



How-to Action Sheet



<http://www.pebbletossers.org>

## How to Start a Community Garden

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.***