

ASPI/ Grow Appalachia

**Grow
Rockcastle
Community
Garden**

Manager Packet

Welcome Packet Instructions

The Welcome Packet is a set of materials for the garden manager. It includes materials that can be handed out to gardeners at Spring Registration, general information about Grow Rockcastle, and sample materials to be used throughout the season. If prepared in early spring, all or parts of it would be available to potential new gardeners who make inquiries about getting a plot. The materials are available on our website www.a-spi.org

Following are recommended materials to review and copy for participants, which you can find on ASPI's website in the Community Garden Handbook:

- Welcome Packet Instructions
- Welcome Packet Cover Letter
- Grow Appalachia Application
- Garden Leaders Contact List & Class Calendar (Attached)
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Community Garden Rules Sample
- Expectations
- Volunteer Opportunities and Manager Job Description
- Sample Postcard for Participants
- Sample news article
- Gardening Techniques
- Participant Contract
- Workbook for Grow Appalachia (one included)

These materials can be found in the Adobe formats on the ASPI website, and can be adapted as needed by each garden. Each garden may choose to add additional informational materials to the Welcome Packet.

For participants (no adaption needed)

For manager to adapt to each garden

Welcome to Community Gardening

You've probably heard the term *community gardening*, but what exactly is it? Many people come into community gardening thinking that it's simply a way to grow food... the same as back yard gardening, only not in their back yard. It's actually a whole lot more; there are more responsibilities, but there are also more benefits and rewards.

Responsibilities

A community garden takes a lot of work to run well, and everyone is expected to participate (many hands make light work). Some examples of group responsibilities are maintaining paths, fixing hoses, **handling registration, managing the budget, organizing educational workshops**, enforcing garden rules, communicating to all gardeners, and organizing social events. Successful gardens are run by committees of gardeners, and most gardens have at least three committees. From the work of many volunteers, each according to their ability, community gardens survive and thrive.

Other responsibilities are related to your plot, for example, most community gardens require that you keep your plot fairly well weeded.

Benefits and rewards

If you've never gardened in a community garden before, you can look forward to more than fresh fruits and veggies.

Community gardens are common ground for growing plants that feed, heal and give aesthetic pleasure. They are civic spaces where people work and recreate to nourish themselves, their families and friends; the gardeners' shared labor also builds a stronger sense of belonging to their physical environment and connection to other gardeners. Community gardens are the collective effort of people with the patience and determination to make things grow.

Community gardens not only nurture green spaces but foster the development of a community identity and spirit. Community garden spaces also allow for interaction with nature and the productive use of land. Because community gardens are beautiful and visually appealing, they function as calming places.

Community gardening brings together people and encourages interaction. Many people have developed leadership skills as a result of being involved with their community garden.

Community gardens should be inclusive and welcoming to all people. Regardless of age, education, language barrier, or disability, all gardeners should participate both in the upkeep of the garden -- with tasks like caring for the water system and common areas -- and in garden decision-making including setting rules and choosing leaders. ASPI Community Gardens Project provides the framework so that all can share the work.

By choosing to be in a community garden, you'll be gardening in close proximity to others. You can learn from these folks either actively (by asking questions) or passively (by observation). People of different cultural backgrounds garden differently; if your community garden is culturally diverse, you may be surprised at what you'll learn even if you've been gardening many years.

Welcome to your community garden; we hope you enjoy this new way of gardening! Please call your garden's leaders or ASPI if you have questions or suggestions.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a community garden all about?

A community garden is a shared space for groups of individuals and families to garden together. We welcome people of all cultures, speaking all languages, making any kind of income, with little or a lot of gardening experience. Each participant gets a garden plot to tend and contributes some volunteer hours to help run the garden. Participant gardeners maintain paths, help each other when needed, attend garden meetings, and divide all tasks. Most gardens have no paid staff people, so we all pitch in by volunteering for different tasks.

What is ASPI?

ASPI stands for Appalachia- Science in the Public Interest. ASPI is a non-profit organization with properties in Mt Vernon and Livingston. Our main goal is environmental education. We use science and technology to promote sustainable living through education, research, and demonstration projects. Our focus areas are: **Food Systems, Ecosystems, Energy, and Culture**. We operate out of our Small Town Demonstration Center at our main offices in Mount Vernon, KY. Our other educational facilities are located on close to 200 acres of old growth forest at our Rockcastle River Wilderness Site in Livingston, KY, which includes the Mary E Fritsch Nature Center, Michael Francis Zalla Trails. Since our inception in 1977 in ASPI has been dedicated to education and awareness of our region's environmental issues and we remain just as dedicated to that ongoing cause 35 years later.

What is Grow Appalachia?

Grow Appalachia is a program that provides gardening grants to communities through our partner nonprofits (called "partner sites"). ASPI is a partner site. The gardens take on the unique personalities of their respective communities — whether backyard gardens, community gardens, gardens for the elderly, healing gardens, Girl Scout gardens, raised bed gardens or gardens planted directly in the soil. Each partner site must:

- **Offer** classes throughout the year on topics such as garden planning, planting and maintenance, heart-healthy cooking and up to date food processing and preservation techniques. The use of open pollinated and heirloom varieties is required at every site as is the practice of seed saving to preserve and strengthen Appalachia's horticultural heritage. Classes are shaped by the unique needs of each community and then education is then shared between partner sites.
- **Provide technical and physical assistance** to every gardener throughout the growing season, ensuring that they have access to solutions and help getting started. We provide plants, seeds, organic soil amendments and pesticides, and quality hand tools.
- **Report where the harvest goes. If participants have a lot of food, the sites donate** a portion of the harvest from to a local food bank or others who cannot garden for themselves. Grow Appalachia **encourages growers to move toward entrepreneurship** by providing technical assistance, which improves garden yields, and access to efficient kitchens and markets. This way, growers can save on grocery costs and begin to make extra money on surplus produce. We also encourage growers to develop value-added goods such as jellies and salsas through community commercial kitchens.
- **Respect tradition.** Families throughout Appalachia have heritages of family seeds, growing techniques and recipes. Grow Appalachia participants are encouraged to learn more about the legacy of farming and gardening in their families and local cultures. We deliberately establish mentorships among generations and families as well as among partner sites.
- **Leverage community assets** in the form of universities, churches, volunteer workers, external grant sources, leveraged resources of all kinds, unused land and AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers to ensure maximum participation. Grow Appalachia partner sites have never paid for the use of land for community gardens — communities see the need for the program and lend land to support it.

How big are plots?

Plot size depends on the garden and the number of participants. Plots are usually around **100**

square feet, but some gardens have less and some have more. Half-plots are available as well.

How many plots can I get?

It depends on how many gardeners sign up for plots. Most gardens should have room for everyone to have at least one. You may request additional plots, and the garden manager will honor your request as space allows. Returning gardeners may request to keep the plot(s) they gardened the previous year.

What do I get when I sign up?

- A plot for your use during the season
- Use of a few shared common tools, and some free seeds & plants provided by ASPI Grow Rockcastle
- Compost will be provided
- Access to water.
- A supportive environment for learning about gardening and meeting neighbors!

How much does it cost?

Usually, payment for plots is based on a sliding scale, set to be affordable for everyone while still collecting enough money in your garden bank account to pay for tools, hoses, water, etc. The number of people in your household and your income determine how much you will pay for a plot. In the ASPI Grow Rockcastle Program, your "payment" is volunteer hours. You sign a contract to pledge 7 hours of volunteer time in the garden and attend 5 workshops to receive the plot, tools, plants, seeds, water, and technical assistance. The program is two years long, and after your second year, we ask for a donation to maintain the programs.

What extra things can I purchase?

Floating row cover, perennial plants, fertilizer, additional tools, and straw or hay for mulch are available at wholesale cost during Spring Registration. See separate sheets for why you might want these.

Are the gardens organic?

There are different meanings of "organic gardening." Many of the gardens are organic because insecticides, pesticides, and herbicides (like Round- Up) are never allowed in the gardens. We do provide alternative pest control sprays and technologies. Compost is provided, and organic fertilizers are encouraged. If you are unsure about a particular product, contact the garden manager for the garden you are interested in to find out if you can use it. ASPI Grow Rockcastle will schedule a workshop on organic pest control.

What about people who have never gardened before?

One of the greatest benefits of community gardening is learning from other gardeners. Someone will always be there to help. We have a range of experience in the gardens and many resources to help people who are just getting started. ASPI Grow Rockcastle pairs new gardeners with more experienced ones. Workshops are offered through ASPI Grow Rockcastle. The most important thing is to ask for help and suggestions from your fellow gardeners. It's a lot of fun! Experienced gardeners are usually quite glad to share their knowledge and skills with gardening novices. Flatter experienced gardeners with your questions! Also, check out the ASPI website (www.a-spi.org) and resource library (at 50 Lair Street) for hundreds of books on how to garden.

How much time does it take?

Gardening is fun, but it's also hard work. You have to weed, harvest, and maintain your plot. If you are going to be out of town for an extended period, you'll have to arrange for someone to tend your plot. Gardening also demands more time at different points in the season than others. If you don't think you can tend to your plot twice a week, consider sharing with someone else.

Once I have a plot, what do I have to do?

Be a good neighbor by following the rules of the garden and maintaining your plot.
Perform the required hours of voluntary-service for your garden.
Enjoy the garden and the community of gardeners!

What about theft?

All the gardens experience at least a little theft or vandalism. Gardeners have found that theft diminished with signs and outreach to neighbors to tell them about the garden and invite them to get plots. Fences can also help. See the tip sheet with strategies to prevent theft.

Are the gardens tilled?

At most gardens, no-till and tilled plots are available. Mention if you have a preference when you sign up at Spring Registration.

Community Garden Rules

Below are some of the rules created at ASPI gardens, which should be fine-tuned to suit your garden. Clear rules help because it is better to have people mad at the rules than mad at the coordinators!

- The garden should be a safe place for the community, children, and other gardeners. Do not bring anything that will compromise the safety of the garden.
- Ensuring enjoyable gardening experience for all of the garden community is the primary goal of these rules and responsibilities. For this reason, observe the rules of the garden, and be a good neighbor.
- The garden's manager has the duty of enforcing rules and making decisions for the garden between annual meetings of all gardeners. They have authority to resolve conflicts, including refusing a plot to a gardener or dismissing a current gardener.
- Please check the information board for a map showing where your plot is, as well as information concerning the garden - problems, classes, information, notices. Feel free to post information you have and leave messages for other gardeners there.
- Teach your children to respect others' plots and not to waste water.
- Unresolved issues or disputes between gardeners will be referred to the manager.
- Each person must apply each year for a plot but returning gardeners will be given first preference and permitted to keep the same plot if they wish. The number of plots per gardener may be limited according to demand.
- You are responsible for your own plot and 7 hours of volunteer work (contributing to the upkeep of the whole garden.)
- If you are unable to care for your plot for a time because of illness or vacation, ask a fellow gardener or the manager for help with weeding and harvesting.
- Generally visit your plot at least once each week.
- If you decide not to use your plot, please contact the manager or ASPI so it may be reassigned to someone on the waiting list. If there is no evidence of activity at your plot by June 1st, it will be reassigned.
- If your plot is overgrown with weeds, you will receive a warning. After one week of no action, your plot may be mowed and reassigned.
- Biodegradable mulch such as compost, leaves, straw, and hay are encouraged. Carpet mulch is not allowed. Remove any non organic mulch by closing day. They do not biodegrade quickly. Black plastic is allowed, but must be removed at the end of the season.
- Please do not plant mint, catnip, Jerusalem artichokes, comfrey or raspberries.
- Please do not put up brightly-colored fencing (for instance orange plastic construction fencing) around your plot, and check with the manager before you put up any structures.

- Keep tall plants such as corn or sunflowers at the center of your plot so they do not shade your neighbors plants.
- Keep vines and visitors out of neighboring plots.
- If you have a surplus of vegetables or fruits, please contact the manager or ASPI.
- Do not pick from your neighbor's garden even if you think they have neglected their plot.
- Keep plot boundaries weeded and trash-free. If you are on a pathway, you are responsible to care for 1/2 of the pathway between you and your neighbor. Keep plot edges and fencing free of weeds that will go to seed. Don't put rocks and sticks in paths. Take them to the rock-and-stick area.
- Compost should be available at your garden. Weeds and diseased plants should be put in plant refuse piles – not on the compost pile.
- If you use the garden's tools, please return them to the storage area when done. Sign tools out when in use.
- Plant refuse piles are set up for weeds and diseased plants. Please use these designated areas. No trash in the piles, please. Please do not add kitchen scraps to the plant refuse piles because they are likely to draw animals.
- Pack your trash back home to dispose of properly.
- Stakes that mark your plot's corners and have your plot number and name must be left in place all season.
- Never use any herbicides (weedkillers), and pesticides are discouraged and prohibited at many community gardens. Keep pest-control products and containers away from children
- Do not drive into the garden area.

Mt Vernon Garden Expectations and Information - 2014

- The combination for the shed is xxx. The tools and the combination are for Mt Vernon gardeners only. Please put tools away when you are done and lock shed to avoid loss and theft.
- *This is an organic garden. This means no pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, etc.* If you don't know if a substance is organic, please ask.
- This is a **community** garden, with many different and diverse members of our community coming together to garden on a very small patch of land. Sometimes this can lead to difficulties or disagreements. Please do your best to work problems out in a peaceful and pleasant fashion. If this doesn't happen, contact the manager for a little help with mediating. Also, to state the obvious: don't take things from other people's plots without asking.
- You need to start working your plot by May 1. If you don't, it will be considered abandoned and will be reassigned. If meeting that deadline is impossible for you please talk with the manager.
- Please keep your plot as weed-free as possible. We know no one is perfect, but plots with excessive weeds not only affect you, they cause trouble for your neighbors. Gardeners whose plots have weeds that are likely to cause trouble for neighboring plots (because of height, location, or concentration, among other reasons) will be given a warning. If the first warning is not effective, the gardener will be sent a letter specifying a time by which the weeds must be taken care of. Failure to comply will result in forfeiture of the plot. We really don't want to be hard-noses about this, but we do want the garden to be productive and abundant for all.
- Plants and structures tall enough to cast significant shadows should be grown in the middle of the plot, instead of on an edge where they are likely to block the sun in your neighbors' plots.
- All gardeners are expected to volunteer a minimum of 7 hours of their time to the community, beyond time spent working on plots. To accomplish this, please attend opening and closing day, work on a committee, and/or arrange other activities benefiting the garden as a whole with one of the coordinators. *It is your responsibility to fulfill this obligation and verify your work with the manager. If we don't know you've done the work, you won't receive tools and supplies.*
- When clearing trash from your plot, please move large rocks and sticks away from the grass in front of and behind your plot so that it can be mowed. Human-made refuse should be placed in the trash can by the shed or taken away to be disposed of. Natural junk (rocks, sticks, weeds) should be moved to the other side of the railroad tracks. Please do not put any natural material or animal refuse in the garbage can. *There will be only one garbage can at the garden and it will be in the tool shed. Please do not keep other garbage cans in the garden as people put their garbage and dog poop in them. We do not have garbage pickup at the garden and should minimize garbage left there.*
- The water will be turned on in early May. To get water from the rain barrels to your plot, you will need to use the buckets. We should have the pump and hose hooked up as well. Please return the hose to the shed when you're done. (When you are done, please ask other gardeners if they will need to use the hose soon; if not, please turn the water off and disconnect the hose) Similarly, if you are the last person at the garden please shut the water off and make sure the hose is disconnected and carried back to the shed. *In order to maintain our water system and minimize noise for the neighbors, the hose should not remain out any longer than needed.* If you discover any problems with the water system (leaks or lack of pressure, for instance), please notify the manager.
- Please keep a clear path in the garden to allow access to hoses and the water system. *The path must remain clear all summer.*
- Please do not dig up the grass or take tools home.
- Closing day: Saturday September 20th 9 a.m. to noon
- If you have concerns or questions, please talk with ASPI or the manager.
- Have a great gardening season!

Participant Name

Date

Garden Staff

Gardens run smoothly because of the work of many people, coordinated by several key volunteers who each have small but important roles to organize the efforts. Tips about what's involved for each of these volunteers are in the Garden Volunteer section.

The role of the garden manager is to know the gardeners. The manager is responsible for gathering the gardeners together for events, workdays, and meetings, encouraging all to share in the work and decision-making of the garden. The manager will implement and evaluate the various programs of ASPI's Grow Rockcastle onsite, including the assisted gardening structures, special events, youth garden education program, Adopt-a-Plot and (if applicable) the Produce Market. The Community Garden Program Manager will also oversee the development and maintenance of the community garden.

Duties include:

- Managing Grow Rockcastle program implementation and assisting with evaluation for _____.
- Completing basic reports, including photo documentation.
- Working with ASPI to develop and execute an annual operating plan for the garden.
- Managing plot assignments and assist in reviewing, communicating and enforcing garden policies, maintenance schedules, and expectations to program participants.
- Coordinating volunteers to develop and maintain garden.
- Developing and overseeing various garden projects with assistance of garden members and volunteers.
- Leading the development of garden-related written communications to include newspaper articles, emails, social media posts, website content and marketing copy.
- Handling _____ garden-related communications such as mail, email and phone inquiries and maintaining program schedules.
- Assisting with development efforts including grant writing.
- Assisting with garden-related event and fundraiser coordination.

Volunteer Opportunities

The manager will ask for participants to volunteer in exchange for tools, supplies, and educational workshops. Here is a list of jobs the manager may need volunteer help with:

Registrar

The registrar signs people up, holds the waiting list for people who want plots, runs Spring Registration, and assigns plots.

Monitor

The monitor, a.k.a. "weed police", has the task of making sure that all garden plots are being used and maintained.

Communications Leader

The communications person makes sure gardeners are in touch through meetings, phone calls, mail and email, and arranging newspaper articles or social media blogs.

Outreach

The outreach person makes sure that people in the community know about the garden and have opportunities to participate.

Grounds Leader

The grounds committee leader organizes workdays to make sure that paths, common areas, hoses, fences, compost, etc are in order.

Social / Education Leader

The social committee leader organizes and publicizes potlucks and other events at the garden. They can also help set up the Grow Rockcastle educational workshops and connect new and experienced gardeners with a buddy program.

Security

The security leader works on strategies to minimize theft and vandalism.

Skills and Experience Required

- Bachelor's degree. A minimum of 3 years successful program management experience may be substituted for degree.
- 1-2 years' experience working in a nonprofit setting, preferred.
- Horticultural knowledge and experience strongly preferred.
- Ability to coordinate and lead volunteers in garden development and maintenance tasks and projects.
- Must be proficient in the use of Microsoft Office Suite, email and the Internet. Basic skills in database management a plus.
- Must possess exceptional organizational skills and be able to prioritize tasks and follow through on all projects with minimal supervision.
- Excellent writing skills with ability to produce high quality program reports.
- Excellent verbal skills and ability to work effectively with diverse groups of youth and adults.
- Ability to follow strict grant guidelines and application instructions. Grant writing skills a plus
- Must have reliable transportation.
- Must be able to work occasional evenings and weekends.
- Must be able to lift a minimum of 50 lbs. and be able to handle the physical demands of gardening.
- Knowledge of nutrition and/or community organizing a plus.

Compensation

- The Community Garden Program Manager will be compensated at an hourly rate, commensurate with experience.
- This is a (10-20 hours) seasonal weekly staff position with no paid overtime. Future work is contingent upon successful performance and continued funding.
- Schedule is somewhat flexible and some telecommuting allowed.

**You Are Invited To
REGISTRATION DAY
For the Mt Vernon Community Garden**



WHEN
Saturday, March 12th at 1:00pm

WHERE
ASPI offices: 50 Lair Street

Plots are available, so please feel free to attend even if you have not gardened here before! Come stake your claim and help decide what events and activities should be at the garden this year. Refreshments and free seeds will be provided. We hope to see you there!

(If you want a plot but cannot attend, you must contact manager Joe Smith beforehand at 555-2726 or at edingerd@a-spi.org)

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TO: _____

TO: _____

TO: _____

TO: _____

Jones Community Garden Grows Again!

by Jim Winkle

Jones Community Garden is expanding again and plots will be available. This will be our last expansion; we're growing to the north, but can't go any further because of the landfill.

It's exciting to see the strong demand for community garden space. We started out with about 5 plots in 2012, doubled to 10 in 2013, and added 15 more in 2014. Every year we fill to capacity, yet somehow usually manage to squeeze everyone in. We're adding 15 plots this year, which sounds like a lot, but they will go quickly since a nearby community garden is closing.

It's also exciting to be a part of this project that's about a whole lot more than growing fresh fruits and veggies. Racial and cultural bridges are being built before our eyes. New friendships are forming. Community is being strengthened and leaders are taking shape on the south side.

To sign up for a garden plot, come to the **Multicultural Center**, 1862 Beld Street on **Saturday, April 9** in the downstairs dining room. **Newcomers should arrive promptly at 10 a.m.** **Returning gardeners should come at 11:30 a.m.** This is the kick-off meeting and registration, and will run until around 12:30. There will be an optional potluck immediately afterward; please bring a dish to pass and your own tableware.

The plots are 20 by 22 feet, and will rent on a sliding scale from \$7.50 - \$50 per season, depending on your income. If you sign up for Grow Appalachia, there is no fee, but each gardener is required to volunteer 7 hours per season. The garden is entirely organic.

There's a small website for the garden at www.a-spi.org where you can find more information about the garden.

If you have questions, please contact one of the pre-registration contacts. **Returning gardeners** should contact them **by March 5** to reserve their old plot. Email Cheryl at dewelt@sbcglobal.net or phone Nora at 260-9141.

******Articles for events, updates, or special occasions should have the same basic info. The manager should update the website, Grow Appalachia blog, facebook, and other newsletters every two weeks.**

ASPI/ Grow Appalachia Participant Commitment 2014

This is a commitment between the Appalachia-Science in the Public Interest/Grow Appalachia project and _____ . This commitment will serve as a formal agreement between both parties.

The Grow Appalachia Project agrees to:

1. Provide coordinator to work with participants.
2. Provide seeds, plants, soil amendments and, if necessary, hand tools and canning supplies for participants.
3. Provide technical advice during the growing season.
4. Provide tiller for participants use.
5. Visit garden site four times during the growing season.
6. Host or co-host seven gardening workshops.
7. Host four all participant meetings where participants can discuss the progress and direction of the project, and share tips and resources.

The participant agrees to:

1. Schedule garden visits with the Project Coordinator four times during the growing season.
2. Provide garden reports to Project Coordinator each month on how the garden is growing.
3. Keep track of how much produce was harvested and how it was used (report template provided). These forms will be turned in each month.
4. Attend four of the seven gardening workshops hosted by ASPI.
5. Attend two of the four all participant meetings held.

I understand that I will not hold Appalachia-Science in the Public Interest responsible for any injury or property damage that occurs as a result of negligent actions by myself or family members. I hereby agree that I will not allow any person under the age of 18 to use the tiller or any other mechanized equipment owned by Appalachia-Science in the Public Interest and that all adults in the household will take a tiller safety training before using the equipment.

I grant permission to the hold Appalachia-Science in the Public Interest and Grow Appalachia project to take and use: photographs, digital images, and/or audio of ___me and/or ___ my garden for use in SVM files, grant reporting and/or educational materials. These materials might include printed or electronic publications, web sites or other electronic communications. I authorize the use of these images without compensation to me. All negatives, prints, and digital reproductions shall be property of Appalachia-Science in the Public Interest and shall be shared with me upon request.

I grant permission to the Appalachia-Science in the Public Interest and Grow Appalachia project to take and use: photographs, digital images, and/or audio of my minor child (or children) _____ for use in ASPI files, grant reporting and/or educational materials. These materials might include printed or electronic publications, web sites or other electronic communications. I authorize the use of these images without compensation to me. All negatives, prints, and digital reproductions shall be property of Appalachia-Science in the Public Interest and shall be shared with me upon request.

I understand that I have an obligation to participate in the program in order to receive resources. If I do not complete my volunteer service or attend the workshops, I will not be able to take home supplies or tools.

Participant Signature

Date

Coordinator Signature

Date

Participant Name:

Address:

Phone Number: