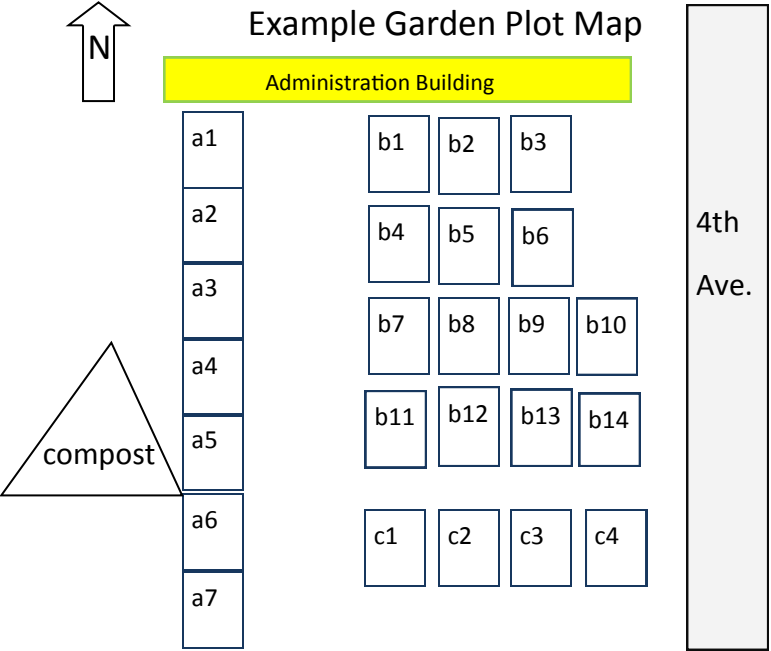


# Start a Sustainable Community Garden

- Arrange for space at a church, park district, school, or business. Ask about water, parking, hours of access, and insurance.
- Decide on your garden’s mission. The mission will dictate the rules etc.
- Are garden plots free to participants or is there a rental fee? Gardeners tend to invest in the plot/soil, if they have the option of using the same plot again.
- Map/mark your plots to communicate boundaries - see example on right.
- Have a planning meeting and choose a coordinator to oversee the project. Get commitments and post rules.
- Start seeds/plants outside after the last frost. Add flowers to attract pollinators (bees, butterflies, birds, and bats).
- Amend the soil with compost and keep synthetic fertilizers out of the garden.
- Build a compost pile. Add green and brown garden waste, turn often, and add moisture.
- Use lead-free hoses if a water connection is available.
- Refrain from annual tilling. Instead, top dress soil with compost and work gently. Create pathways around growing areas to reduce soil compaction in the garden.
- Connect with your neighbors and share ideas, seeds, and harvests.

Tina Koral, Founder/Director of  
The GardenWorks Project:  
[www.gardenworksproject.org](http://www.gardenworksproject.org)



## The Mission of Community Gardens

**Naperville Park District, Naperville IL**— “Since the 1970’s, the Park District has offered its Community Garden Plots program as a place for people to exercise their love for growing plants and food. And, through the program, something else has emerged and grown – a whole community with a passion for sharing its abundance.” [www.napervilleparks.org/gardenplots](http://www.napervilleparks.org/gardenplots)

**Our Savior Lutheran Church, Carol Stream IL**— “Our garden brings together people in our congregation and forms stronger relationships. It allows people in need to work the garden and receive fresh grown food. Individuals learn about sustainable gardening practices and take care of the resources God has given us.” [www.oursavior.com/community-garden](http://www.oursavior.com/community-garden)

**Ball Horticultural, West Chicago IL**— “Our company currently offers employees 8’x8’ garden plots to 105 growers who plant a mix of vegetables and flowers. Many of our employee gardeners live in apartments/condos with limited outdoor space and appreciate a chance to garden. They take their garden yield home and also share some vegetables with a local shelter. A “harvest potluck” completes a season of growing and socializing for our workforce.” [www.ballhort.com](http://www.ballhort.com)

**The Resiliency Institute, Naperville IL**— “Our non-profit educational organization is transforming the suburbs into resilient permaculture communities prepared for economic, social and environmental change. Our ecological garden designs grow food security, build the local economy, increase biodiversity, and foster community.” [www.theresiliencyinstitute.net](http://www.theresiliencyinstitute.net)

## Benefits of Community Gardens



### Nutrition

Garden based activities can influence children’s willingness to taste vegetables, understand nutrition, and have a preference for fruits and vegetables.

### Physical Activity & Fitness

Gardening is considered moderate to heavy physical activity, and is linked to beneficial changes in total and HDL cholesterol, and systolic blood pressure.

### Economic

Community gardens have been shown to increase property values and save people money.  
  
One tomato seed can produce 60 tomatoes!

**Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry, Du Page County**—Joint efforts keep Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry serving residents. The pantry regularly receives produce from: The Green Earth Institute, Mayneland Farms, and Wagner Farms. In 2013, individual gardeners from "Plant a Row" project (Naperville Park District) also donated. In addition, the University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners planned and maintained a small garden donated by the Mondolez plant in Naperville. These vast growing and giving efforts supply people in need with fresh organic produce.  
[www.loaves-fishes.org](http://www.loaves-fishes.org)

**“The 600 or so pounds delivered to the pantry is greatly appreciated because of its freshness. Our country's negative health issues are due mostly to bad nutritional habits promoted by expeditious ways of eating. It is hoped that the fresh produce will guide clients to a healthier lifestyle.”** Fritz Porter, University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener  
[web.extension.illinois.edu](http://web.extension.illinois.edu)

**Westmont High School , Westmont IL** — Westmont High School administration asked for new ways to engage the school population, and teachers and students answered the call. In the winter of 2013, soil was brought in and raised beds were constructed. Planting began in the spring and ended with a harvest of over 500 lbs. of produce. Students ate campus grown: cucumbers, green beans, zucchini, potatoes, lettuce, tomatoes, chard, and broccoli. All were prepared by the school’s Food Service Program. The kids performed drainage and chemical testing on their plots and learned lessons in sustainability, composting, and self-reliance. Westmont High is currently planning for the new growing season.  
[www.cusd201.org](http://www.cusd201.org)

**“When the students know the foods they are eating are from the school garden, it influences them to, at the very least, try the food. We have received positive reactions from the students when sampling the garden foods.”** Francesca Canzoneri, Westmont High School—Food Service Director



# William Hammerschmidt School Lombard IL

**Ambitious Beginnings**  
A year and a half ago, the school principal and a few parents decided to create a road map to transform the school grounds. The dream was to inspire students to get outdoors, connect to nature, and move their bodies. The “Learn & Play Gardens” is a vision of the outdoor classroom and recreational amenities that emphasize the importance of caring for our environment.

The garden will include:

- Public Art & Music Garden
- Edible Raised Beds & Fruiting Shrubs
- Butterfly Garden
- Native Plants & Trees
- Outdoor Classroom

In addition, the program aims to resolve ongoing drainage issues in low-lying and flood-prone areas that negatively impact the use of the grounds and the neighborhood beyond. For the complete garden plan go to: [www.whslearnandplaygardens.org](http://www.whslearnandplaygardens.org)



## Additional Resources

[www.dupagehealth.org/forward](http://www.dupagehealth.org/forward)  
[www.theconservationfoundation.org](http://www.theconservationfoundation.org)  
[www.dupageco.org/sustainability](http://www.dupageco.org/sustainability)  
[www.chicagowilderness.org](http://www.chicagowilderness.org)  
[www.communitygarden.org](http://www.communitygarden.org)  
[www.facebook.com/ConnectingChicagoCommunityGardens](https://www.facebook.com/ConnectingChicagoCommunityGardens)

DU PAGE County  
421 N. County Farm Road  
Wheaton, IL 60187  
630-407-6700

Email questions or concerns to:  
[recycle@dupageco.org](mailto:recycle@dupageco.org)

## Lead Free Garden Hoses

Even at low levels lead exposure may cause a range of negative health effects in humans. Lead can come in many forms in the home from old paint to plumbing fixtures. Help keep lead out of our garden and recreational water by using a “lead free” hose.

Lead free hoses can be purchased at most hardware and big box stores. Labels must clearly state “lead free.”

Brand names include: Element, Flexon, Apex, Water Right, and Colorite.

[www.scarcecoed.org](http://www.scarcecoed.org)



## Small Space? Grow Up!

Vertical gardening lends needed space for flowers, fruits, and veggies and offers an easier reach for those with physical handicaps. You can use outdoor walls, trellises, fences, and window boxes to support and grow many plants. Consider tomatoes, climbing beans, strawberries, and grapes in your design. [www.organicgardening.com](http://www.organicgardening.com)



# DuPage County School & Community Gardens

