



COMMON QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE PEOPLE'S GARDEN INITIATIVE?

It is a nation-wide effort which was started by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 2009. Initially, the initiative challenged all USDA employees to start People's Gardens at USDA facilities or help communities create gardens through collaborative efforts. Today people across the Nation are urged to join the movement. People's Gardens bring together people - young, old and from all ethnicities and all walks of life - who seek ways, big and small, to improve their community and the environment. This is what The People's Garden Initiative is all about.

USDA is working with over 700 local organizations to create school gardens, community gardens and small-scale agriculture projects in urban and rural areas, collectively referred to as community-based agriculture.

HOW DID IT START?

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack declared the grounds surrounding USDA Headquarters in Washington, DC the first People's Garden on February 12, 2009 in honor of Abraham Lincoln's 200th birthday.

WHAT IS THE HISTORY BEHIND THE NAME?

When President Lincoln founded USDA in 1862, he called it The People's Department. USDA continues to honor his vision for a Department that serves the American people every day and in every way through The People's Garden Initiative.

WHAT IS A PEOPLE'S GARDEN?

People's Gardens vary in size and type, but all are required to have three components in common. They **must benefit the community**, in some cases by creating recreational spaces and in others by providing a harvest for a local food bank or shelter. They **must be collaborative** - that is, the garden must be created and maintained by a partnership of local individuals, groups, or organizations. And third, they **must incorporate sustainable practices**. The gardens might use compost or mulch made by participants. They might contain native plants or encourage beneficial insects. They also might exemplify water conservation, for instance, capturing rain in a barrel to water the garden.

Gardens located at private residences are not eligible to become People's Gardens. You can declare an existing garden as a People's Garden as long as it incorporates the three components.

WHERE ARE PEOPLE'S GARDENS LOCATED?

There are more than 1,500 People's Gardens that have expanded to all 50 states, three U.S. territories and eleven foreign countries. They are located at faith-based centers, on federal leased or owned property, at schools and other places within the community. Find a garden in your area by searching the People's Garden Interactive Map at www.usda.gov/peoplesgarden.

HOW CAN PRODUCE BE USED THAT IS HARVESTED FROM A PEOPLE'S GARDEN?

All produce grown at a People's Garden on USDA owned or leased property is donated to help those in need. We invite our partners to join us in sharing your harvest with neighborhood food pantries, kitchens and shelters - which helps improve access to healthy, affordable food at a local level.

HOW CAN I FIND A LOCAL FOOD PANTRY?

AmpleHarvest.org, a partner of The People's Garden Initiative, diminishes hunger in America by helping people share their excess garden produce with neighborhood food pantries. To find a pantry near you, go to ampleharvest.org.

IF I DONATE PRODUCE AND SOMEONE GETS SICK AM I LIABLE?

Donations of food and grocery items to non-profits to feed needy individuals are covered by the Good Samaritan Food Donation Act (Public Law 104-210). Unless there is gross negligence or misconduct on behalf of the donor, individuals and groups are not liable.

HOW CAN MY GARDEN BE RECOGNIZED AS A PEOPLE'S GARDEN?

Is your garden benefiting the community, incorporating sustainable practices and a collaborative effort? If yes to all three criteria, congratulations on growing a People's Garden! Regardless of type - vegetable, beautification, wildlife, or other - new and existing gardens can receive the designation of a People's Garden if they meet the three criteria.

Visit www.usda.gov/peoplesgarden and select 'Join Us' to register. You'll be asked to describe each garden, who's involved and where it's located. Once registered you can share photos and request a free sign to show your support. Signs will be shipped directly to you.

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