

Part 2: Managing A Volunteer-Run Garden



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Our Gardening Teams

- ~ Garden 1:
 - Mostly retirees, a few working folks
 - 3-person team each day, an hour or so



- ~ Garden 2:
 - Special-needs young adults & their teachers/aids
 - 2-3 days a week, an hour or so



- ~ Garden 3:
 - Retirees, working folks, special-needs adults
 - 6 days a week, an hour or so

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Special Projects Team

- ~ There are tasks besides gardening!
 - Shopping
 - Hauling things
 - Building things - trellises, etc.
 - Fixing things
 - Refurbishing beds



- ~ Good jobs for non-gardeners!



- ~ We established a Special Projects Team

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Advance Planning Team

- ~ Someone needs to think ahead:
 - When will the current crops be done?
 - What will be planted next?
 - When do seeds need to be ordered?
 - When do seedlings need to be started?



- ~ We established an Advanced Planning Team

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Administrative Tasks

- ~ Raise funds; manage finances
- ~ Recruit, process, place volunteers
- ~ Set up / manage web site
- ~ Coordinate with other groups
- ~ Prepare and distribute newsletter
- ~ Set up / coordinate meetings



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Who Makes Gardening Decisions?

- ~ Everyone has an opinion!
 - ~ What to grow?
 - ~ When to plant?
 - ~ How fertilize?
 - ~ When to harvest?



- ~ We appointed a Lead Gardener for each garden who listens then decides



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Team Communication

A big issue in a volunteer garden!

- ~ The daily teams don't see each other
- ~ They need to know:
 - What's already been done?
 - What else needs to be done?
 - Who is responsible for what?
- ~ Without communication, it's chaos



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Setting up Team Communication

Two way communication:

- 1) Give directions to the volunteers:
 - What needs to be done?
 - Who is assigned to do it?
 - How is it to be done?
- 2) Get feedback from the volunteers:
 - What was done on your day?
 - Observations / feedback
 - Questions / concerns / requests



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Communication Methods

- ~ White board at the garden
- ~ Email messages
- ~ Web site where everyone can make entries
 - Lead Gardeners post instructions
 - Daily teams report in
 - Everyone can read and stay in tune
 - <http://volunteer-garden.wikispaces.com>



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Training

- ~ Most daily teams have both experienced & new gardeners
- ~ New volunteers get on-the-job training from teammates
- ~ Farmer Roy advises and mentors us
- ~ Sunshine Care garden seminars are open to all



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Repairs/Maintenance-Reporting/Resolution



- ~ Daily teams report problems in their on-line daily report
- ~ Special Projects team picks up on the report
- ~ Special Projects reports back when the job is done

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Tools and Resources - Sharing/Storage

- ~ Most of our tools were donated by volunteers



- ~ Stored in garden-side tool boxes, plastic bins
- ~ Each garden has its own tools + shared tools
- ~ Soil amendments / fertilizers are acquired in bulk and shared as needed by each garden

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Compost Pile / Recycling / Trash



- ~ We compost our garden waste
- ~ The three gardens share:
 - One composting operation
 - One trash can, recycle can for non-compostables

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Working with a Food Bank



- ~ What crops do they want?
 - This determines what you grow
 - May differ from gardener wishes
- ~ How will the produce get there?
 - We have to harvest AND deliver
 - What days / times will they accept delivery?
 - Do you need a cooler / refrigerator / storage?

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Reporting to Funders / Volunteers



We use a monthly newsletter to:

- ~ Report to volunteers, funders, and other supporters
- ~ Announce upcoming events and developments

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Challenges



- ~ Regular gardening challenges
- ~ Ensuring a good experience for the volunteers
- ~ Raising sufficient funds
- ~ Maximizing production



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Rewards

- ~ Learning new things
- ~ Feeling of camaraderie
- ~ Sense of accomplishment



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