



I  MY P-PATCH!



**A community garden leadership handbook**



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Staff and Volunteers

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## ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP ROLES

### **Introduction: EVERYBODY HAS SOMETHING TO OFFER: COMPONENTS OF GARDEN LEADERSHIP**

The following description of leadership roles is by no means meant to be complete. Seattle P-Patch gardens employ many creative examples of management. Your P-Patch would not function but for the leadership roles assumed by gardeners every year. The degree of leadership varies from site to site. Individuals and/or groups oversee, facilitate, and delegate the tasks necessary to manage a whole P-Patch. The framework suggested below can be done either individually or as a team.

#### **We have broken down garden leadership into three categories:**

- Interaction with P-Patch staff
- Essential tasks for garden management
- Special Projects

#### **• INTERACTION WITH P-PATCH STAFF**

1. Plot registration, turnover, and orienting new gardeners
2. Assessing plot activity and enforcement
3. Communication and gardener lists
4. Required P-Patch community hours
5. Leadership development, resource availability and technical assistance
6. Good Neighbor Coordinator/s
7. Annual Special Events
8. *P-Patch Trust*
9. Theft/Vandalism/Illegal dumping
10. Conflict

#### **1. Plot registration, Turnover and Orienting New Gardeners**

The P-Patch year essentially starts in late fall or winter when the P-Patch program sends out renewal applications. On average about 75% of all gardeners return each year. Gardeners may keep their plot provided that they maintain it and complete their P-Patch hours. As applications return, program staff compiles gardener information and complete new maps of garden sites, accommodating gardener requests to transfer

site or plots as much as possible. Site leadership has limited involvement with renewal applications, but staff share information and consult as needed on shifting plot assignments. Once renewing gardeners are in, staff begin identifying vacant plots and calling new gardeners from the waitlist. The process continues throughout the winter and spring, with most sites filling by May 1. After that the cycle of plot monitoring begins, when staff and site leadership keep track of who is gardening. Monitoring often results in a rash of plot reassignments in early summer but they continue throughout the growing season. There is often another mini-rush of plot reassignments in fall as staff and site leaders begin hearing about gardeners who do not plan to renew for the next season. The garden year completes in fall with verification that plots have been winterized and a total tally of volunteer hours. The hours tally is an important measure of the incredible community involvement in P-Patches. Gardeners who have not meet the hours and winterization requirements are notified and the annual cycle begins again.

Most newly turned over plots are reassigned by program staff from the waitlist. The waitlist varies; sites in the denser urban areas have waits of several years. Most sites, however, accommodate new gardeners after a short wait or by the start of the following gardening season. Staff recognizes that the waitlist is not a perfect tool for broad neighborhood participation since it can be

a barrier for potential gardeners who may face challenges with the English language or other life circumstances. We encourage sites to think of other ways to draw the neighborhood into the P-Patch and make it a true community space. We encourage participation by groups (seniors, special needs, and children) as a means to reach segments of the populations who might not be able to participate otherwise.

Site leadership responsibility really kicks in with new gardeners. When a new gardener is confirmed, they will be instructed to contact the site coordinator or another designated individual who will set up a convenient time to meet in the garden. The new gardener receives a tour of the P-Patch including their specific plot (boundaries, history, soil condition if known) and communal items and expectations including the shed, tools, common areas, composting systems, yearly volunteer hour sign-in sheets, and other site specific items. Including a short history of the site in this orientation encourages involvement by new gardeners and develops an appreciation of the surrounding neighborhood. The Program staff will have orientated the new gardener on program wide requirements, but it is good to go over them again in person.

Identifying plot turnover is a shared responsibility between staff and site leaders. When a plot becomes available, staff and the site coordinator communicate with each other about the vacancy and condition of the plot. Depending on the previous gardener's stewardship, the

plot may need preparation by an individual or at a work party. A plot that's ready to go meets our program goal to encourage early success and inclusion of new gardeners.

## 2. Assessing plot activity and enforcement

Naturally, a garden filled with well-tended plots inspires pride in both gardeners and neighbors. A public program like P-Patch, however, necessarily includes a broad range of people whose differing backgrounds, life circumstances, and expectations influence their gardening styles and abilities. As an inclusive program, we try to strike a balance between acceptance of differences and the need for attractive gardens.

Plot monitoring and turnover is often a coordinated activity between Program staff and site leadership. The rules (see *P-Patch Rules* in Resources) spell out the requirements that gardeners must meet to keep their plot. If gardeners fail to “actively garden” throughout the year, staff and site leadership identify the problem and work through a process to remedy the situation or turn over the plot. The process includes notices and cure periods. It is especially helpful when site leadership contacts under-performing gardeners to find out what's happening as a first step. Talk with your P-Patch staff about the best method to assess plot activity in your garden. Note that at some of the larger sites, assistants or block leaders monitor plots, and in that case the “assistant” would

communicate the above information with lead coordinator/s who will then in turn contact the office staff person.

The following is the official process (*though individual variation occurs*) for dealing with unattended gardens. P-Patch staff works with site coordinators throughout this process.

- Step 1: Tour garden to assess gardener activity.
- Step 2: Send ‘Prepare’, ‘Plant’, ‘Weedy’, or ‘Winterize’ communication (postcard, e-mail, or phone call) to gardener who is not tending their plot. The gardener is advised of a one-week deadline for taking action in their garden plot.
- Step 3: Recheck the garden plot after the end of the deadline date.
- Step 4: If the garden is not worked and if the gardener has not communicated their circumstances, then a warning letter for loss of their plot goes out. It indicates that they must garden within one week or lose their plot.
- Step 5: If the garden is not worked within the above two-week time limit, program staff send a drop letter and reassign the plot to another gardener from the wait list.
- Step 6: If a garden becomes neglected three times in one growing season and is sent communication by site leadership or staff in each instance, the gardener can be removed without the above steps on the third offense.

### 3. Communication and gardener lists

The program and the P-Patch Trust often share information for all gardeners; it is important to assign someone the task of posting mailings and educational opportunities where all can see them. The person should work closely with other gardeners doing leadership activities to spread the word on garden and program-wide happenings. Creating a phone tree of people willing to call everyone at the site is another useful communication tool. Others include: posting flyers on site, post card mailings, and/or e-mail. Please remember: *Not everyone has or uses email, so a combination of these tools is best!* Program staff can help with work party and special event notification as well as generating up to date gardener lists.

### 4. Required P-Patch community hours

An individual should volunteer to work directly with program staff to monitor and report P-Patch community hours. Hours are counted annually, prior to renewal applications going out in fall. Periodic updates throughout the main part of the growing season are helpful to remind people they have to get in the required p-patch hours.

### 5. Leadership development, resource availability and technical assistance

For the most part, P-Patch leaders learn on the job. Typically, gardeners become site leaders by taking on more tasks that serve that garden as a whole, as their comfort in

the garden grows. For example, a gardener may start by attending work parties and later help with specific activities like a garden event. As their comfort level grows gardeners might lead work parties or compost sessions, manage a food bank plot or collections, or organize a garden event.

*A principle role of site leaders is to recognize and promote gardeners' interest in assuming more responsibility.* Delegating responsibility is the chief tool to train new leaders and insure that the tasks are equally shared and garden leadership is inclusive. Many gardeners are content to simply attend work parties, but to equitably share the tasks of community garden management, every gardener should take on some leadership role at some time.

P-Patch staff have no magic guidebooks to instruct garden leaders, but we do have some resources:

- **P-Patch Trust Site Coordinator Meetings:** These periodic meetings are a forum for site leadership to meet and share ideas. Often they are organized around a topic, for example, the Trust's Small Grants or Tool Purchase program or fundraising.

- **P-Patch Application Task Preference List:** This list (see *Task Preference List* in Resources), completed with each renewal application, provides a beginning point for assessing gardener's interests. Program staff can provide a list specific to your garden or do specialized searches. This tool is a starting point for matching the tasks necessary

to run the garden with the gardeners who want to do them. It is best used in consultation with other garden leaders and program staff to consider what's known about the gardener, whether they are suitable for the task, and most importantly, who will ask them to volunteer.

- **P-Patch Program Staff** are a big resource for site leaders. While they do not have magic answers, they do work with many gardens and can help site leaders think through issues. They can also connect gardeners with leaders in other P-Patches, who are often very willing to share their expertise.

- **Collective Expertise of Other P-Patch Leaders:** The P-Patch Program contains a wealth of people who have managed P-Patches or have other very useful experience. Most of them are more than willing to share their expertise. Program staff can help make the connection. In addition, within a specific P-Patch, many former site leaders may still be around and able to assist.

- **P-Patch In-Site Discussion Group:** This resource is an email discussion group specifically for garden leaders. It can be a great place to share ideas and resources and get answers to quick questions or useful tips related to managing a community garden.

## 6. Good Neighbor Coordinator/s

Periodically people need help with their plots. They may go on vacation, get hurt, have a family emergency, take over a badly neglected plot, etc. A team of gardeners who

have identified they are willing to help out when needed in these special situations is very helpful.

## 7. Annual Special Events

- **Spring Gardener Gathering:** This pre-season gathering is an important chance in the early spring for each garden to get together and plan for the up-coming year. These “gatherings” take on as many different forms as there are P-Patches; it is up to each garden to work with program staff to create your very own gathering. These meetings should be garden specific and can be an important tool for leadership to set goals and expectations for the coming season. Many gardens use the time to set up a series of dates for work parties throughout the season and get leadership roles filled for the garden. These meetings are also a fun way to welcome newcomers and for gardeners to connect with each other when interest is high at the start of the gardening season. Since not everyone can attend these meetings and some people come into the garden later on in the season your garden should have a way to share decisions and communicate expectations to those gardeners too. The P-Patch Trust and Lettuce Link are potential visitors to these gatherings. When possible, program staff brings seeds to share and are there to help.

- **P-Patch Harvest Banquet:** This fall celebration is the P-Patch Program's annual city-wide party. All staff, gardeners, and their

friends and families are invited to come to share each other's company and a fantastic potluck meal. It's a fun, informal time to connect with people in other gardens and to get a sense of the extent of the P-Patch movement.

### 8. The P-Patch Trust Site Coordinators Committee

The P-Patch Trust is a non-profit organization that promotes community gardening in the city of Seattle through advocacy, land acquisition, fiscal agency, education, tool provision, small grants for site improvement, and plot fee assistance for low-income gardeners. The **Site Coordinator Committee of the P-Patch Trust** is your venue for educational opportunities, networking between gardens, soliciting ideas, voicing complaints, and a forum to influence policy of both the City Program and the P-Patch Trust. The committee holds periodic meetings that focus on education and networking. This forum gives gardeners a voice in the larger scheme of community gardening in Seattle. Dates and other information will be provided over the year from the chair of the committee. If you have ideas, concerns, questions contact the P-Patch Trust Site Coordinator Committee Chair/s listed in the Resource Section under P-Patch Trust.

### 9. Theft/Vandalism/Illegal dumping

From time to time gardens are affected by these undesirable events. Sources can be

within or outside of the garden. A few simple practices are the first step to curb these activities. Encourage all gardeners to make these practices the norm in your P-Patch.

#### THEFT

**When you share your produce/flowers: "Pick and give. Don't Invite!"** Inviting different people from the neighborhood (kids too) to pick when you aren't there can give rise to several problems. Others may assume free license. People outside the garden often don't understand that next year someone else might be gardening your plot and won't want uninvited picking. Misunderstandings occur about plot boundaries and where picking is OK. And finally, what may be a one time or limited offer from you is sometimes taken as an open invitation.

**Keep your plot well harvested.** A common excuse given by thieves is "*there sure is a lot of food going to waste here*". A plot un-harvested for a while may need a simple reminder call. If the gardener can't get to it, offer to glean and take the fruit to the nearest food bank. (*Un-harvested produce also can infuriate other gardeners.*)

**Get to know your garden neighbors and encourage reporting of illegal activities.** P-Patch program staff can help with signs. Encourage gardeners to get to know other gardeners. Consider hiding vegetables in the design of your garden by placing desirable plants in less visible location and use perennials as cover. It helps to plant more



vegetables than you need. These measures should reduce the amount of casual theft.

Some sites may find they have an organized and continuous problem. Collective action may be needed, and the theft or vandalism should be reported to the police. If you observe theft or vandalism in the garden, first call 911. Get a good description of person or vehicle if possible. If the person is caught in the act have police issue a “No Trespass” card when they arrive. Get the incident report number and be sure to post information for other gardeners to see. If you find vandalism and/or theft after the fact you can still report it to the police and get an incident number. Sometimes if you’re having on-going problems it is good to let the police know you’re having problems so they can try and do more visits to the site. See *Safety, Vandalism and Theft in Garden* in the Resource Section for further strategies and contact information.

The following are real-garden examples of dealing with theft.

### **GARDEN THEFT CAN HAVE CONSEQUENCES** *by Bruce Swee-Interbay P-Patch*

It’s early in the day, when nature is at peace with the world. The plants are awaiting their gardener’s hand for grooming and nurturing. Suddenly an unseen hand rips the plant from the earth, its prized features cut out. Hours later, the gardener discovers the loss. The stolen plants have left frustration

and anger, labor wasted, and the gardener feeling violated.

This happens often in the P-Patch community. The standard official recourse is to file a police report, which leads to limited results. It’s easy to lay blame and point fingers, and if this is your solution, you can expect a lot more of the same in the future. Recently Interbay, achieved a more satisfying result.

With information gathered from other gardeners, we determined when the most likely time our thief might show. His features were identified along with his means of transportation. Supplied with binoculars, camera, and cell phone, I positioned my car outside the garden. I waited and waited. When he arrived, I immediately called the police, then sat back and watched the satisfying results unfold. He was caught red handed. I managed to photograph the man, and post his picture in the garden. His photo, initiated countless other incidents involving our gardeners and this individual. The lesson for us was loud and clear, COMMUNICATE. By bringing together assorted information, we discovered we knew far more than we realized. Assist your P-Patch community and report any incident, large or small to leadership.

We found out that it is important if you catch the thief to ask the officer to issue a “trespass card”. Some officers will do so without being asked, while others do not. It is important that this be done so that a record is created on the police computer system.

## ILLEGAL DUMPING AND TRASH

Trash at the garden happens. There is no formal trash service at most P-Patches; the only gardens that have small trash pickup are those housed on shared Parks property. If your garden is not in a city park, it is each gardener's responsibility to dispose of their trash. Pack it in, pack it out.

Illegal Dumping does occur at various gardens; in that case notify illegal dumping at # 206-684-7587. You should also notify your staff person. If you have large amounts of debris you can contact Gretchen Muller # 206-684-0570 from Seattle Public Utilities he will periodically help out gardens with free dump passes.

Graffiti is generally the responsibility of the garden. Notifying the graffiti report line # 206-684-7587 is important for tracking occurrences of graffiti. P-Patch staff may be able to help with materials for clean up and can reimburse for costs.

You can find more information about both dumping and graffiti or make reports online is at [http://www.seattle.gov/util/Services/Garbage/Reduce\\_Garbage\\_&\\_Litter/](http://www.seattle.gov/util/Services/Garbage/Reduce_Garbage_&_Litter/)

## 10. Conflict

Occasionally difficulties between people within and outside of the garden arise. You may have difficulty dealing with another gardener. Two gardeners will have trouble with each other and come to you. Of course, people should remember to treat each other respectfully. Anger can lead to difficult situations. If

it is a problem between two gardeners try to get them to work it out between themselves. As with most things P-Patch, listening and common sense often lead to the best solutions. In any instance, if you aren't sure how to deal with a person or situation, don't hesitate to call the program staff for suggestions and/or help in resolving the problem. Conflict usually takes three forms:

- Gardener to Gardener. P-Patches contain a cross section of humanity. Minor disagreements, misperceptions, and irritating behavioral differences are inevitable. When confronted with these situations, encourage gardeners to work it out among themselves, after all they have to live with each other. Encourage them to listen carefully and treat each other respectfully.

- Coordinator to Gardener. Some people just get our goats. In this situation ask another gardener or site coordinator to take over.

- P-Patch Neighbor to P-Patch or a gardener. Most P-Patch neighbors welcome the open space and community activities of a P-Patch. Some have concerns. To name just a few: P-Patches can be noisy during work parties, parking may be an issue, individual gardeners may set off a neighbor or a neighbor's dog may have free reign in a P-Patch. In all cases remain polite. Careful listening will usually suggest a solution, for example, changing a work party time, posting gardener no parking signs or politely making a neighbor aware that their dog is harming

the P-Patch. Neighborhood relations are important and can affect more than just your garden, reflecting on P-Patches city-wide. Please cultivate good neighborhood relationships, and always keep the program staff informed.

**Conflict Tip:** *Occasionally, P-Patches pick garden mediators for serious issues. Any conflict has at least two sides, and site coordinators may not know where the truth lies or appear to pick sides. If gardeners agree to mediate, then they must accept the solution negotiated by the mediator.*

**• ESSENTIAL TASKS FOR GARDEN MANAGEMENT:**

1. Internal communication
2. Work parties
3. Compost system
4. Shed and Tool Maintenance
5. Managing the water system and conservation
6. Communal areas
7. Infrastructure maintenance and improvement

**1. Internal communication**

Good communication is essential in creating a happy community. Gardeners each have their own schedules and are generally not in the garden at the same time as each other. A way to let everyone know about activities and issues at your P-Patch is very important. Gardens have many ways to communicate with their fellow gardeners, they include: annual garden booklets (P-Patch staff can provide samples),

simple email lists, phone trees, postcards (the p-patch program staff can help mail these out for you), posting in the garden, e-mail newsletters, and program-hosted list serves. The best communication comes in many forms so that every person is reached with a method that works for them. We *strongly* recommend that gardens do not rely solely on electronic communication; try a phone tree or a postcard in addition. Whatever you decide, remember to be clear on what the form/s of communication will be.

**2. Work parties**

Work parties and other events need coordination and leaders. Anyone leading a work party should work with other garden leadership to determine tasks and provide reminders. Four elements make a successful work party: good leadership, clear delineated tasks, multiple forms of notice, and food. *(Food is a reminder to all of us that work parties also serve a social role helping build community in the garden.)*

**GOOD LEADERSHIP**

At the spring gardener gathering, people can choose a specific work party date to lead. Alternately, site coordinators can recruit work party leaders prior to the spring gathering from the task list, supplied by the P-Patch office. The list identifies those who showed interest in leading work parties on their application form. Some people will naturally take to leadership in the garden so look to those

who have demonstrated leadership abilities at previous work parties. Assigning leaders at the beginning of the year lightens work party leader burnout. Be sure to confirm a week or so prior to the work party.



### **CLEARLY DESIGNATED TASKS**

Common areas of the garden must be maintained by gardeners. These include common flower and food bank beds, orchards, compost areas, and sheds. Work party leaders should send a reminder of the upcoming event to all gardeners and consult other leaders in the garden to identify tasks. A specific project or list of tasks helps gardeners get right to work when they arrive. For gardeners that can not make it to the work party, you may want to post tasks at the site for them to work on a different time

### **SOME IDEAS FOR A SPRING WORK PARTY INCLUDE:**

- Re-chipping/saw-dusting the pathways
- Clean up winter accumulation of debris
- Weed common areas and pathways
- Organize tool shed
- Appraise tools (sharpen, clean, and oil)
- Bring compost area into order
- Prune plants that need it
- Check and repair hoses and spigots
- Update bulletin boards and signage
- Fix damage that may have occurred over the winter
- Prep food bank garden beds

### **SOME IDEAS FOR A FALL WORK PARTY INCLUDE:**

- Use compost and clean up compost areas
- Clean and organize tool shed/box
- Check, repair, and roll up hoses for storage
- Prune, prepare young trees and other perennials for winter

Plant in common areas

Divide plants and offer to other p-patches

Update bulletin board, etc....

### **FOOD**

Have someone or group of people assigned to bringing snacks and beverages. This is great task for those who are more physically limited. Another way is to advertise a potluck in conjunction with the work party to allow for socializing.

### **NOTICE**

Good attendance requires sufficient notice and phone and/or email reminders prior to date of work parties. Two weeks prior to work party, draft text and send it to your city staff person for a postcard mailing. Someone in the garden should do an email a week to few days prior to date of work party. There should also be people assigned to make a phone call the night before.

### **COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER HELP**

Large groups of volunteers from the larger community can really help get things done.

It is often best to get help with large projects you want to do, new construction, or large weeding projects. When a community group volunteers, you should offer them drinks, maybe lunch, gloves, plenty of tools, and a first-aid kit. You should always send a thank you note after so make sure to get folks to sign in with their contact information! Some sources for volunteers are the United Way, school service learning programs, corporation community service days, garden clubs, faith organizations, girl and boy scout groups, eagles club type groups, etc.

**Practice Tip:** *If your site has a small team of garden leaders, have at least one of those people attend all or part of each work party. Work parties are a great way to connect with gardeners informally.*

### 3. Communal Compost System

*(See Composting and Soil Building in Organic Gardening 101 manual in Resources for technical information)*

Every garden is responsible for processing its own garden ‘wastes’, yet composting is one of the biggest challenges for sites and site coordinators. Given that composting in P-Patches generally relies on a shaky premise that gardeners know what to do and will do it, site leaders shouldn’t get too upset when the results fall short of hopes. Common composting types that happen in p-patches are: cold, hot, combination, and within a plot.

#### COMMON P-PATCH COMPOST STRATEGIES:

**1. Whole Site Work Party.** This default strategy relies on periodic work parties to chop up accumulated green material. Between work parties, gardeners pile up organic wastes. The pile, despite the best signage, is usually a mix of chopped and un-chopped material. At the work party gardeners chop through the pile and add it to the compost pile in appropriate proportions. Depending on the level of experience, a well-constructed compost pile will rest neatly in the bin at the end of the work party. There it will stay until the next work party when it is turned, or can be turned between work parties. This method would fall in the combination method, a little hot, a little cold. *The advantage to this is the shared activity; the disadvantage is a longer time to get usable compost.*

**2. Compost Teams.** Sometimes a P-Patch will organize a group that takes on the compost bins as their ongoing task. These individuals create their own weekly schedule for building and turning compost piles. They will also work with garden leadership to create good signage and may hold compost workshops to make sure everyone knows what the expectations are. It is always good, when doing this hot composting method, to ensure the collection of brown material (fall leaves, coffee chaff, etc) for use in the summer when green materials are abundant while browns are harder to find. *The advantage to doing this method/strategy is fast usable compost for garden plots and*

*building community around composting. The disadvantage to this method is that a limited group of individuals are responsible for processing the whole gardens organic “waste”.*

**3. Composting in plots.** Some sites, where organic matter piles up but no composting strategy exists, have closed the collective compost system and adopted a “compost in your own plot” strategy. These sites offer demonstrations of different methods, which include trench composting (in a plot’s internal paths), hole composting, and “Interbay mulch”. (See *Tips for Composting in Your Plot* in Resources ). This strategy remarkably cuts down on organic clutter, opens up work parties for more fun tasks, and can insure that some sort of soil building happens in each plot. *The advantage here is that each individual is responsible for processing their own garden waste into compost and the cut and drop method takes less effort. The disadvantage, garden misses out on a team building effort.*

#### 4. Tools/Shed

Your garden will need to maintain and replace communal gardening tools. It is helpful to have a lead on this task to ensure tools are cleaned and sharpened regularly. Having a gardener assigned to maintain order in the tool box/shed helps keep the tool shed safe and helps keep tools properly stored and in good working order. Keeping compost machetes sharp helps lessen gardener fatigue when chopping. If it’s not clear who in the garden can sharpen them, contact the office

to find out if anyone signed up for tool sharpening on their preferred tasks. (See appendix “Helpful Tool Hints”) Safety is the most important element when using any tools in the garden. The program has a tool library with a supply of tools that can be checked out for a large work party when additional tools may be needed. Check with your program staff person on how to check out tools.

#### 5. Managing the Water System and Conservation

It is important to have someone to watch over the water system at each garden site. If no one has signed up to be “water czar”, identify a gardener with some plumbing knowledge at your gardener meetings and encourage them to lend their skills. The program has some water repair kits available, check with your staff person to see what is available. P-Patch staff can also train gardeners on how to maintain your water systems.

Tasks for a water czar include:

- Patrol for water leaks and waste: look for leaks in hoses, connections, and watch for water left running. Fix leaks right away. Call the office for authority to buy or obtain plumbing parts in stock. If there is major leak water should be turned off. If the leak is from the water main call #386-1800
- Turn water off *around November 1*. The water should be turned off; water lines drained at the first sign of frost and then back on again in the spring after the threat of frost is gone.

• Conservation is the most cost-effective approach to water use in our region's dry summers and keeps the costs at a minimum for the program. Every drop counts. Here are some tips:

- **Water in the morning or late afternoon—not in the midday when water will evaporate and be wasted.**
- **Water deeply. It is better to give plantings a good soaking once a week than to give 3–4 light surface waterings.**
- **Water slowly and at the roots. Avoid spraying your plants from the top where water is lost to evaporation. Certain vegetables, such as tomatoes that don't like wet leaves.**
- **Mulch bare soil. A layer of mulch and soil with lots of organic matter retains moisture longer.**
- **Creatively include water collection into the garden. Barrels can easily be attached to the shed roof's drainage system and then be used to water hot composting systems.**

For more information on watering and collecting techniques call the p-patch office and/or the Lawn and Garden Hotline @ 206-633-0224, lawn&gardenhotline@seattletilth.org.

## 6. Communal Areas

Common areas are resources for your neighborhood and enrich your P-Patch's natural environment. P-Patches host many different communal areas. They can include, but are certainly not limited to, orchard trees, berry bushes, flower beds, native areas complete with ponds, gathering

areas (benches, picnic tables, barbecues, educational libraries, etc.), and herb gardens. Keep low maintenance in mind when designing common spaces. Drought tolerant and/or native species can increase habitat and food for pollinators and beneficial insects. Weed, water, mulch, and prune these areas as a regular part of garden maintenance. Communal gardens often are the garden's outward appearance to the neighborhood; up-keep is important. Work with the whole P-Patch to come up with a plan. Sometimes divided perennials are available from other P-Patches; call the office, and program staff can facilitate.

## 7. Infrastructure maintenance and improvement

Your P-Patch's infrastructure is very important to the function and look of the garden. Identify someone to plan and work on fundraising for the project and individuals with construction skills. Basic construction skills, or the willingness to learn, are helpful for maintenance of fences, posts, sheds, hose hangers, arbors, and compost bins. Any major construction projects on site should be approved by program staff. There may be considerations you have not thought of, agreements with the landlord, safety and liability issues, expense and funding options, permits and much more. Some basic designs are included in this manual WHERE?, and other resource information is available at the office.

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

- 1 Food Bank/Giving Gardens
- 2 |Community Building and Welcoming the Public into P-Patch Community Gardens
- 3 Children's and Demonstration Gardens
- 4 Outreach
- 5 Fundraising

### 1. Food Bank/Giving Gardens

P-Patches have a long tradition of growing healthy, organic food to share with others. Each year P-Patchers together donate over 10 tons of produce to food banks and meal programs. Gardens are encouraged to make food bank gardening part of their regular activities. The lead volunteer on this task should work with the Lettuce Link Program at Solid Ground and P-Patch staff. Lettuce Link can help with information on food bank locations and hours, in-demand produce, seeds/starts, and lots of helpful advice (206-694-6754 or

<http://www.solid-ground.org/Programs/Nutrition/Lettuce/Pages/default.aspx>). P-Patch staff can provide garden space, seeds, notification and lists of people who have expressed interest in helping with the food bank gardening on their application.

Some ideas for different ways of organizing your giving garden are:

- Dedicated Food Bank “Giving Garden” Bed/s
- Donation drop-off: Some sites coordinate weekly collection from individuals

in the garden and deliver to their local food bank.

- Row for the Hungry: Some gardens (especially those that are small) coordinate to plant rows of within their individual beds. A specific crop is decided upon (like onions), planted, and harvested at the same time for delivery one or two times a year.
- Many gardens have initiated policies and systems for gleaning produce from people's plots if produce is not being harvested. Working with all gardeners to glean unused produce can also be helpful with theft problems because all food is being harvested and used. If someone is going out of town, they can ask a fellow gardener to harvest for the food bank. The “InSite” listserv and site coordinators committee are two good places to learn from other gardens about successful systems.

Tasks for giving gardens include: planting, caretaking/cultivation, harvesting, prepping/cleaning, and delivery of donations to local food bank.

### 2. Community Building and Welcoming the Public into P-Patch Community Gardens

With all this talk about chores it's easy to lose sight of what gardening in a P-Patch is all about: building community and having fun. Building community



includes inviting neighbors into the P-Patch. There ways to do this using physical features of the garden and with community activities. At the least, visitors should always be welcomed and informed that they should call the office if they want a plot. Program brochures are available that explain the P-Patch Program and P-Patch Trust; ask program staff for some. You can create a space for them in the garden or keep them in the shed, either way, make sure the public knows how to get involved. Many gardens host special events, specifically with the intent to invite neighbors into the garden and to make community connections. Gardeners get the word out in a variety of ways including posting information in the garden, advertising in neighborhood papers and list serves, windshield flyers, and in-person invitations. Some gardens choose to pair these events with fundraisers for their garden. This is just a short list of events that some gardens host to get your own ideas flowing:

- Neighborhood “Night Out” Barbeques or Potlucks—part of the National Night Out events
- Solstice Dessert in the Garden—gardeners each bring a dessert to share with neighbors
- Art in the Garden—artists and musicians share their talents and turn the garden into an outdoor gallery
- Open Garden—like an open house,

- with gardeners hosting their neighbors
- Plant Sales
- U-Pick Lavender Day
- Pony Rides
- Chef in the Garden—cooking demos and tastings
- Garden Fair—just like the county fair, but in the city: produce contests, jams, jellies, etc.
- Kids Day
- Music Night
- Movie Night
- Welcome other Neighborhood Groups to hold meetings, classes, evens in the garden’s common space
- Some gardens have even hosted weddings!

### Welcoming the Public into P-Patch Community Gardens with Physical Improvements

*by Joyce Moty (Bradner Gardens Park P-Patch)*

Seattle P-Patches are often sited on publicly owned land. Occasionally a critic may describe P-Patches as private use of public land. Some non-gardeners are under the impression that they are not allowed to enter a P-Patch to look around. So what can we do as gardeners to make the P-Patches serve both our gardeners and the visitor?

**All of the ideas listed below are just starting points.** Each P-Patch has its own identity. P-Patches can be magical places that create a feeling of enjoyment and well

being. Materials for some of the ideas may include recycled or found objects. Safety and durability should be a major consideration for furniture and structures.

(Note: For tips on good sources for supplies and materials, see the P-Patch Program's "Organic Gardening Resources and Tips" booklet. The P-Patch office can get you a copy if you don't already have one.)

### ENTRANCE SIGNS

- Include a WELCOME (available from the P-Patch office)
- Name of the p-patch
- Additional information: p-patch phone number, ordinance

### EDUCATIONAL SIGNS

- Organic gardening techniques
- Salmon-friendly gardening
- Plant identification
- Composting information
- Leaf mold information
- Events calendar

### PLANTS IN COMMON AREAS

- Ornamental shrubs and perennials that can look good all year long
- Habitat plants for birds, butterflies, hummingbirds and other beneficial insects: native and non-native

### GARDEN STRUCTURES THAT TELEGRAPH THE MESSAGE THAT ONE IS ENTERING A SPECIAL PLACE

- Arbors
- Stepping stones or pavers to indicate a threshold
- Fences and gates
- Banners and flags
- Benches or picnic tables
- Bird houses, bat houses, mason bee houses

- Scare crows
- Guest book
- Brochure box for information on a particular garden, P-Patch Community Gardening Program, and P-Patch Trust.
- Art

The more we participate in the neighborhood the more "good will" we generate and this will create a more protective atmosphere from our neighbors. Being a good neighbor means keeping things clean and well tended around the perimeter of the garden.

### 3. Children and Demonstration Gardens

P-Patch's are a great place to learn about nature and where our food comes from. Some gardens create plots specifically for children. Others create a common space that is conducive to youth involvement at varying levels. Including signage for passive education or creating a native plant, water, herb, sensory/tranquil, orchard, butterfly or winged wildlife demonstration gardens are ideas to accomplish this. We encourage gardens to be creative. Check out what others P-Patch sites are doing.

#### ADOPT A PLOT

Gardens can incorporate a designated plot for youth gardening. A local community youth group/school can adopt this plot as their own, being responsible for the caring, maintaining, and harvesting. These plots may need additional community garden

input, assisting with watering and weeding when needed. Communicating with the youth group on the level of support needed is vital for its success and sustainability.

#### GIVING PLOT

Often the Community Giving Plot is an excellent opportunity to have youth groups directly involved with gardening in a mentorship atmosphere. Giving plot volunteers may need assistance with planning and maintenance. Youth groups can assist this plot on a regular basis or one time experience.

#### KIDS IN THE GARDEN DAY

Team up interested garden members with community youth groups and plan kids in the garden day. This day can include activities revolving around processes occurring in the garden using Master Gardener Discovery Kits\*. Publicize this day in the community with assistance from P-Patch staff.

#### GARDEN TOURS

Invite nearby schools and Youth Organizations to take full advantage of the garden as an educational tool, beyond simple gardening. Have a designated volunteer be available to offer tours and history of the garden area. This could be followed by inviting the group to use the garden common area to conduct activities, such as worm/insect discovery, garden scavenger hunts, food geography research, or simple measuring math activities.

#### SERVICE PROJECTS IN COMMUNAL SPACES

P-Patch sites are consistently in need of help with small projects. Throughout seasonal changes common areas can always use assistance with upkeep. High School and Middle School students often have service hour requirements. The P-Patch is a great opportunity for service projects ranging from painting a shed to upkeep and planting in common areas. Let school counselors know about opportunities in the community garden.

#### Fundraising for the Garden

There are many times that a garden needs to raise money. This can be for a major project such as infrastructure improvements (new plumbing systems, fence, garden beds, sheds, compost bins, etc.), for special projects (art, common area plantings, outreach, celebrations, kids and food bank gardens, etc.), or simply for everyday supplies and tools for the garden. There are three main general ways to raise money and/or supplies for your projects: In-Kind donations, grants and fundraisers.

The **P-Patch Trust** is available to serve as a fiscal agent for all community gardens. Their 501-C-3 status allows those who make a donation to write-off their donation on taxes and can help with eligibility for certain grants. They can also hold money for your garden and for a small fee manage your

\*Inquire with P-Patch staff on how to rent these kits free of charge from the University of Washington Extension Program.

money in an account so you do not need to use a gardener's personal account.

Following is a beginning list of potential fundraising ideas. It is designed to give you some examples and sources to get you started as you raise resources and/or money for your garden. This list is far from complete. We encourage you to add to this list and share your experiences as you explore local resources in your own neighborhoods.

## GRANTS

- **City of Seattle—Department of Neighborhoods Neighborhood Matching Fund:** The Neighborhood Matching Fund provides money to Seattle neighborhood groups and organizations for a broad array of neighborhood-initiated improvement, organizing or planning projects. A neighborhood group may be established just to undertake a project--the group does not need to be "incorporated." Once a project is approved, the community's contribution of volunteer labor, materials, professional services, or cash will be "matched" by cash from the Neighborhood Matching Fund. There are four different funds within the Neighborhood Matching Fund, each with its own funding parameters and application methods. Four Opportunities: **Large Project Fund** (\$15,000-\$100,000); **Small and Simple Project Fund** (up to \$15,000); **Tree Fund;** **Neighborhood Outreach and Development Funds.** Funds are limited so it's a competitive program. Applications

are considered during specific funding cycles and the highest rated applications are awarded funds. For more information: <http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/nmf/> or 206-684-0464

- **King County Natural Resource Stewardship Network** A clearinghouse for grants for watershed protection, habitat restoration, natural resource stewardship, salmon conservation, and reforestation. It has tips for submitting grant proposals and downloadable pre applications. <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/pi/grants.htm> or 206-296-8265

- **SNAP (Strong Neighborhood Action Program)** The Washington Insurance Council offers grants for neighborhood improvement and security issues please call them for more information on how to apply and who is eligible. The webpage has more detailed information at [http://www.wiconline.org/cm\\_snap.htm](http://www.wiconline.org/cm_snap.htm). For more information contact them at 206-624-3330 or [caryn.badgett@wa-ic.org](mailto:caryn.badgett@wa-ic.org)

KING COUNTY:

- **WaterWorks, Water and Land Resources Division—The King County Water Quality Block Grant Fund.** Grants up to \$60,000 are available for community projects that protect or improve watersheds, streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands and tidewater. Projects must have a demonstrable positive impact on the waters of King County and must:

- Improve or protect water quality and water dependent habitats; or

—Demonstrate the beneficial use of biosolids or reclaimed water.

There is good information on the website: <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/PI/grant-exchange/waterworks.htm>.

- **Department of Natural Resources Parks-Urban Reforestation and Habitat Restoration Grant Fund’s Wild Places in City Spaces** provides grants up to \$10,000 to volunteer organizations, community groups and government agencies for projects reforesting urban areas and restoring habitat within the Urban Growth Area of King County and incorporated cities. Examples of Fundable Projects

—Removing invasive species and planting native plants in wooded area near another natural area.

—Upland restoration including stewardship training, placement of woody debris, invasive plant removal, and special educational activities.

There is good information on the website: <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/pi/grant-exchange/wildplaces.htm>

Each of these King County grants has two types: *Small Change for a Big Difference* for up to \$2,500 and *Competitive* for over \$2,500, with corresponding application processes. For more information about any of them contact Ken Prichard at (206) 296-8265 or [ken.pritchard@metrokc.gov](mailto:ken.pritchard@metrokc.gov).

- **Washington Department of Natural Resources-Urban & Community Forestry.**

For more information contact Sarah Griffith at (360)902-1704. [http://www.dnr.wa.gov/ResearchScience/Topics/UrbanForestry/Pages/rp\\_urban\\_commandurbanforestry.aspx](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/ResearchScience/Topics/UrbanForestry/Pages/rp_urban_commandurbanforestry.aspx)

- **Neighbor to Neighbor Grants.** The Neighbor to Neighbor Fund makes technical assistance and grants up to \$5,000 available to resident initiated projects in South Seattle and White Center neighborhoods. The purpose of the fund is to build stronger communities in those neighborhoods. The fund is particularly interested in supporting organizations that may not have access to traditional sources of funding. Applications are accepted at any time and are reviewed quarterly. Contact Eunice Letzing at (206) 721-8887 or [letzing@comcast.net](mailto:letzing@comcast.net).

- **Bank of America.** Bank of America has a variety of granting programs in their Neighborhood Excellence Initiative that provide funding to non-profit organizations (ie. P-Patch Trust), Find more information here: [http://www.bankofamerica.com/foundation/index.cfm?template=fd\\_neighborexcell](http://www.bankofamerica.com/foundation/index.cfm?template=fd_neighborexcell)

- **Cottonwood Foundation:** <http://www.cottonwoodfdn.org/> The Cottonwood Foundation is only funding established partners through 2011 but they seem worth knowing about. The Cottonwood Foundation is dedicated to promoting empowerment of people, protection of the environment, and respect for cultural diversity. The foundation focuses its funding on committed, grass roots organizations that

rely strongly on volunteer efforts and where foundation support will make a significant difference and meet all four of the following criteria:

- **protect the environment**
  - **promote cultural diversity**
  - **empower people to meet their basic needs**
  - **rely on volunteer efforts**
- **Fiskars-Orange Thumb grants.** Project Orange Thumb is committed to encouraging, sharing, and inspiring creative expression in gardening. Grant recipients receive up to \$1,500 in Fiskars garden tools and up to \$800.00 in gardening-related materials (i.e. green goods). Gardens and/or gardening projects geared toward community involvement, neighborhood beautification, sustainable agriculture and/or horticultural education are eligible. Community garden groups, as well as schools, youth groups, community centers, camps, clubs, treatment facilities are all encouraged to apply. For up to date information <http://projectorangethumb.com/pot/>
- **Stonyfield Yogurt: Profits for the Planet Program.** In addition to funds, they may donate product to organizations. Projects which meet the following criteria will receive the highest priority for funding:
    - Protect and restore the planet
    - Generate measurable results, i.e. natural resources saved, people educated
    - Promote Stonyfield Farm via sampling opportunities, collateral, media relations

Check the website for more information. <http://www.stonyfield.com/AboutUS/ProfitsForThePlanetProgram.cfm>

### IN-KIND DONATIONS

In-kind donations from businesses and individuals can be a great way to bring resources to your garden. Local and national businesses are often willing to donate supplies for garden projects and skilled professionals have donated their time and expertise. Working through the **P-Patch Trust** (or another non-profit 501C3 organization) allows you to accept tax-deductible donations. It's a good idea to start locally when soliciting donations (either local businesses or national chains that are based in your neighborhood) as people are generally more apt to be generous to their own community. Donating to your P-Patch can be a great way for businesses to contribute locally, build pride for them, and give them great local publicity. Be sure the businesses know their donation is tax-deductible and let them know you will give them public recognition for their donations such as in a newsletter (P-Patch Trust, local papers, etc.), sign at the garden, etc. Sometimes when they realize that their donation will increase their own visibility, help the community, and get them a tax break they will be much more likely to donate. Here are a few ideas that have been successful for P-Patches in the past:

- **Tool manufactures**—Some gardens have received boxes of various brand-name

tools (hoes, pruners, shears, shovels, etc.) to test and give feedback to manufacturers. Gardens get tools and the manufacturers get help to produce higher quality and more effective tools.

- **Fiskars**—As a part of their Orange Thumb grants, Fiskars will provide grant up to \$1,500 in Fiskars garden tools and up to \$800.00 in gardening-related materials (i.e. green goods). See information in grants section above.

- **Local Landscape Contractor's Association or individual companies**—Construction companies, University greenhouses, nurseries, etc. like to use sharp and shiny tools and don't always repair or mess with older tools. When soliciting donations, remember to stress they are for community use and that you will give them public recognition for their donation.

- **Garden supply stores and nurseries**
- **Hardware Stores**
- **Seattle Street Tree Programs**

—Department of Neighborhoods Tree Fund. A component of the Neighborhood Matching Fund, the Tree Fund provides trees to neighborhood groups to enhance the City's urban forest. The City provides the trees, and neighbors share the work of planting and caring for the trees. <http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/nmf/treefund.htm>, (206) 684-0714.

—Seattle City Light, Arboriculturist, Vegetation Management—Urban Tree

Replacement program. Seattle City Light has a neighborhood tree planting program called the Urban Tree Replacement Program and also sponsors neighborhood plantings. For more information, call (206) 386-1902.

- **Lowes Home Centers** <http://www.lowes.com/lowes/lkn?action=pg&p>AboutLowes/Community>

- **Home Depot** [http://corporate.homedepot.com/wps/portal/Corporate\\_Contributions](http://corporate.homedepot.com/wps/portal/Corporate_Contributions)

## FUNDRAISERS

There is always a need for a little money to make the garden run. Community gardens around the city and nation have come up with some fun and creative ways to raise funds. Many gardens hold occasional or annual events to raise money for common elements in their gardens. We list some of those ideas below. Please check with the P-Patch office for individual contact information for further questions about any of these in particular. You will know what works best for your garden group and may develop a new idea. We encourage you to share what you create so we can continue to grow this list and share information with others.

- **Pass the Hat**
- **Bake Sales**
- **Plant Sales: Starts, Perennials, Lavender Cuttings, • Honey, Dahlia Tubers, Etc.**
- **Evanston P-Patch Pie Sale**
- **Interbay P-Patch Salmon Bake**
- **Art in the Garden at Ballard P-Patch—**

**A community event where artists sell their works and visitors buy bake sale items and make donations for a variety of art activities**

### **CHEAP BUYS / EXCHANGES**

When the time comes to actually make a purchase, it's often worth checking these "cheap" resources first. You might find what you need for less money than you imagined.

- **Estate/Garage Sales and Auctions**—Great places for garden tools. Get there early or call ahead and try to cut a good deal for a package of garden tools.

- **Craig's List**—The "farm+garden", "materials", and "garage sale" listings can all be good places to look <http://seattle.craigslist.org/>

- **King County Materials Exchange**—A good source for free or cheaper building materials <http://your.kingcounty.gov/solid-waste/exchange/index.asp>

- **Freecycle**—Another spot to find free and

useful stuff <http://www.freecycle.org/group/United%20States/Washington/Seattle>

### **Other Resources and Partners**

**Seattle Parks Foundation-Park & Green Space development** A private, nonprofit organization. They do not offer grants but they can work with communities to improve parks and green spaces by providing technical assistance, fiscal oversight, and/or project management to park projects. The Parks Foundation chooses park projects based on community need for new or improved parks; donor interest; and the degree to which the project enables the Foundation to fulfill its mission to improve and expand Seattle's parks and green spaces and make Seattle a better place to live, work, and play by ensuring that vibrant parks are readily available for all to enjoy. For more information contact them at 332-9900 or [www.seattleparksfoundation.org](http://www.seattleparksfoundation.org)