

Notes from “Building an Inclusive Community Garden” Workshop
Gardening Matters Community Garden Resource Fair
March 27, 2010

facilitated by Melvin Giles and Tom Guettler (Minnesota Food and Justice Alliance, www.mfja.weebly.com)

Why did you choose this workshop?

- Engage the community
- Engage youth and students
- Engage persons unfamiliar with gardening
- Explore characteristics of inclusiveness
- Explore the needs of the community
- Improve access to food
- ‘How do I, as a white male, operate in a traditionally underserved community?’
- Why do the same people show up in the garden and at meetings?

Three issues addressed by small groups:

The same people always show up for garden workdays.

Exclusive responses	Inclusive responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No or few or disorganized activities for kids ○ No support for parents ○ Space not well-organized or accessible ○ Limited methods of communication with gardeners ○ Complex sign-up, rules, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Raise awareness of residents and businesses ○ Engage a variety of people through other events and networks ○ Adopt philosophy that everyone learns from each other ○ Space is accessible and inviting ○ Take the long-term approach (bring kids, build skills) ○ Appropriate signage and methods of communication ○ Build relationships and mutual trust

We have problems with people who never plant their plot or who neglect their plot after it’s planted.

Exclusive responses	Inclusive responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Must follow established rules ○ Assume that your method is normative ○ Blame the person ○ Hold a meeting to address the problem (even if person is not present) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Talk personally with the person ○ Listen to the person ○ Address the issue as a group ○ Think critically about your own assumptions and prejudices ○ Explore possible challenges, such as: Sense of ownership; Resources, transportation; Communication

We have trouble communicating effectively with all gardeners.

Exclusive responses	Inclusive responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You make the idea and claim the idea ○ Stay within comfort zone ○ Don’t interact with anyone but our peers ○ Confine ourselves to one ‘language’ ○ Assume all persons have the same experience ○ Maintain a fixed and rigid point of entry (plot fees, rules, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use word of mouth to contact persons ○ Find jobs that are suited for each person ○ Nurture a sense of ownership ○ Ask questions of people, learn about their culture and their personal story ○ Implement a sliding scale plot fee ○ Acknowledge pluralism in all activities and modes of communication