It’s difficult to find nutritious yet affordable food. One smart solution is to grow your own food, but people often don’t have the space, the knowledge, or the drive to start a garden. Community gardens provide a way for people to work together to grow food, grow relationships, and grow neighborhoods. They can start anywhere, including a patio, if green-space is limited. A community can be any connected group of people, so the possibilities are endless! As always, ask an adult sponsor to help direct the action.

**STEP ONE—PLAN IT!**

- Bring community individuals and organizations together to decide which issues are important to your community. Discuss how your garden—whether a communal or multi-plot space—will serve your community’s needs.
- Get people energized and organized; hold regular meetings to collaborate on goals and ideas that will help your garden and your community thrive.
- Make a checklist of things that need to happen to get your garden going.

**STEP TWO—CREATE IT!**

- Enlist help from groups and professionals to get: tools, funding, materials
- The USDA’s national educational network offers Cooperative Extension Offices in communities around the country, where Extension Master Gardeners can help with gardening challenges.
- Plan the layout of the garden by plots. Include plans for watering either with hoses, sprinklers, or other systems.

*Helpful Hint: The USDA’s People’s Garden website has how-to videos and databases filled with garden-based education guides, free seed and funding sources, and healthy gardening practices.*

**STEP THREE—DO IT!**

- Establish basic garden rules with the community. Everyone should agree on these.
- Clean the site. Clear the ground of litter and brush and loosen the soil using garden tools.
- Buy a soil testing kit or send off samples to be tested; check with your local Cooperative Extension Office. This will tell you the pH of the soil, as well as let you know if the soil is suitable for growing food.
- Section the garden as planned in Step Two.
- Plant!

*Helpful hint: The USDA’s Plant Hardiness Zone Map helps to determine which plants will thrive in your part of the country.*