

SUSTAINABILITY
SUMMIT



How Does Your Garden Grow?

June 24, 2022, 11:30am – 12:30pm

**Jose German Gómez, Founder & CEO,
Northeast Earth Coalition**

Agenda

1. What is Eco-Friendly Gardening
2. What is Sustainable Gardening?
3. Soil, the cornerstone of the garden
4. Fertilizers
5. Sustainable Growing Techniques
6. Bringing natural allies to your garden
7. Sustainable & Eco-Friendly Garden Maintenance





WHAT IS ECO-FRIENDLY GARDENING?

Eco-friendly gardening is a gardening approach that conserves resources and does not harm local ecosystems by degrading or polluting the soil or hurting pollinators, other wildlife, or humans with chemicals.

Earth Friendly = Eco-friendly

Earth Friendly = Eco-Friendly



Incorporate a holistic approach to your garden that will allow you to:

1. Build soil
2. Reduce waste and water consumption
3. Grow veggies chemical free
4. Promote food sustainability

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WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE GARDENING?

A sustainable garden is self-replicating, meaning you can renew your resources without significantly harming future gardening in the same location. It's a garden that yields fruits and vegetables over and over 'sustains' itself by natural means such as healthy soil, seeds, water, and sunlight.

Our community garden goal is to be productive while bringing people together



Spring Harvest



Summer Harvest & Maintenance



Example of ecological & sustainable gardening practices: new community garden in Montclair



Installation of a landscaper liner to block weeds and reduce the garden maintenance time

Organic Soil and Crop Protection



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SOIL: THE GARDEN CORNERSTONE

Organic soil, composting, and soil building

Soil amendments:

- Use grass clippings, “green manure,” and rabbit manure as nitrogen sources
- Use compost tea
- Use pine needles as a soil modifier to increase acidity, (good for blueberries)
- Use beneficial nematodes



Fertilizers

- Compost
- Compost tea
- Vermicompost
- Fermented bio-liquid
- Commercial “organic” products



Rabbit manure provides:



Nitrogen, phosphorus



Potassium, minerals



Micronutrients

Compost tea:



- You can make a compost tea brewer with an aquarium pump, a plastic container, and a colander made of fabric filled with compost – or buy a brewer online.
- Compost tea multiplies thousands of times the beneficial microorganisms of the compost

Vermicomposting



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- Acts as a biofertilizer
- Restores soil nutrients
- Stabilizes soil
- Enhances long-term soil fertility
- Acts as a slow-release organic fertilizer

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SUSTAINABLE GROWING TECHNIQUES:

- Grow from seeds, not seedlings
- Buy FDA certified organic, non-GMO heirloom seeds
- Use sequential planting methodology
- Rotate crops



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SUSTAINABLE GROWING TECHNIQUES

- Use companion plants
- Create a “seedling nursery” bed
- Reduce water consumption. Don’t water after a rainy day, catch rainwater, use containers with reservoirs



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SUSTAINABLE GROWING TECHNIQUES:

- Use straw to hold moisture and suppress weeds
- Preserve seeds as your garden progresses
- If using hydroponic systems, develop your own liquid fertilizers using compost tea and fermented fertilizers



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BRING NATURAL ALLIES TO YOUR GARDEN

- Integrate pollinator gardens into community garden projects
- Plant a pollinator garden around your vegetable garden
- Use beneficial insects to naturally control unwanted insect pests in the garden



The ugliest and scariest

Roly- Polies

They are great garden composters



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Brown snakes love
to dine on slugs
and snails

But are harmless to humans



SUSTAINABLE & ECO-FRIENDLY GARDEN MAINTENANCE TIPS

- Implement a holistic gardening approach
- Protecting your crop is part of sustainability
- Implement zero waste and zero single-use plastic policies



SUSTAINABLE & ECO-FRIENDLY GARDEN MAINTENANCE TIPS

- Stop using plastic containers to develop your seedlings; instead, use bio-degradable recycled paper cups
- Use leaves as mulch. Leave the leaves to allow pollinators to overwinter in your garden
- Use metal or recycled plastic raised beds, instead of wood – they last longer
- Work with nature, not against it



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Work with
nature, not
against it



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Ensuring continuity & consistency

Save time training new
volunteers

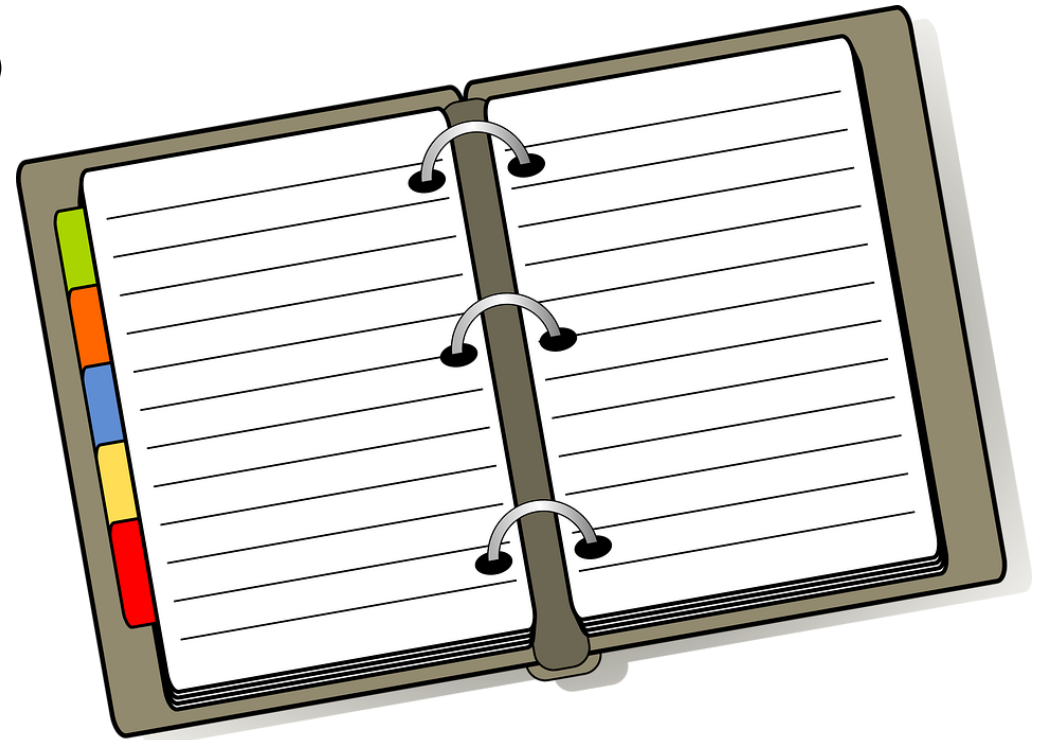
Volunteer turnover is high,
especially in school gardens

Create a community garden
handbook



THE HANDBOOK SHOULD INCLUDE:

- A planting master plan for the season
- Set up season productivity goals. Keep track of your garden harvest
- Daily maintenance with tasks to be assigned to the volunteers
- Composting rules
- Pest control plan (IPM)
- Seed preservation



TIPS FOR GARDENING SUCCESS

- BUILD SOIL



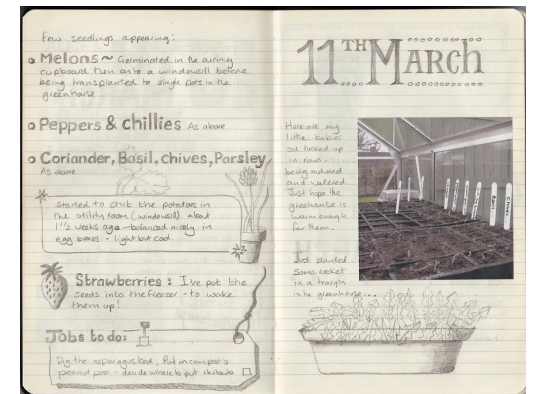
- IMPLEMENT SUSTAINABLE & ECOLOGICAL GARDENING TECHNIQUES



- PRESERVE SEEDS & TRANSITION TO HEIRLOOM VARIETIES



- DOCUMENT YOUR PROJECTS - MEASURE YOUR CROP



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Thank You

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