



WALKING alongside strengthening congregational community ministries

»» Community Gardening Ministry ««

»» RESOURCES FOR THE JOURNEY

Hunger is a daily reality for families, not only in foreign countries but in the United States as well. Hunger often leads to a number of other problems, including poor performance in school, obesity, and other health issues such as diabetes. By planting and nurturing community gardens, churches can join the battle against poverty, hunger, health problems, and lack of education. Gardens become sources of fresh, nutritious food for families who often do not have access or cannot afford fresh vegetables. They also provide a place of learning for neighborhood children and adults, opportunities to build communities, and a place for neighbors to come together to share food and friendship. This backpack includes resources to help you begin your own garden. The books, articles, and websites listed here are great place to look to help answer your questions and connect you with other gardeners.

Books

- *Community Gardening* by Elizabeth Peters and Ellen Kirby (published by Brooklyn Botanic Garden). This is a comprehensive guide for gardeners seeking to begin projects in their communities. It offers tips for beginning and sustaining a garden, as well as success stories and suggestions for larger organizations that want to get involved.

- *Garden Your City* by Barbara Hobens Feldt and Paula Brinkman (published by Taylor Trade Publishing). This step-by-step guide for planning and implementing a garden in your city is peppered with encouragement and innovative ideas. This is a great book for churches interested in community gardening in urban settings.

Journal Articles

- "Community Gardens: Lessons Learned From California Healthy Cities and Communities" by Joan Twiss, Joy Dickinson, Shirley Duma, Tanya Kleinman, Heather Paulsen, and Liz Rilveria. *American Journal of Public Health*. (2003), Vol. 93.9, pages 1435-1438.

This article looks at one organization's approach to community gardening. It discusses the benefits of gardening and assesses the organization's particular model for implementation.

- "A Survey of Community Gardens in Upstate New York: Implications for Health Promotion and Community Development" by Donna Armstrong. *Health & Place* (2000), Vol. 6.4, pages 319-327.

Survey results for 63 community gardening participants in New York are presented in this article. Results include perceived reasons for gardening and comparisons of community gardens hosted by groups of varying income levels.

MORE ON BACK

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- "Social Capital in the Lived Experiences of Community Gardeners" by Troy D. Glover. *Leisure Sciences* (2004), Vol. 26, pages 143-162.

In this article, the author explores both the benefits and challenges of community gardening. His research includes interviews with community gardeners and narrative stories of their encounters.

Websites

- American Community Gardening Association — www.communitygarden.org

The American Community Garden Association (AGCA) is an organization that seeks to build community through gardening. They support, raise awareness for, and connect people with local gardens. Their website also has resources for starting and learning more about community gardens.

- Holy Nativity Parish, Los Angeles, CA — <http://www.holynativityparish.org/communitygardenhn.php>

This church in Los Angeles provides an excellent model for churches thinking about planting a garden. Their website explains how they began their garden and how they use their garden to serve their community.

- Square Foot Gardening — www.squarefootgardening.com

Square Foot Gardening is a gardening method that uses significantly less space than conventional gardening and accommodates various levels of gardening experience. This website is a great tool for those looking to start a garden in a small space. It provides a variety of resources for this type of gardening, including tools for getting started, checklists for supplies, and a forum to ask questions.

- Urban Harvest — www.urbanharvest.org

Urban Harvest is a nonprofit organization based in Houston. Their website offers advice on starting various types of community gardens as well as resources and classes for beginners.

Stepping Stones

Brief descriptions of how to implement specific ministries. For each of the five broader areas above, many ministries can be envisioned. We have identified a few of these for each area and have articulated the steps for how that ministry might be planned.

Pathways

Learn from the first-hand account of those already engaged in this specific ministry. Plus, develop networking contacts as go-to sources to explore solutions to challenges or celebrations of successes.

Food for the Journey

A short devotional based on scripture that can be used in church bulletins, as a Moment for Mission during worship or as an introduction to a Bible study.