Create Health Gardens Information Meeting

An information meeting is to be held before the planting season starts, preferably two weeks before the start of the series. This meeting should be a collaboration between the CBH ambassador and the Master Gardener volunteer.

Location: An indoor location near the community garden. Consider a school, Extension office or library. If the weather permits, this could be held outdoors in the garden.

Who: Invite participants who have signed up to participate in the Create Healthy Garden classes.

Meeting Agenda could include the following:

Welcome participants

Introduce Educators

- CBH
- Master Gardeners or USU Extension faculty member

Icebreaker introduction for participants

1. What inspired you to join this gardening class?
2. Do you have a favorite plant or flower? Why is it your favorite?
3. Have you ever grown your own vegetables or herbs? If so, what was your experience like?
4. What is one gardening tip or trick you have learned that you would like to share with the group?
5. If you could design your dream garden, what would it look like?
6. Do you have any gardening challenges you are hoping to overcome through this class?
7. What is the most unusual plant you have ever tried to grow?

Publicly thank the sponsors that are helping to support the garden.

- Tools
- Water
- Location
- Seeds
- Soil
- Fertilizer
- Experience

Discuss as a group:

What to expect during the class series:

Once-a-month workshop to learn in the garden.

- Provide an overview of the schedule, times, dates, and lesson topics.
- Workshops are the time when everyone comes together to learn and work in the garden.

Setting expectations for the community garden

- Everyone contributes to the well-being of the garden.
    - If you are in designated family spaces, the assigned space is yours to care for.
    - If it is a communal space, everyone shares the work and harvest.
    - A watering schedule will be established.
    - Everyone is responsible for weeding and garden maintenance.
- You can bring chairs to the garden to use during the lessons.

Planning the garden space

- What to plant? Utah has such a diverse climate; please check your area. Use these websites to identify plants that grow well in Utah.

Fruit, Vegetable and Herb Gardening

https://extension.usu.edu/yardandgarden/fruits-vegetables-herbs

Recommended Vegetables Varieties for Northern Utah

https://extension.usu.edu/yardandgarden/research/recommended-vegetable-varieties-for-northern-utah

- **Group A: Hardy** *(Plant as soon as the soil dries out in the spring.)*

  Seed: *Kohlrabi, Onions, Peas, Radish, Spinach, Turnip*
  Plants: *Artichoke, Asparagus, Broccoli, Cabbage, Turnip, Brussels Sprouts*

- **Group B: Semi-Hardy** Plant a week or two after the 'A' group, or about 2 weeks before the average last spring frost.)

  Seed: Beet, Lettuce, Potato, Carrot, Parsley, Salsify, Endive, Parsnip, Swiss Chard
  Plant: Cauliflower
- **Group C: Tender** (Plant on the average date of the last spring frost-about when the first apples reach full bloom).

Seed: Cucumber, New Zealand Spinach, Spinach, Sweet Corn, Dry Bean, Snap Bean, Summer Squash

Plant: Celery

Seeds

Seed Selection Tips

- Adapt to Local Climate: Choose seeds suited to your USDA hardiness zone.
    - 2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map | USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map
- Disease Resistance: Look for varieties resistant to local pests and diseases.
- Growth Time: Consider early maturing varieties for shorter growing seasons.

Planting Seeds

- Follow Depth and Spacing Instructions: Proper depth and space are crucial for healthy growth.
- Temperature: Ensure proper temperature for germination (warm for tomatoes, cool for lettuce).

Starting Seeds Indoors

- Start Early: For a head start, start seeds indoors 6–8 weeks (about 2 months) before the last frost.
- Grow Lights: Use grow lights for strong seedling growth indoors.

Key Considerations for Planning the Garden Space

1. Soil Preparation:
    a. Test the Soil: Ensure that your soil has the right pH and nutrient levels. Amend it with organic matter or compost to improve soil fertility and texture.
2. Watering Needs:
    a. Irrigation System: Given the semi-arid climate, an efficient irrigation system, such as drip irrigation or soaker hoses, will help conserve water while providing adequate moisture to plants. Watering deeply and infrequently encourages deep root growth.
    b. Rainwater Harvesting: Consider using rain barrels to capture and store rainwater to reduce water costs and ensure you have water when needed.

3. Garden Layout and Spacing:
    a. Space Appropriately: Plan your garden layout so that plants have enough space to grow without competing for resources. Pay attention to the plant's spread and height and be mindful of how their roots will develop.
    b. Raised Beds or Containers: These can help improve soil quality, manage water better, and extend the growing season, especially for warm season crops that need more controlled conditions.
4. Microclimates:
    a. Sun Exposure: Ensure that your garden is in a location with ample sunlight. Most vegetables need at least 6–8 hours of direct sunlight per day.
    b. Wind Protection: If you are in an area prone to wind, consider using windbreaks or planting shrubs and trees around your garden space to protect plants from wind damage.
    c. Frost Protection: Plant frost-sensitive crops like tomatoes and peppers after the last expected frost date. You can also use row covers, cloches, or high tunnels to extend the growing season.
5. Frost-Free Growing Season:
    a. Growing Season Length: Be mindful of these factors when selecting crops and their varieties.
    b. Frost Dates: The average last frost date varies across all areas; check your local information. Adjust planting schedules accordingly and consider using season extension methods like row covers or greenhouses for longer-growing crops.
6. Companion Planting:
    a. Some plants thrive when grown together, while others can inhibit growth.