and joy are divided between many individuals, and that every gardener is encouraged to contribute based on their skills, abilities and interests. A positive approach is not only more fun, it is more efficient and contributes to the healthy development of a sustainable and self-managed community garden.

Possible community gardening committees include:

- General coordination
- Membership and treasurer
- Maintenance
- Communications
- Social and outreach
- Gardening buddies
- Food Donations
- Beautification
- And others

General coordination role examples

- Gather gardeners together for events, workdays, and meetings
- Encourage all to share in the work and decision-making of the garden
- Work to get other gardeners involved, recruiting people to take on tasks and responsibilities so that the garden and gardeners are cared for well
- Usually, there is 1 general coordinator per garden, but 2 people can also co-coordinate

Membership and treasurer role examples

- Take calls and emails from people who would like plots at the garden
- Maintain the waiting
- Coordinate the Registration Day
- Provide the gardeners with a map of the plot allocation of the garden
- Collect garden fees
- Keep track of expenses and budget
Maintenance role examples
- Organize work parties
- Look after material and installations
- Keep a to-do list of tasks that need to be done in the garden
- Propose a system that divides maintenance tasks (mowing the lawn, fixing the hose, racking, cleaning…) between gardeners
- Help organize any improvements to the garden like bulletin boards, fences, water system improvements, etc.

Communications role examples
- Update email list and gardener list with phone and emails
- Set-up and feed a garden Facebook page
- Create posters and signs for the garden
- Arrange for translation in different languages

Social and outreach role examples
- Participate in creating an inclusive space where everyone is welcome
- Organize community events such as potlucks and BBQs
- Organize kids activities or setting (e.g. sandbox, swings…)
- Explore partnership to create events in the garden (e.g. movie night, art festival…)
- Invite neighbours and local organizations to participate
- Outreach to individuals vulnerable to isolation and facilitate their participation
- Include art in the garden (e.g. mural, painted stones, stoned pathways…)

Gardening buddies role examples
- Organize gardening educational workshops
- Offer new gardeners assistance by teaming them up with experienced gardeners or offering specific gardening support
- Share with others gardening information and resources

Food Donations role examples
- Organize for harvesting days for food donation to a local food program
- Call volunteers for each donation day
- Care for the garden beds reserved for fresh produce donation

And others! The key is to adapt the committees and their roles based on your garden’s needs and your gardeners’ skills and interests. Have fun!