

P-Patch Community Gardening Program

GIVING GARDENS

TIP

PP501

6/12/2017

P-Patch TIPS are reference documents that address topics related to the development and ongoing management of P-Patch Community Gardens.

P-Patches have a long tradition of growing healthy, organic food to share with others. Each year P-Patch gardeners donate more than 10 tons of produce to food banks and meal programs. Our gardens and gardeners are encouraged to make food bank gardening part of their regular activities. The lead volunteer on this task should work with P-Patch staff. **P-Patch staff can provide garden space and seeds, as well as link you to other gardens who have successful giving programs.**

Organizing

There are many approaches to organizing giving garden efforts in your P-Patch. All are great ways to share the bounty of your garden. Use any combination of these approaches that works best for your P-Patch.

Recipe for successful giving

Below are the ingredients that make a successful Giving Garden. Think about how you'll engage other people in your garden or neighborhood to carry out these activities.

People: volunteer recruitment and appreciation

Growing: planting, caretaking, harvesting

Sharing: prepping, cleaning, weighing, logging produce totals, delivering donations to local food bank or feeding program.

Organizing:

- Creating a dedicated Food Bank "Giving Garden" Bed: individuals work together to care for,



harvest, and deliver.

- Identifying a team willing to coordinate, plant, water, weed, harvest, prepare for donation, and deliver.
- Incorporating individual donations with shared efforts. *Sometimes a garden might only be able to donate from individual plots, consider organizing to plant a row specifically for donation.*
- Finding gardeners that are good growers and asking them to share their expertise with others and consider sharing their harvest.
- Including the Giving Garden work at whole garden work parties.
- Tracking your donations! Help the P-Patch Program track your great impact by using our tracking sheets - available at: http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/PPatch/Produce_tracking_Sheet.pdf
- Picking a consistent location, time, and day for donations.



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- Find a cool spot for gardeners to put produce (some gardens use coolers or a shady storage area).

Planting Tips

- 1) **Plant fewer crops.** For example, in a 100sf garden, plant 2 crops at a time. It is easier to harvest and will be more impactful for food banks and feeding programs.
- 2) **Batch harvest.** Plant crops that can be harvested at one time if you aren't in the garden everyday. Example: green onions vs. peas or beans
- 3) **Successive plantings.** Many crops can be grown several times a year (lettuce, green onions, spinach, radishes, carrots, cilantro, etc.).
- 4) **Food banks love herbs.** Package them well in small amounts tied together. Please label herbs; lots of folks have never seen them fresh!
- 5) **Label produce** that is not 'basic' such as kale, chard, fancy greens, and odd colored squash.
- 6) **Consider setting up a gleaning program.** Working with all gardeners to glean unused produce can also be helpful with theft problems. Staff are happy to share examples from other gardens. When doing gleaning, treat each garden as it is your own. Step back and look at the garden layout and then tread gently into each plot.

Where to donate

- 1) Connect with the program you are growing for. Learn who is using the meals program or food bank. If you know who the people are, the food will be better received.
- 2) Find a comprehensive list of Seattle-area food banks, meal programs, and low-income apartment buildings that gladly accept fresh produce donations, including contact information, best hours to donate, and preferred donations at: [http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/PPatch/Where to Donate.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/PPatch/Where%20to%20Donate.pdf)
- 3) Take items in before they open to give volunteers and staff time to process the donation.



Additional Resources

Organic Gardening information:

- [“Organic Gardening 101”](#)
- <http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/PPatch/Organic-Gardening.pdf>

Join the citywide P-Patch Giving Garden e-mail discussion listserv: <http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/programs-and-services/p-patch-community-gardening/contact-us/mailling-list>

Seattle’s Giving Garden Network:

The “GIVINGGARDENS” list serve and Seattle’s Giving Garden Network www.sggcn.org is a good place to look for updates related to getting starts. It also provides opportunities to connect with other gardeners working on giving gardens.

Visit their website at SGGN.org.

To contact the Giving Garden Network directly email: SeattleSGGN@gmail.com

Other P-Patches

Ask P-Patch staff for connections with other gardens that are running successful giving programs.



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