Faith and Food Congregational Garden Program

Thank you for fighting hunger where we live by growing produce for donation! You can help provide nutritious, fresh vegetables to those who need it the most. Congregations all over Washtenaw County are growing items and donating them to Food Gatherers. They are distributed through meal programs and food banks. Working together, we can accomplish what none of us can do alone.

The basic suggestions for your garden are:

• At least a 20 x 20’ plot. This could be raised beds or in the ground. Raised beds provide more structure. They define the area and make it easier for groups to work a certain area. You would need 12 - 4x8’ beds to equal 400 sq. ft. They are a little more work at the beginning to construct and cost about $15 each. See if someone in your congregation has wood to donate or knows someone in construction. You can plant raised beds on top of any type of soil and even concrete, without necessarily having to till. However, they require much more compost.

• Grow whatever you wish – but please consider some items that Food Gatherers needs most: collards, cauliflower, cabbage, cantaloupe, broccoli, carrots, potatoes, peas, green beans, Roma tomatoes, peppers, and winter squash.

• Donate at least half of the yield to Food Gatherers. A member of your team delivers the produce to Food Gatherers.

What can Food Gatherers do to help?
• Let us know what you need! If we can't provide it, we will try our best to connect you to someone who can.

• Provide ideas for resources (where to get compost, fencing, seedlings, etc)

• Answer your questions – either by phone: 734-761-2796 or by email: sebastian@foodgatherers.org.
Things to consider when planning a garden:

What condition is the area in now?
Are you starting from scratch or has it been cultivated before? Most of the work is in the preparation. Depending on the current condition of the site, you could get it started with 3-4 dedicated volunteers working 2-3 afternoons. This includes fencing to keep out critters.

How about sunlight?
Your garden should get 6 hours of full sun each day, either morning or afternoon.

What is your water source?
You need a water source nearby. A hose can be run up to 300 ft. Is there a hydrant nearby that can be tapped into? How about rain barrels?

How many people does it take to keep a garden?
After making your beds, preparing the soil, and planting, it would require 2-3 people one afternoon a week to weed and tend the plants and harvest the produce. Watering depends on the weather. At the beginning you need to water everyday. Later on, if it’s a dry spell, every 2-3 days is usually enough.

It is a good idea to have a core group of 2-3 people, one who is the garden steward and actually knows a little about gardening and can direct volunteers in how to do things. Another would be the lead organizer who keeps tabs on what is happening, recruits volunteers, and stays in good communication with them. It is ideal if both of these people are not on vacation at the same time.

Who has a truck that can transport compost and/or equipment?

What about a fence?
It’s a good idea to have some kind of fencing to keep out rabbits, deer, and woodchucks, if they are an issue. It also cuts down on trampling by neighbors and children. It doesn’t have to be fancy. Chicken wire will do. A general suggestion is buried 10" - 12" and 5 feet tall. Posts placed every 5 feet keep it stable. Who might have materials to donate? (Dexter Mill has good prices and availability.)