

## Garden Ministry

While it helps greatly to seek donations for food or to glean from crops, having a home or community garden is a fun and cost-effective way to get fresh, healthy food. You may start a family garden ministry at your church, or use available land to provide a community garden.

### PROJECT DETAILS

#### Steps

During the planning stage, consider the following questions:

- How much time and effort are you willing or able to put in?
- Do you have an area for the garden that gets at least 5 or 6 hours of sun each day?
- Do you have a source of water for the garden?

Find a garden site. Do a soil test in the fall. Check with your local Cooperative Extension office for a soil sample analysis. Check if the land is contaminated and if water is available.

Ask around for supply donations, e.g. Lowe's, Home Depot, Wal-Mart Gardening Center, Ace Hardware, tractor supply companies or local gardening and hardware stores. Here are some supplies you may need:

- Gardening gloves
- Scoops, shovels and/or spades
- Rakes
- Tarps
- Hoes/cultivators
- Storage sheds
- Pest control
- Compost
- Fertilizer

Talk to local farmers and seek their expertise and advice. They may also have extra tools to borrow. Gather volunteers to prepare and develop the site. You will need to:

- Clean the site
- Develop your design and set a visible perimeter
- Arrange for land preparation
- Plan a storage area for tools and equipment and a compost area

For a more comprehensive guide on planting and maintenance, read this guide <http://baptistsonmission.org/missions/by-type/agriculture>

Advertise to the local community to enlist garden volunteers. Set specific times to open the garden.

## Tips

- Be prepared to get your hands in the dirt!
- This project requires time and effort. Be prepared to dedicate your time to making the garden grow.
- If possible, consider planting a prayer garden with flowers adjacent to the vegetable garden.

## Resources

- Victory Garden, Second Baptist Church, Springfield, MO 417-887-3111
- A Guide to Starting a Garden Ministry <http://baptistsonmission.org/missions/by-type/agriculture>
- Missouri Cooperative Extension <http://extension.missouri.edu/>

## Stories

- Read the story of community gardening with the homeless at the Urban Ministry Center Community Garden in Charlotte, NC <http://urbanministrygarden.wordpress.com/>
- Church gardens build community and help the hungry [http://blog.mlive.com/grpress/2008/06/church\\_gardens\\_build\\_community.html](http://blog.mlive.com/grpress/2008/06/church_gardens_build_community.html)