



Village of **Croton-on-Hudson** *where nature grows on you*
www.crotononhudson-ny.gov



Croton Community Victory Garden Information Sheet

Mission: To create the first of hopefully many community gardens throughout the village. The gardens will be Victory Gardens in that they will take a large step toward addressing issues of sustainability, locally grown produce, organic gardening practices, etc. The gardens will be used to educate the villagers on how to grow plants and recycle dead plants and leaves.

The benefit to the gardeners will be that people with deer, without sun or with no land can grow food for themselves or others. The cooperative nature of the garden allows people of like mind to work together in a very unique community activity. Although this garden will be designed for the practical purpose of growing food, it will create a unique beauty and may inspire more community gardens throughout the village.

The first Croton Victory Garden will be at the southern part of the grassy area adjacent to the parking lot at Silver Lake. This spot is ideal for the following reasons: accessibility (plenty of parking and close to many); water availability (a main is right there so a spigot is an easy and inexpensive item); sun (plenty of it). It is also ideal because it is not being used for sports or other activities and should not have a negative impact on anyone in the village.

This garden is currently under construction. An 8 foot high fence will surround a 50 by 42 foot plot. There will be one entrance into the garden via a 4 foot gate at the northern end. This gate will open onto a 4 foot wide path which will run down the center of the allotment. Initially, 10 plots on either side of the path will measure 5 feet wide by 19 feet deep. Each plot will touch the neighboring plot so each gardener will be responsible for creating a path through their plot. If some gardeners do not want plots this large, the 5 x 19 plot may be halved and shared. An initial load of earth and mulch will be provided by the village. Thereafter, additional soil or mulch will be paid for by the gardeners.

The initial cost to the garden participants this year will be \$50 per plot or \$25 per half plot. The community gardeners will also be responsible for paying the water charges. (So far this year, water has not been a big issue for most gardens!!).

The community gardeners will essentially be a self-governing body, accountable to the village board. They will create rules regarding membership, dues, responsibilities etc. subject to approval by the village board. The garden can embody whimsy, as many community gardens do. But the garden must not ever look like a shanty town which is the sole reason why community gardens earn enemies. Permanent plants such as plum or apple trees are possible, if the gardeners so choose. The gardens must be organic. No pesticides or herbicides or chemical fertilizers of any kind will be allowed.

Other successful community gardens thrive on the participation of the members. Gardeners cannot just grow their vegetables. They also have to get involved in the various committees that will be needed to make the project run successfully. The first year is going to be the most difficult. It will be necessary to fund and build a tool shed, purchase watering hoses, tools, a lock with keys for the gate. Committees will have to be set up to raise funds, keep the garden neat, create and maintain a website, sell or donate surplus food or vegetables, setup the garden in spring time and to take the garden down in the fall. It will only be successful, if the members put a lot of energy into the enterprise.

A composting operation will be established beside the garden to provide fresh mulch for the garden each year. There will have to be a committee which will take responsibility for this activity too! If the number of people interested in a plot this year exceeds the number of plots available, a lottery will be held on July 18th to determine who will get the plots. Should this pilot garden succeed this year, the program may be expanded next year.

One possible outgrowth of this activity is matching residents with ample backyards to residents who want to garden, but lack garden space. This "Backyard Sharing" program will, where possible, match people who have the time and skill to grow vegetables with people with sufficient private land, but no time. Each party can work out a mutually beneficial agreement, most likely some sort of a food sharing agreement.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How many plots will there be?

We plan to have at least 20 plots, each 5 feet by 19 feet. If a number of people opt to share plots we should be able to accommodate 25 or more gardeners.

2. What is the size of the plots?

Most of the plots will be 5 feet by 19 feet. The smaller plots will be 5 feet by 9 feet if some people opt to split the larger plots.

3. Are there particular hours designated for working on the plots?

Initially, we suggest gardening be limited to the hours between sunup to sundown. The rules committee will have to address the work hours issue once it is formed. It is anticipated that no motorized garden equipment will be needed or allowed.

4. When will people be allowed to work on the plots?

We anticipate having the garden up and running by July 18th. This start date assumes the fencer finishes his fence installation on time. The garden will be open until the end of the fall harvest season.

5. Will there be any cost to getting a plot?

Initially we are setting the fee at \$50. This money is to cover startup costs. Once we have run the garden for a year or two, it will be easier to determine an annual budget and assess fees accordingly.

6. Is this open to non residents? Is it the same fee for non residents?

We plan to make this pilot garden open to Village residents only for this year, leaving the door open for expansion later on.

7. What kind of requirements will there be?

This garden will prohibit the use of non-organic, or synthetic fertilizers, herbicides, or pesticides and explicitly promote the use of organic gardening techniques.

8. How will garden plots be assigned?

All households interested must submit a Lottery form (see the attached flyer) telling the village their name, phone, email and street address. Plots are limited to one per household. If the demand exceeds the number of available plots, a lottery on July 18 will determine which households will be assigned plots for this first year.

To enter the lottery, send your name, phone number, email and street address by noon on July 17 to jhannigan@crotononhudson-ny.gov (use "community garden" as the subject line), or fax this form to 914-271-2836, or call 914-271-4781 with this information during normal village business hours.

For general garden questions, contact Sustainability Team members Niall Kelleher by email at nkelleher@ups.com, or call Jane Shumsky (914-271-0057) or Claire Hilbert (914-862-2291). For more information, see "Community Garden" at www.crotononhudson-ny.gov.