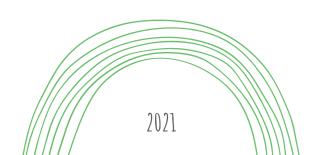# wANt to stARt A coMMUNITY GARDEN?

SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE

YOU START

2021

WHY do you want to start a community garden?

Think about what you hope to achieve and choose a garden model that will help you reach your goals.

Goals might include:

• Producing local food for your family
• Learning gardening skills
• Growing food to share or donate
• Creating a space where people of your community can meet
• Physical and mental health benefits

SO WHAT IS A COMMUNITY GARDEN?

A community garden brings together a group of people to garden in the same location. Community gardens can take many different forms. How people grow in the garden, how produce is used and who decides are all key to determining what model might work for you.

2 COMMON COMMUNITY GARDEN MODELS:

- Communally grown/managed garden: Everyone works in the whole garden together and decides as a group what to do with the produce.
- Hybrid model garden: Decision of the whole garden area are taken as a group, some plots are available for the whole group to garden together, others are available for individual garden work and maintenance, while respecting the general rules and regulations of the garden space.

WHERE to start?

THINGS TO ADDRESS IN AN INITIAL MEETING

- What is the VISION for the garden?
- Who will the garden serve?
- Is land available?
- How much gardening experience does the group have?
- Are there individuals/organizations willing to provide materials and expertise?
- How much time can group members commit to the project?
- Who is willing to serve on a garden leadership team?
- What is the best way for the group to stay in touch?
- When does the next meeting take place?
- What are ways to advertise your project in your community for future gardeners or organizations?

ABOUT THE SITE

- Does the site at least get 6 hours of direct sunlight per day throughout the seasons?
- Does the site have access to water?
- Is the site big enough to accommodate the number of interested gardeners?
- Is the site located close enough to the people who want to use it, ideally in walking or cycling distance?
- How visible is the site for safety and neighborhood support?
- How accessible is the site for trucks?
- What was former use of the site? Was there any contamination of soil?

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Think about FENCING your site, keeping dogs out
- Think about acquiring TOOLS for a low cost or from donations (contractors, recycling centers, landscape services, community contributions, group of former gardeners, ads in (social) media).
- Think about a good ad safe STORAGE place for supplies and tools.
- Think about easy WATER acces and using rain water where possible, summers are getting hotter and irrigation is an important part of your garden.
- Find SEEDS and SEEDLINGS from local providers if possible. (SEED asbl in Luxembourg)
- Participate as a group or as an individiual in ecological trainings, and share new knowledge the group.
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MEETING PITFALLS

- Don't get tactical too fast (think about the WHY before addressing the HOW).
- Don't be surprised by other agendas (particularly if government officials or people with authority are present).
- There may be disruptive participants. Opinions are good and welcome, but need to be brought forward with respect).

Think **SOCIOCRACY** system of governance for organizing your group.

WHAT IS A SUCCESSFUL GROUP?

- Everyone is working towards a shared VISION.
- People feel comfortable in their group.
- Everybody has a voice and is also heard, expressing feelings is as important as expressing ideas.
- Members work towards agreements collectively and keep them.
- Leadership and responsibilities are divided and shifting among people.
- The group works out a roadmap with milestones to achieve and works step by step.
- Critical opinions are heard and not taken personally but taken as an opportunity to learn.
- Fun and humour are usually good ingredients in a successful project.
- Patience and sense for experiments.