

01 FALL

OTTAWA COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION COMMUNITY GARDEN GUIDE



<http://www.och.ca>

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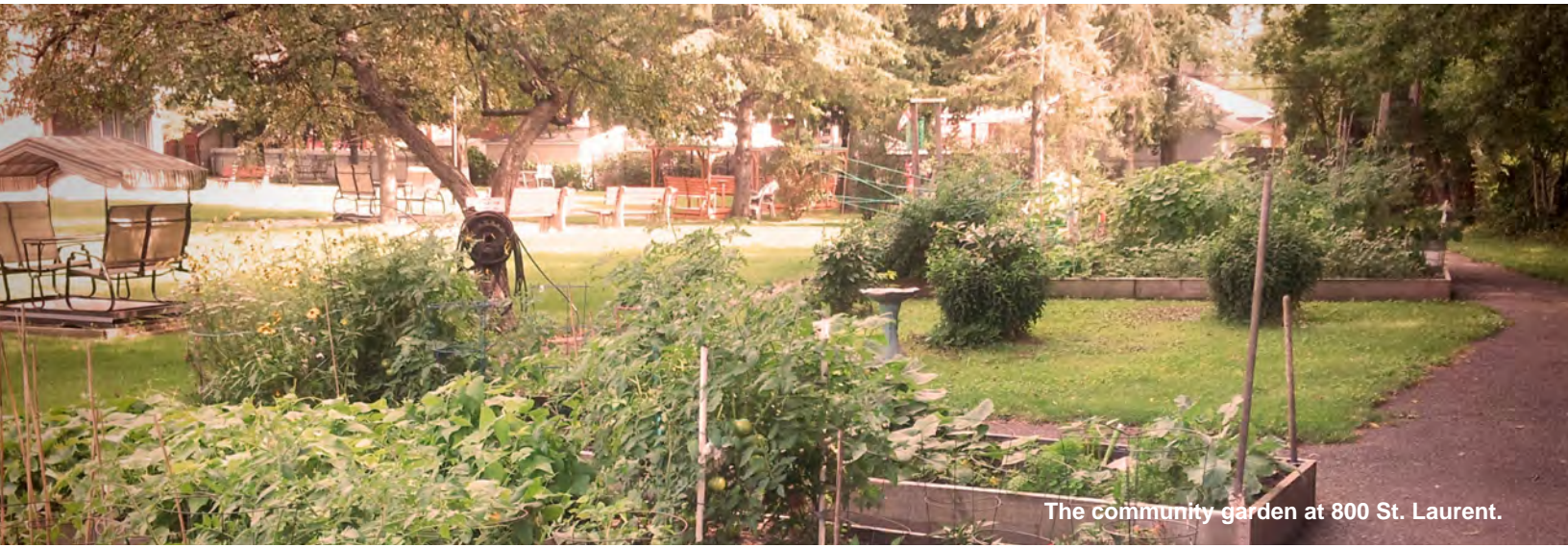
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Start Gardening!

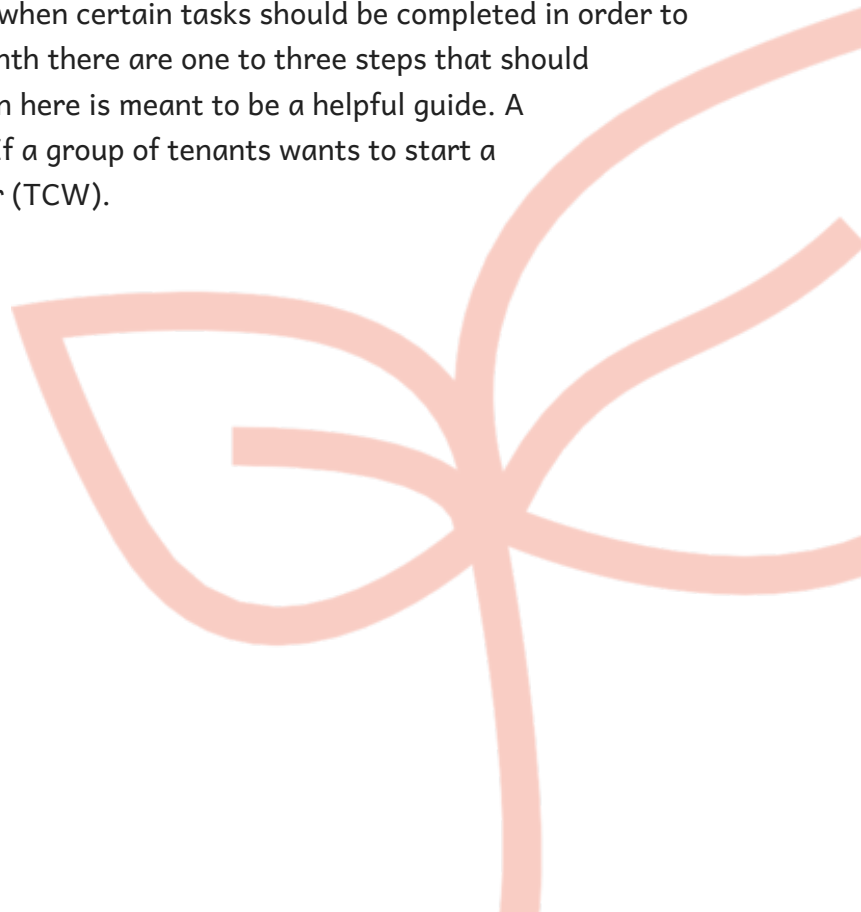


The community garden at 800 St. Laurent.

The OCH Community Garden Guide will help tenants organize a successful food producing community garden. This guide is filled with helpful information, suggestions, and tips. Be sure to pay attention to the boxes and timeline. Enjoy!

GARDEN TIMELINE

The Garden Timeline gives gardeners an idea of when certain tasks should be completed in order to set up a new community garden. Under each month there are one to three steps that should be completed for that month. The timeline given here is meant to be a helpful guide. A community garden can get started at any time. If a group of tenants wants to start a garden, contact your Tenant Community Worker (TCW).



STEP

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Step 1: Finding Gardening Sites

Are there spaces to garden in your community? Walk around the site and note potential gardening sites.

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REMINDER

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The Community Garden Network (CGN) hosts a “How to Start A Community Garden” workshop each fall! Also, Senior Organic Gardeners (SOG) is available to help gardeners in seniors communities. For more info, contact your Tenant Community Worker (TCW).

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Central: 613-564-1235

East: 613-789-4305

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South: 613-249-0458

West: 613-729-3136

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Step 2: Form your group

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Spread the Word

To get a garden up and running it is important to let other tenants and community members know about it. This can be done through word of mouth, flyers, invitations, or door-to-door visits. Let people know that anyone can join, even if they don't have a lot of experience.

Calling all Gardeners!

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Checklist to Form a Group:

☐ Contact OCH staff to let them know that you would like to start a garden

Discussion: How will your group involve staff?

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Build day at Russell Manor.
Thanks to Genband volunteers,
Senior Organic Gardeners, and
funding from the Community
Garden Development Fund!



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- ☐ Form a group of interested tenants.

Discussion: What is our plan to get other tenants involved? How will we let people know of this idea?

STEP

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- ☐ Develop a contact list of interested tenants

(See the back of the Fall section of this guide for a contact list template)

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- ☐ Plan your first gardening meeting!

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Garden Meeting

A meeting can act as a starting point for gathering tenants interested in gardening. This is where everyone can get together and talk about why they are interested in gardening and what they would like to get out of the garden club. The next few steps will highlight what you can discuss at your first gardening meeting.

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Contact List

It is important to have a formal list with the names, unit numbers, email and phone numbers of everyone who will be involved in the garden. This makes it easier to coordinate and get in touch with one another.



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Step 3: Setting Garden Goals

Goals of the Garden

It is important for gardeners to agree on what the goals of the garden will be. Garden goals can include any or all of the following:

- Beautifying the area
- Growing fresh, organic produce for individuals or the community
- Providing recreational activity
- Meeting and socializing with other community members
- And more!

In order to determine the goals of the garden, as a group at your gardening meeting work through the following questions:

1. What kind of garden do we want?

- ☐ Balcony/Container Garden
- ☐ Raised Bed(s)
- ☐ In the ground
- ☐ Rooftop garden
- ☐ Vertical garden
- ☐ Other _____

2. Where do we want to have our community garden?

3. What is our commitment to organic gardening?

OCH strongly recommends that all gardens follow organic practices. As a garden group, you should discuss your commitment to organic gardening. Ask your TCW for help if you are unsure about organic practices.



Container gardening with Lowertown Community Resource Centre.



Organic gardens are spaces where pesticides and other chemicals **are not** used.

Only natural remedies are used to deal with pests and weeds. When chemicals are used, they may get into other people's plots, other people's fruits and veggies, and into the ground water. If one person uses chemicals, the whole garden will feel the effects.

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4. What will we grow in the garden? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Annuals
- ☐ Perennials
- ☐ Fruits
- ☐ Vegetables
- ☐ Fruit and/or Nut Trees
- ☐ Shrubs
- ☐ Anything else?

5. What benefits do we want to get from gardening?

- ☐ To produce fresh, healthy, and affordable food
- ☐ To beautify the property
- ☐ To provide social and recreational activities
- ☐ Other _____

6. Will we share or donate extra produce? (Check one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, where?

i.e. food bank, community kitchen, etc.

7. What do we want to call our garden? Give your garden a name.



The community garden at Monfort.



Food Donation

Some community gardens choose to donate extra produce from the garden. Whole fruits and vegetables can be donated to food banks, local meal programs, or even shared among community members.

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Step 4: Involve OCH

How Can OCH Help?

Both the TCW and the Property Manager (PM) are helpful resources that can support the community garden from the beginning.

It is helpful to invite the TCW and PM to a meeting with the gardeners. This is an opportunity to discuss the location of the community garden and any other issues relating to the operation of a community garden. Also, let the TCW and PM know what ideas the gardeners have come up with so far and what help may be needed.

1. Have gardeners talked to the Property Manager yet?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

2. Have gardeners talked to the Tenant Community Worker yet?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

My Contacts

My Property Manager is:
Contact Information:

My Tenant Community Worker is:
Contact Information:



Ottawa Community Housing Support

OCH staff can be used as a main point of contact and as valuable resources throughout this process.

Staff can:

- Help get site permission
- Provide or help get water access
- Help gardeners acquire tools, soil, flowers, and turn over the soil (annual maintenance)
- Develop the garden site/ provide landscaping services
- Help gardeners find storage space
- Support funding applications (See the Budget & Funding section)

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How will our garden run?

Step 5: Garden Structure

Different Garden Structures at Ottawa Community Housing

There are many different types of community gardens. At OCH, community gardens range from separate plots maintained and harvested by individual tenants to Giving Gardens that are cared for by a group of tenants and open to anyone in the community to harvest from. Your TCW can help you determine which type of garden best suits your needs. In order to decide which type of garden is best for your community, discuss the following six different garden structures.



IMPORTANT:

There is financial support available for community gardens. Applications for Community Garden Development (Just Food) funding are due in January. Applications for OCH's Community Capital Fund are due in February. Talk to your TCW as soon as possible for help with the application process.

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1. We want our garden to consist of:

☐ Allotment plots: Separate plots assigned to individuals, a couple of friends or a family who want to garden together.

2

☐ Communal plots: Where planning, gardening and harvesting are done by the garden group together and harvest is shared among the gardeners. This may be how your whole garden is structured, or could be how one plot is structured. For example, if you want to plant a lot of strawberries, corn or squash it might make sense to set aside a communal plot for these plants which everyone can maintain and share.

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☐ Public/Tasting plots (aka Giving Garden): Where garden members and volunteers maintain all the plots together but anyone in the community can harvest from them. They are a way of engaging people who are not garden members and may help to reduce theft and vandalism in a garden. This could be how your whole garden is structured, or how one plot is structured.

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☐ Accessible plots: Individual or community plots that are accessible for people using wheelchairs or walkers. Some accessible plots may have seating for people who need to sit while gardening, or raised beds for people who have difficulty bending over.

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☐ Donation plots: Where a specific plot is set aside and maintained by all gardeners and the harvest is donated to the Food Bank or a local charity

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☐ Programming plots: Where a specific plot is set aside as a teaching garden for educational, therapeutic or community building purposes. For example, a local school, a daycare centre, or a community group could help care for the plot. Garden members help out with maintaining it, in addition to their own plot.

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Step 6: Governance

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What do Garden Coordinators/Steering Committee members do?

The main role of a Garden Coordinator or Steering Committee members is to organize garden meetings and act as a contact person in case of problems or gardening questions. They will be the main contact with OCH staff. Other duties of the Garden Coordinator/Steering Committee could include:

- Planning garden meetings
- Coordinating gardening events and workshops
- Supporting group decision-making on gardening
- Assigning plots
- Ensuring gardeners have information they need about gardening
- Connecting gardeners to someone who can answer their questions
- Referring concerns or disputes to OCH staff
- If there is a storage shed for the garden, the Coordinators could be the keeper of the keys



Container gardening workshop with Lowertown Community Resource Centre.

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Garden Coordinator(s)/Steering Committee

As a group it is important to select a person or group of people who will organize garden meetings and coordinate with OCH. They will become the garden group's main contacts. The TCW can act as the garden coordinator if a gardener is unable to take this role.

2

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1. In terms of governance, we would like to:

- ☐ Nominate a garden coordinator(s) from among the gardeners (1-2 people)
- ☐ Nominate a steering committee from among the gardeners (3-4 people)
- ☐ Have the OCH TCW be the main point of contact
- ☐ Have another partner or service provider be the main point of contact (i.e. Community House Director, Salus staff, etc.)

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Getting Gardeners Organized!

Garden groups, like any other group, need to be organized. Being clear on expectations, roles, rights and responsibilities keeps the garden running smoothly and consistently. Gardeners should discuss with each other and with their TCW as to how they want the group to be organized.



An example of container planters.

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STEP

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Step 7: Garden Guidelines and Membership

Making Garden Guidelines or a Membership Agreement

It is important to establish guidelines for the garden because it lets everyone know what their rights and responsibilities are as a gardener. These guidelines should be discussed and agreed upon as a group, and either given to all gardeners or posted in a location all gardeners can see. Garden groups can also put these guidelines in a written agreement which every member must agree and sign in order to participate in the garden. All gardeners can refer to the guidelines when rules and responsibilities are not being followed.



A membership agreement ensures that each gardener knows and agrees to their rights and responsibilities. Examples of guidelines are:

- No dogs allowed in the garden plots.
- Gardeners will only tend their own plots. They will not water, weed, or harvest other plots unless given permission by the gardener who has that plot.
- Pesticides and herbicides will not be used in the garden.
- Tobacco and marijuana will not be grown in the garden.

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The following questions can help you determine what things you would include in your membership agreement. Work through these questions as a group in order to come up with your garden guidelines.

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1. How will plots be given out? (i.e. lottery; first come, first served)

2. How many plots can each gardener have?

3. Do returning gardeners have priority to be assigned the same plot next year?

4. What will we do if we have many interested gardeners and not enough plots?

5. Will there be a small membership fee to go towards purchasing shared tools, etc.?

6. If we have shared tools and hoses, how do we expect gardeners to treat them? (i.e. clean the tools and put them away after using them; put away the hose after using it, etc.)

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7. Do we expect gardeners to put in volunteer hours towards the whole garden? (i.e. filling rain barrels, work days for preparing the garden in spring or putting the garden to sleep before winter, maintaining the wooden beds, etc.)

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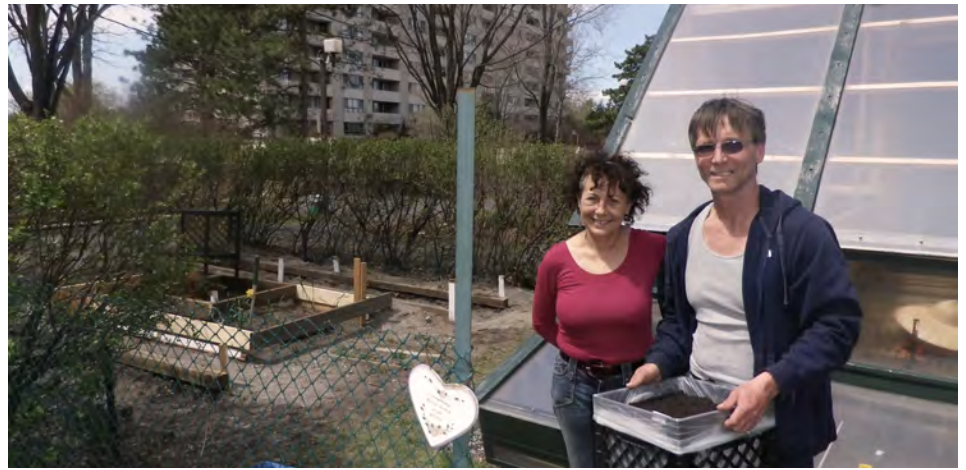
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STEP

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The Giving Garden at Debra Dynes.



Regina Towers

....The Regina Towers Community Garden was started informally over five years ago by different tenant volunteers who wanted to beautify their community. Initially it was a small plot in the back of the building, but about two and half years ago few tenants asked to expand the beautification efforts to other parts of the community's green space. Since then more volunteers have joined and they have started a semi-formal process of electing a garden lead and advocating/fundraising for the garden through the Tenant Circle. The success of this garden is directly linked to the fact that it was started by tenants in an informal manner and it continues to be a community grassroots initiative. The garden volunteer group's slogan is "Bring Back Joy"



Community Garden Member Contact List Worksheet

	Name	Preferred language	Address (please include unit #)	Phone	Email address
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
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Notes: