

2024 revisions add in red

CATEGORY: LANDSCAPES FOR HEALTH – DESIGNED LANDSCAPES

Community Gardens

Community gardens are defined as a “single piece of land gardened collectively by a group of people using shared or collective plots on private and public land” in urban or rural settings (Connect our Future, n.d.). The diversity of community gardens is their strength; the American Community Garden Association links more than 2000 gardens in North America. Community gardens encompass a broad spectrum of goals, activities, people and garden installations including school gardens, environmental stewardship, food action, food councils, sustainable communities strategies, soil and water conservation, social engagement, and horticultural therapy. More recent research has investigated plant & insect health at community gardens (Felderhoff et al., 2023; Sebald et al., 2023).

A newer model of community gardens are those affiliated with hospitals, as delivery sites for nutrition-focused educational/lifestyle/health programming aimed at individual and community health improvements. Part of a newer movement referred to as Food is Medicine, an increasing number of these types of community gardens, some at hospital locations, some in the community, represent the intersection of healthcare and horticulture.

Recent research focuses have been on group gardening with native Americans (Brown et al., 2020; Emmanuel et al., 2023; Cueva et al., 2020; Ornelas et al., 2021), community gardening impacts on specific health metrics like stress (Coringrato et al. 2024), and interventions for specific populations - community gardening interventions for non-communicable diseases among Indigenous populations (Emmanuel et al., 2023), migrant and refugees (Polanco, 2020; Ramburn et al., 2023), vulnerable populations (Dyg et al., 2020; Tracey et al., 2023), cancer survivors (Gregis et al., 2021), and senior's with food insecurity (Tims et al., 2021).

For related resources refer to category: Food, Nutrition and Food Action – all sections; category: Landscapes for Health – Community Gardens, Urban Farms.; category Populations & Programs - Food Insecure populations

Key Organizations

[The American Community Garden Association](#) (ACGA)

[The Coalition of Community Gardens](#) (Florida)

[Edible South Florida](#)

[Federation of City, Farms and Community Gardens](#) (Europe)

[Health Care Without Harm](#)

[Urban Land Institute](#)

Books, journals & epublications on community gardens

City Farmer News <https://cityfarmer.info/how-community-gardens-contribute-to-healthy-and-inclusive-neighborhoods/>

MacDonald, R., & Reitmeier, C. (2017). *Understanding food systems agriculture, food science, and nutrition in the United States*. Academic Press.

Nettle, C. (2014). *Community gardening as social action*. Routledge.

Public Health Law Center (2017). *Community gardening policy reference guide*.
<https://publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/Community-Gardening-Guide-2017.pdf>

Valle, GR. (2022). *Gardening at the margins: Convivial labor, community, and resistance*. University of Arizona Press.

Research & articles on community gardens

Recently published selected research & articles:

- Alaimo, K., Beavers, A.W., Crawford, S. et al. (2016). Amplifying health through community gardens: A framework for advancing multicomponent, behaviorally based neighborhood interventions. *Curr Environ Health Rep.*, 3(3),302-12.
- Al-Delaimy, W.K., & Webb, M. (2017). Community gardens as environmental health interventions: Benefits versus potential risks. *Curr Environ Health Rep.*, 4(2), 252-265.
- Barry, V., & Blythe, C. (2018). Growing pathways to well-being through community gardens and greenspace. Case studies from Birmingham and the West Midlands, UK. In Coles, Costa & Watson (Eds.) *Pathways to well-being in design examples from the arts, humanities and the built environment*. Routledge, 76-96.
- Baur, J. (2020). Campus community gardens and student health: A case study of a campus garden and student well-being. *J Am Coll Health.*, 5, 1-8.
- Beam, D.R., Szabo, A., Olson, J. et al. (2021). Vacant lot to community garden conversion and crime in Milwaukee: A difference-in-differences analysis. *Inj Prev.*, 27(5), 403-408.
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- Boffi, M., Pola, L., Fumagalli, N. et al. (2021). Nature experiences of older people for active ageing: An interdisciplinary approach to the co-design of community gardens. *Front Psychol.*, 27(12), 702525.
- Brown, B., Dybdal, L., Noonan, C. et al. (2020). Group gardening in a Native American community: A collaborative approach. *Health Promot Pract.*, 21(4), 611-623.
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- Butterfield, K.L. (2020). Neighborhood composition and community garden locations: The effect of ethnicity, income, and education. *Sociological Perspectives*, 63(5), 738-763.
- Carrad, A., Rose, N., Charlton, K., & Reeve, B. (2024). Local governments as gatekeepers to community gardens: What does “support” mean? *Local Environment*, 29(7), 849-864.
- Chauvenet, C., Sheppard, B., Siddique, N. et al. (2021). A qualitative study of rural low-wealth participants’ experiences with community gardens. *J Hunger Environ Nutr.*, 1-21.
- Coringrato, E., Alaimo, K., Leiferman, J.A. et al. (2024). A process evaluation of a randomized-controlled trial of community gardening to improve health behaviors and reduce stress and anxiety. *Scientific Reports*, 14(1), 13620.
- Cueva, K., Lovato, V., Carroll, D. et al. (2020). Qualitative evaluation of a community based, culturally relevant intervention to promote healthy food access in American Indian communities. *J Community Health.*, 45(3), 458-464.

- Derksen, M. (2021). Healthy urban communities: How does involvement in green citizen initiatives benefit people's health and well-being? *ISHS Acta Horticulturae 1330: XV International People Plant Symposium and II International Symposium on Horticultural Therapies: The Role of Horticulture in Human Well-being and Social Development*
- Dobson, M.C., Reynolds, C., Warren, P.H., & Edmondson, J.L. (2021). "My little piece of the planet": The multiplicity of well-being benefits from allotment gardening. *British Food Journal*, 123(3), 1012-1023.
- Doyle, G. (2022). In the garden: Capacities that contribute to community groups establishing community gardens. *International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development*, 14(1), 15-32.
- Dyg, P.M., Christensen, S., & Peterson, C.J. (2020). Community gardening and wellbeing amongst vulnerable populations: A thematic review. *Health Promotion Int.*, 35(4).
- Egli, V., Oliver, M., & Tautolo, E. (2016). The development of a model of community garden benefits to wellbeing. *Preventative Medicine Reports*, 3, 348-352.
- Elton, S. (2021). Relational health: Theorizing plants as health-supporting actors. *Soc Sci Med.*, 281, 114083.
- Emmanuel, R., Read, U.M., Grande, A.J., & Harding, S. (2023). Acceptability and feasibility of community gardening interventions for the prevention of non-communicable diseases among Indigenous populations: A scoping review. *Nutrients.*, 15(3), 791.
- Estrada, M., Kotsila, P., Hörschelmann, K. et al. (2020, November). Ensuring citizenship rights: Cooperation and tensions in the governance of urban community gardens. In *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 588(5), 052003). IOP Publishing.
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- Felderhoff, J., Gathof, A.K., Buchholz, S., & Egerer, M. (2023). Vegetation complexity and nesting resource availability predict bee diversity and functional traits in community gardens. *Ecol Appl.*, 33(2), e2759.
- Fisch, V.K. (2023). Beyond the human-garden communities in community gardens. *Social Work & Society*, 21(1).
- Fleming, L., Zhang, W., & Nelson, K. (2022). Horticulture for health in U.S. hospitals: Horticultural therapy, gardens in hospitals, nutrition-led programs & affiliated community gardens. *Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture*, 32(1), 25-38.
- French, B., & Maynard, A. (2023). Eradicating malnutrition through small-scale, diverse and local food production. In Marsh & Williams (Eds.), *Cultivated therapeutic landscapes*. Routledge.
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- George, D.R., & Ethridge, A.E. (2023). Hospital-based community gardens as a strategic partner in addressing community health needs. *American Journal of Public Health*, 113(9), 939-942.
- Glover, T.D. (2021). Healthy garden plots? Harvesting stories of social connectedness from community gardens. *Int J Environ Res Public Health.*, 18(11), 5747.
- Gosh, S. (2023). Growing health in local food gardens: Cases studies of community, school, and home gardens. In Marsh & Williams (Eds.), *Cultivated therapeutic landscapes*. Routledge.
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- Gripper, A.B., Nethery, R., Cowger, T.L. et al. (2022). Community solutions to food apartheid: A spatial analysis of community food-growing spaces and neighborhood demographics in Philadelphia. *Soc Sci Med.*, 310, 115221.
- Gush, M.B., Blanuša, T., Chalmin-Pui, L.S. et al. (2024). Environmental horticulture for domestic and community gardens—An integrated and applied research approach. *Plants, People, Planet*, 6(2), 254-270.
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Examples of community gardens

Active Orlando community gardens.

<https://www.orlando.gov/Our-Government/Departments-Offices/Executive-Offices/CAO/Sustainability-Resilience/Green-Works-Focus-Areas/Local-Food-Systems/Community-Gardens>

American Community Garden Association website shares resources and gardens of the month as success stories and inspiration. Eden Garden, Joliet Ill. is one such example where church, children and food literacy and access have thrived.

<https://www.communitygarden.org/post/copy-of-community-garden-spotlight-of-the-month-wagner-farms-arboretum-gardens-nj>

Bardarash Community Garden, Kurdistan is located at the SEED Foundation Trauma Center in the refugee camp, with the mission of helping people heal from trauma, cope with displacement, rebuilding a future where gardening, psychosocial and mental health services are available.

<https://lemontretrust.org/community-gardens/>

Beacon Food Forest in Seattle Washington is open to the public to forage on the 7-acre plot adjacent to a local park.

<https://beaconfoodforest.org/>

Boston Medical Center's rooftop farm video. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-f9dPX2AiYc>

Cancer Treatment Centers. (n.d.). *Cancer patients use gardening for physical and mental health* [Video].

YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8OKVhaiD1M>

Community Gardens website from *edible South Florida* lists community gardens (2024).

<https://ediblesouthflorida.ediblecommunities.com/things-do/community-gardens>

Denver Urban Gardens (DUG) increases access, skills and resources to grow food locally as sustainable green spaces while providing resources, community garden directory, programs.

<https://dug.org/>

Gainesville Giving Garden in Gainesville, FL is committed to “Bridging the gap between low-income families and fresh, organic produce by growing and distributing food to those in need.”

<https://www.gainesvillegivinggarden.org/>

Green Haven Project in Overtown, FL is a non-profit organization that creates community gardens in food deserts and provides locally grown food free to community residents. They also provide educational workshops on horticulture and nutrition for youth.

<https://www.greenhavenproject.org/>

Grow2Heal Hospital Garden South Florida PBS. (n.d.). YSF – Grow2Heal Hospital Garden [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRNFQHIBYGo>

Henry Ford Hospital West Bloomington greenhouse combines food production and wellness.

<https://www.greenhousemag.com/news/henry-ford-hospital-greenhouse/>

Needham Community Farm MA provides hands-on education and growing space for sustainable growing, community connections and food donations for food insecure community members.

https://www.needhamfarm.org/?gclid=CjwKCAjw5dqgBhBNEiwA7PryaAAZuMTYsXqOhO9n6FagQIvRaOeWwWpqDy7-3HitoVf4b4c6r-KhYRoCelQQAvD_BwE

Prinzessinnengarten urban farm in Berlin Germany, beside the former Berlin Wall, in unused space in the city, is growing vegetables in easy to move containers (recycled tetra pacs, rise sacks, plastic crates).

<https://prinzessinnengarten.net/about/>

United States Botanic Garden, in conjunction with the American Public Gardens Association have awarded funds to 26 public gardens and their community partners engaging in urban agriculture, food-growing and related education work in 2024. The Urban Agriculture Resilience Program, begun in 2020 has awarded \$1.57 million dollars.

<https://www.publicgardens.org/funds-awarded-to-26-urban-agriculture-projects-led-by-public-gardens-and-community-partners/>

Whitelock Community Farm in Baltimore, Maryland promotes gardening, composting and community activity

<http://whitelockfarm.org/>

Videos, webinars & websites on community gardens

Agrihoods, a new approach to master-planned neighborhoods and interest in community farms is profiled in *Forbes* magazine article in Serenbe GA, Grayslake Ill, and Palm Beach Fl.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/allyyale/2019/09/12/meet-the-farm-based-neighborhoods-changing-the-face-of-master-planned-communities/?sh=61c700f63baa>

Community Agriculture: Concepts, Models, and Impacts website by Utah State University provides background information.

<https://extension.usu.edu/sustainability/research/community-agriculture-concepts-models-impacts>

Common Grounds online forum hosted by the American Community Gardening Association is used for exchanging stories, suggestions and questions related to community gardens.

<https://www.communitygarden.org/forum>

Guides for Community Gardening (digital and hardcopy) are identified on the Boston Public Library site.

<https://guides.bpl.org/communitygardening>

Harlem Grown community gardens seek to inspire youth to lead healthy ambitious lives through hands-on education available at this organization's site in downtown NY.

<https://www.harlemgrown.org/>

Healthcare without Harm. (2018). Examples of hospital roles and participation [in community farms].

<https://foodcommunitybenefit.noharm.org/resources/implementation-strategy/program-community-gardens-and-farms>

City Farmer News site provides articles and videos on community gardens like *Health: Community Garden Storytelling Project* video and "How community gardens contribute to health and inclusive neighborhoods" article.

<https://cityfarmer.info/how-community-gardens-contribute-to-healthy-and-inclusive-neighbourhoods/>

Hunter College New York City Food Policy Center website identifies 15 urban farms bringing fresh produce and food education to New Yorkers (Brooklyn Grange, The Battery Urban Farm, Eagle Street Rooftop Farms, East New York Farms...).

<https://www.nycfoodpolicy.org/15-urban-farms-and-gardens-bringing-fresh-produce-and-food-education-to-new-yorkers/>

NC Collard Greens and Common Ground resources from NC State Extension provides information and guides in English & Spanish.

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/collard-greens-and-common-ground-a-north-carolina-community-food-gardening-handbook>

Food Action is Happening in People-Plant Programming webinar/YouTube video by Lesley Fleming, HTR and Donna Perez Lugones identify projects and organizations addressing food access and food security.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORSrtP1qBhU&t=4s>

Need to Know Developments in Horticultural Therapy and Horticulture for Health include nutrition and food literacy with projects addressing food/nutrition access. Youtube video/webinar.

[New Developments in Horticultural Therapy and Horticulture for Health - YouTube](#)

Nutrition Garden Rx webinar/youtube video shares how garden-based initiatives can address food insecurity.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBNp3Lr1e0M>

North Carolina Community Garden Partners is a volunteer-based grassroots non-profit that hosts a website connection people, gardens and resources for growing food, building communities and cultivating justice.

<https://www.nccgp.org/>

Stein Leaning Gardens at Saint Sabina website discusses benefits of community gardens including helping the environment, sustainable development goals, improved lifestyle and return to traditions, increased real estate values and food action for food insecurity.

<https://www.sabinagardens.org/the-many-benefits-of-community-gardens>

THAD database includes therapeutic horticulture activities specifically for participants at community gardens (activities like kitchen waste: regrow avocado seeds, freezing herbs, newcomer plots gardening at hospital grounds, planting & building a pallet garden, field trip to community garden, growing garlic, herb propagation by cutting & seeds).

<https://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/therapeutic-horticulture-activities-database/food-insecure/>

The BIPOC Community Garden – Connecting Food and People through Gardening (Ithica, NY)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hALWsAm2FjY>

Tulane University identifies public health benefits of community gardens, best crops, with other resources helpful for community gardens.

<https://publichealth.tulane.edu/blog/benefits-of-community-gardens/>

Urban Harvest.org in Houston, Tx shares a video on starting a community or school garden, and information on its 160 affiliated gardens, all focused on creating thriving communities with access to fresh food and sustainable greenspaces.

<https://www.urbanharvest.org/gardens/>

Related organizations

[Jardins Comunitarios de Orland FL.](#) (in Spanish)

Local Master Gardener & Extension offices

[Soil Science Society of America](#)

[Waterloo Region Community Garden Network](#), Canada

Written and compiled by Lesley Fleming, Daniela Perez Lugones Nov 2021; revised in Mar 2023 by Lesley Fleming. Revised in 2024 by Lesley Fleming & Joanna Brown.