

2017 Build It Up Garden Program Description

Introduction

Build It Up is announcing the third year of our Gardening Program! In the past two years, we created 30 new backyard gardens and trained 30 families to grow their own food. This year, we are expanding to 45 gardens, which will include some returning families from 2016. We are accepting applications to fill up the remaining spots. You don't have to have any gardening experience, just an interest in working hard and eating healthy food. Experienced gardeners are welcome to join in the Market Gardener program and grow food for sale to local markets. Beginning gardeners will be given the option to sell extra produce, but their main focus will be on gaining new skills and using fresh produce at home.

Our Vision

This program arose out of a shared desire to support the growth of a sustainable, community-based food system in our area. Through gaining the necessary skills, knowledge, and commitment to gardening and farming, our community is enriched by increased access to foods whose roots are close to home-- fresh, organic, and healthier for the local economy and environment. We will prioritize folks who wouldn't otherwise be able to garden without the support of this program, because our goal is to increase access to healthy, fresh food for all members of our community regardless of income.

Receivables

Participants in the program will receive plants, seeds, fertilizer, a hoe and hand trowel, organic pest and disease control, season extension and help with tilling up new gardens. We can't supply water access, hoses, shovels, rakes, spades, gloves, mulch, or other supplies. However, access to these items may make gardening easier for you, so we recommend you have them. Ask around for anyone with spares or visit a local flea market to pick up tools for cheap.

Land requirements

Applicants need to have access to land for a garden, but do not need to actually own the land used. If you don't own property, talk with your landlord, neighbors, family, friends or contact an area community garden to find suitable space. Garden plots should be at least 20'x25' (500 square feet) and receive at least 6 hours of direct sunlight or more per day. You will not have much success with a heavily shaded area. Gardens should be on relatively level ground, with no more than a 5% slope. You also don't want to put a garden in a place that floods or doesn't drain well during wet weather. Build It Up is willing to help connect participants with land, so even if you don't currently have access, please feel free to apply.

Workshops

Build It Up will host 6 workshops during the months of February-September, and participants are required to attend them all. Workshops are where we will check in with all participants, troubleshoot issues, teach you valuable skills, and hand out all materials. There will be specific

tools, seeds, plants, and fertilizers, etc, handed out at each workshop, so missing a workshop means missing out on that round of materials. Required workshops will include: Planning a Garden, Planting a Garden, Maintaining a Garden, Preserving the Harvest, Healthy Cooking, and Fall Gardening.

Work expectation

Gardening isn't easy! It's fun and very rewarding but it requires a lot of work, and we want to state that right up front. To be successful, you should plan for 5-10 hours of work each week, which will include bed preparation, planting, weeding, mulching, watering, harvesting and more. You will be required to track all of your harvests and send us a report each month. Please be realistic about the time and work requirements of maintaining a garden and your or your family's ability to meet them before applying to this program.

Mentorship

Participants will also be included in a private Facebook group where they can ask questions, post pictures and share experiences with new and returning gardeners. A BIU Program Leader will visit your garden at least once during the season to check in and help troubleshoot any issues you've encountered. Participants in the Market Garden program will receive lots of help picking varieties and info about correct harvesting and packaging items for sale through the program.

Volunteer hours

Grow Appalachia has very graciously supplied us with grant funding to run this program, and in turn, we are providing participants with a lot of gardening supplies and help. In exchange, we'd like all participants to give back through volunteering with Build It Up or with one of our community partners 4-5 hours a month (approximately a half day per month). Here are some volunteer options:

- Help Build It Up host one of our fundraisers
- Participate in a work day at one of our community edible parks in Johnson City
- Help a fellow participant with their garden
- Help run a group booth at a farmers market
- Volunteer with one of our community partners

Other Requirements

Organic--Our funder requires that we only use organic materials for our program. We can't prevent you from buying non-organic materials to use, but we highly encourage you to follow organic practices in your garden. We'll explain what this means and teach plenty of non-toxic methods for successful gardening in our series of workshops throughout the year.

Bloggng--Our funder requires that we blog regularly. To help keep things interesting and share the work of meeting this requirement, we ask that each participant write one blog post during the year about their experiences gardening. Check Grow Appalachia's Blog out here:

<http://growappalachia.berea.edu/blog/>