



**VACANT
LAND REUSE
RESOURCE GUIDE**

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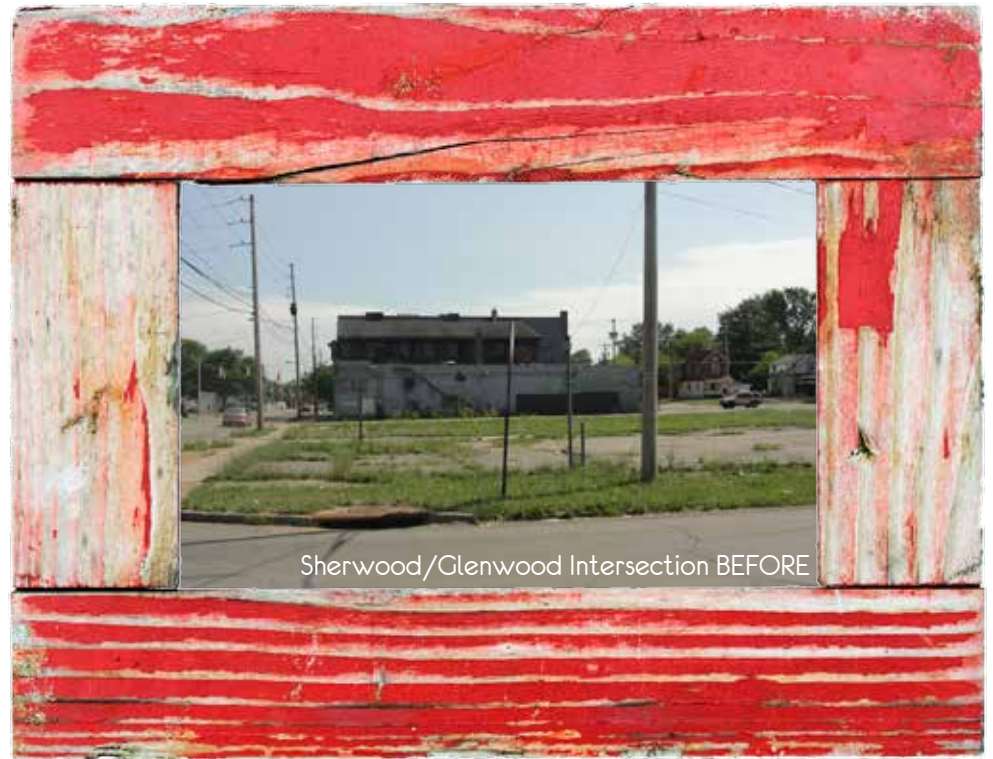
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YNDC OVERVIEW

The Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation (YNDC) is a multifaceted neighborhood development organization launched to catalyze strategic neighborhood reinvestment in neighborhoods throughout the city. The YNDC works to transform neighborhoods into meaningful places where people invest time, money and energy into their homes and neighborhoods; where neighbors have the capacity to manage day-to-day issues; and where neighbors feel confident about the future of their neighborhood.



YNDC Volunteer Workday



Neighborhood Mural Project



Volunteer Garage Demolition

LOTS OF GREEN OVERVIEW

Lots of Green is the YNDC's vacant land reuse program, which was conceived to meet the challenge of vacant and abandoned land in city neighborhoods. The program operates cleanups and volunteer workdays in strategic neighborhoods, as well as vacant land reuse classes, microgrant programs, and project competitions that catalyze new projects around the city.



Senior Program Coordinator
Liberty Merrill
at Iron Roots Urban Farm



Parkview
Community Garden



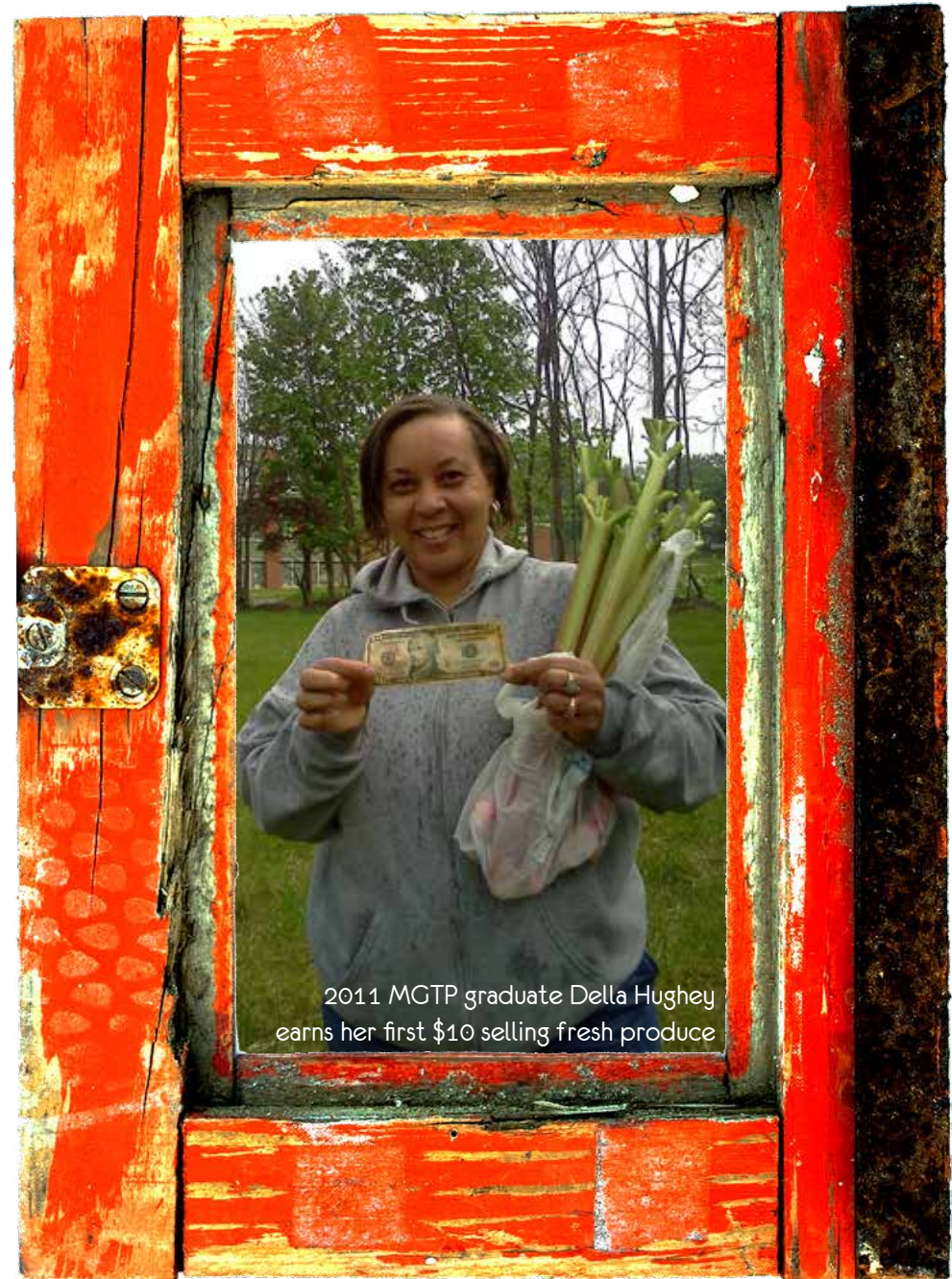
Market Gardener
Training Program

VACANT LAND STABILIZATION

Through this program, lots in strategic neighborhoods are converted into native planting sites, pocket parks, and side yard expansions. The YNDC has also established 5 community gardens on vacant land, which provide space for neighbors to produce fresh foods to feed their families. All of these strategies for vacant land reuse serve to both improve quality of life for residents and transform the physical landscape of neighborhoods.



Side Yard Expansion



2011 MCTP graduate Della Hughey earns her first \$10 selling fresh produce

MARKET GARDENER TRAINING

This program, operated in the spring of each year, trains city residents in the agricultural and business skills needed to develop food-based businesses.

LOTS OF GREEN 2.0

This project competition provides technical assistance and funding to projects that help groups create successful vacant land reuse projects in their own neighborhoods. Since 2011, ten projects in neighborhoods across the city have received microgrants through this program.



Rocky Ridge
Gardens



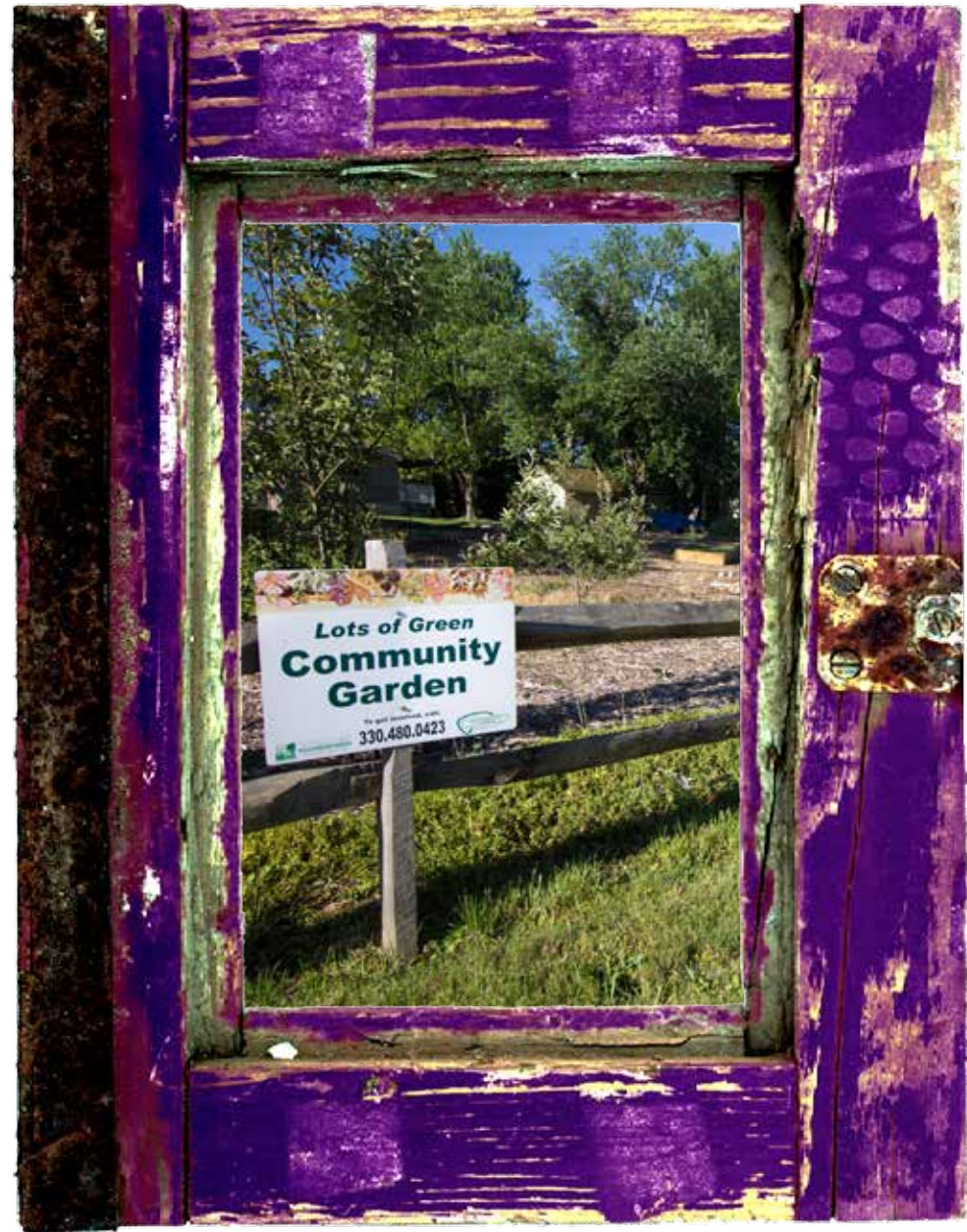
Plantiful Garden

MAHONING RIVER CORRIDOR PEOPLE'S GARDEN GRANT PROGRAM

This program provides microgrant support to new garden spaces in Mahoning River Corridor communities. The program helped establish 10 new garden spaces in 2011 and 12 new garden spaces in 2012.

IRON ROOTS URBAN FARM

Iron Roots Urban Farm is a 1.7 acre working farm and training center under development on Canfield Road on the South Side of Youngstown. The facility's mission is to support new entrepreneurs and provide positive employment experiences for city residents. Produce grown at Iron Roots is sold at four local farmers markets and through the Grow Youngstown CSA.



MINERAL SPRINGS DEMONSTRATION BLOCK

This project demonstrates multiple types of vacant land reuse on one highly vacant block on Mineral Springs Avenue. The block currently contains a 7-lot community garden, a soil research garden, a rain garden, a wildflower area, a food forest (native and wild perennial edible garden), and a basic stabilization area.

CHOOSING A SITE



THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING A VACANT LAND REUSE PROJECT

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?

Proper cleanup and maintenance of abandoned vacant land has a transformative effect on neighborhoods. According to a 2011 study completed by the University of Pennsylvania (Wachter and Gillen, 2006), greening of vacant urban land is correlated to a reduction in violent crime, improved health and safety of residents, and reduced vandalism. Vacant land utilization also provides the opportunity for city residents to create beautiful garden spaces and grow food for their families.

Vacant lots also present the opportunity to create new public spaces in the neighborhood, including community gardens. These gardens provide a place for informal gardening education, teaching new gardeners the basics of growing food and giving them space to grow healthful food to feed their families. Projects can also provide an economic incentive for neighbors, as market gardening on vacant land can provide a modest income.



When planning a vacant land reuse project, one of the most critical ideas to think about is how the project fits into your neighborhood. A neighborhood with large areas of vacant land can accommodate different types of vacant land reuse projects than a neighborhood with only a few scattered vacant lots. It is critical to talk to everyone on your street before you undertake a vacant land reuse project, especially if it looks out of the ordinary. Your neighbors will be your biggest allies or your biggest stumbling blocks if they don't like your idea.

Another question to ask yourself is whether or not the scope of the project is realistic for you to take on. The more people you have willing to volunteer their time for your project, the more space you can reuse, and the more complex a project you can commit to. Make a list of ongoing maintenance tasks (such as mowing, weeding, picking up trash, etc.) and make sure you or a neighbor is willing to take on the responsibility for years into the future. Some projects, such as community gardens, will take more maintenance, while a side yard expansion may only add the extra time to cut your grass.

Here are some questions you should consider as you design your vacant land reuse project:

- How will your project benefit the community?
- Who will be involved in the project?
- How much energy will be needed to maintain this project? Do you have enough volunteers to do the work that will be needed?
- What do you want your project to look like after 1 year? 5 years?
- Do your neighbors support your project? Do they have any ideas to make it better?

CHOOSING A SITE

For some projects, you may have a site in mind and you are figuring out what to do with it. For other projects, you may have an idea for a project, and you are looking for a suitable site. There are more than 23,000 vacant lots in the City of Youngstown, so there is plenty of opportunity, but sites should be properly researched before embarking on a project. Sometimes it is best to research several properties, as you may find that some sites may have environmental hazards, neighbors who are not excited about your idea, or they may not be land bank eligible.

STEPS TO RESEARCH VACANT PROPERTY

TALK TO SITE NEIGHBORS

Site neighbors may have a wealth of information about the lot you are interested in. They may know who owns the property, where the house sat on the lot, and even where the previous owners had a garden. They may also know if the property has ever been in non-residential use, which may affect what environmental hazards you may run into. Additionally, they may know if another neighbor has been maintaining the lot or is interested in owning it. Any ideas you have for the use of the lot should be discussed with the project neighbors, especially if their property is directly adjacent to the proposed project.



DO A SITE WALKTHROUGH

Before you pursue ownership of a lot or commit to a project, you should do a full site walkthrough. Remember that when you take ownership of a lot, you are responsible to take care of any hazards that may exist there. Walk through the entire site from property line to property line, with any project partners. This will help you make sure that the site is suitable for your needs and that there are no unforeseen hazards.

During your walkthrough, you should notice environmental factors that will affect your project. Sun exposure on the lot is critical if you are planning an agricultural project. Lot slope, standing water, shade, and existing trees that will be kept should all be noted.

DETERMINE OWNERSHIP AND TAX STATUS

If you do not know the owner of the lot you are interested in, you will need to determine the historic address of the lot or the parcel number, which is the legal identifier of the lot. You can get this information online through the Mahoning County Auditor website, or by contacting the Mahoning County Land Bank – one of their staff can help you identify the lot.

To look up lot information yourself, go to this web address:
www.mahoningcountyoh.gov

Click on either Property Search – Auditor or Property Search – GIS on the left hand side of the screen. Property Search - Auditor (click property search at the top of the screens) will take you to a search area where you can find the property using its address, owner, or parcel number. Property Search – GIS will take you to a page where you can find properties using a mapping system, which can help you identify the parcel even if you do not know the owner or address.



The Mahoning County Land Bank has staff who can help you with the process of identifying the lot, if you do not find it easily online. Gather as much information as you can about the lot, such as adjacent (or across the street) addresses, cross streets, or possible owners before you call. The Mahoning County Land Bank can be reached at 330.259.1040.

Either the Mahoning County Auditor or the Mahoning County Land Bank can help you identify who owns the lot and whether it is tax delinquent. If it is tax delinquent, it may be eligible for acquisition through the Mahoning County Land Bank. If it is not tax delinquent or is being maintained by the owner regardless of tax status, you should contact the current owner to purchase the lot or get permission for your project.



TEST THE SOIL - AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS

It is important to test the soil if you are planning on planting food to eat or you will be planting directly into urban soils. Soil testing can determine if your garden has the nutrients your plants need and whether the soil is contaminated. A major hazard in urban soils is lead contamination from demolished buildings. While plants do not often take up lead, it can be dangerous for gardeners or children to work or play in soil that has lead in it. Pay special attention to areas at the dripline of existing or demolished homes. See the Resources section for labs that will test soil.

ACQUIRING A VACANT PROPERTY

If you are ready to move forward with your project and you do not already own the lot, you will need to decide whether or not to buy it. It is strongly recommended that you purchase a project site if you are planning a long-term project with significant inputs. If the project is temporary or less intensive in nature, permission from the site owner or project neighbors may be sufficient. If the project is a basic cleanup of a lot for the purposes of neighborhood safety, it also may not be necessary to purchase the lot, however research should still be done to determine ownership. If the owner is still in the area, they may be willing to help alleviate the hazardous conditions on their lot.

If you are purchasing a lot directly from the owner, you should always do due diligence on the lot. Lots can have liens on them that will become your responsibility once the lot is transferred to you, and sometimes these liens can amount to several thousand dollars. To make sure that the lot does not have any liens on it, you can conduct a title search. Contact a title company for this service, or if you are comfortable with the process, research liens at the courthouse. If the lot does not have any liens attached to it, you can purchase the lot directly from the owner.



The Mahoning County Land Bank is the safest option for lot purchase. For a reasonable set price, the land bank can foreclose on the lot on your behalf and transfer the lot to you with a clean title. Contact the Mahoning County Land Bank at 330.259.1040 for details and assistance in acquiring tax delinquent land.



The Mahoning County Land Bank, more formally known as Mahoning County Land Reutilization Corp., is a quasi-governmental organization designed to promote healthy, sustainable neighborhoods by restoring vacant, abandoned, tax-delinquent land to productive status.



mahoning county
landbank

330.259.1040
<http://www.mahoninglandbank.com/>

COMMON HAZARDS FOUND ON VACANT LOTS

Make sure that you have identified any of these hazards before starting a vacant land reuse project. Make a plan before starting your project if any hazards exist on the subject property.

- **Trash and Debris** – this can range from bottles to appliances and demolition debris.
- **Hazardous Trees** – dead or rotten trees can be very costly to remove, but they can be a hazard to both adjoining properties and your personal safety.
- **Hazardous Holes** – after demolition, a basement can settle, making ground unstable or opening up holes that people can trip over. Some holes can be filled easily with soil and rocks, while a large instability could need excavation.
- **Exposed Foundation Stones** – often these stones can make it difficult to maintain a lot, as they can break mowers.
- **Heavy Metal Contamination** – any lot that once had a home on it that was built before 1978 could have lead contamination, and historically commercial sites could contain a range of contaminants. See the back of this guide for soil testing resources.



Knowing what you will have to do to stabilize a lot and make it safe before project activities can help you make an informed decision about the scope, timeline, or cost of your project. Aside from hazards, make sure that the site has the sun exposure you require for your project, observe the patterns if the site is used as a pathway, and examine the soil condition if you plan to plant directly in the site soil. All of these observations will help you plan your project.

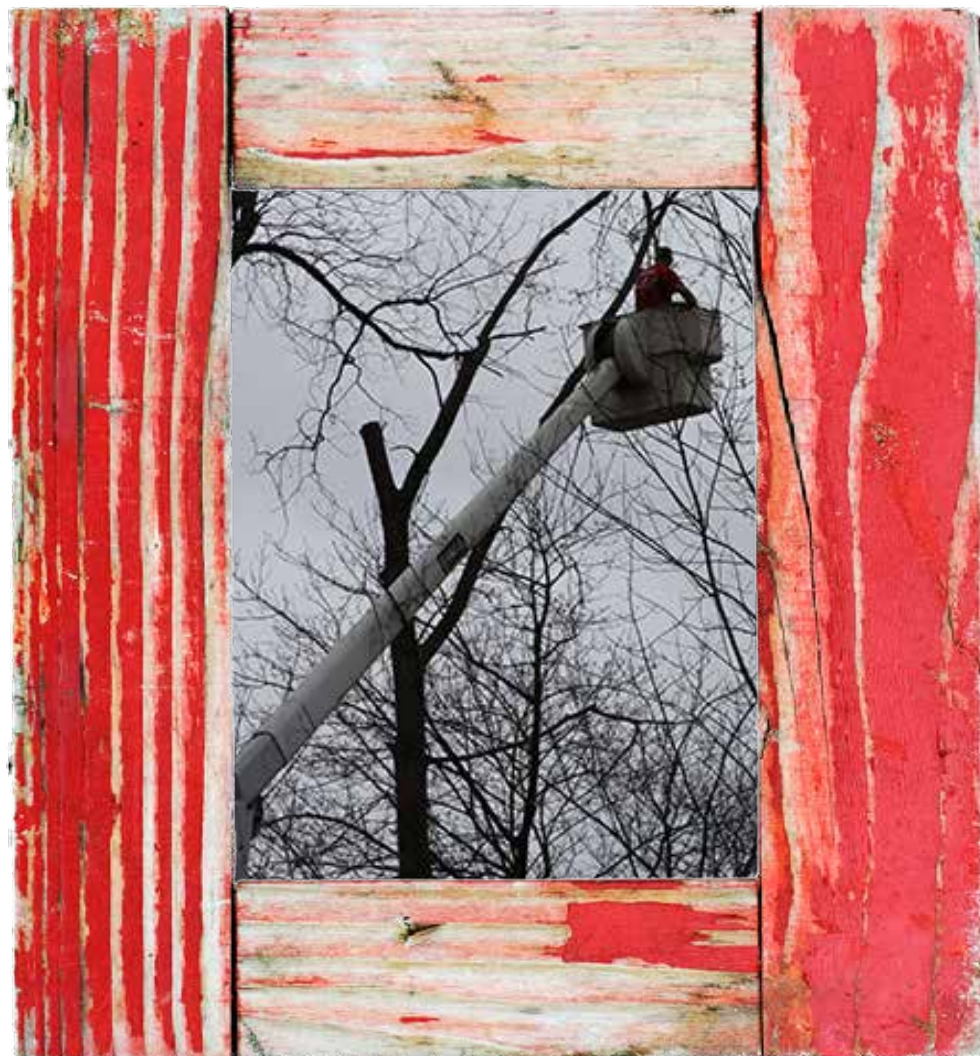
BASIC SITE PREPARATION



GRADING

If your goal is a smooth, easy to maintain lawn on a lot that had a house on it, site grading will probably be necessary. Landscaping companies can bring out heavy equipment that can remove debris, foundation stones, and smooth out holes and high spots to create a smooth and even surface. They can also add topsoil, helping new grass get established. While grading is expensive, it can transform a lot and make it significantly easier to take care of. It can also get rid of weeds, roots and shrubs, making it easy for uniform grass to become established.

Grading a lot and adding topsoil can cost \$800 - \$1,500, not including any other debris or tree removal – these factors can increase the cost significantly of a project. Always get preliminary quotes from at least three reputable landscaping companies before signing a contract to have large-scale landscaping work done, to make sure that you get the best price and quality.



TREE REMOVAL

If there are trees on the lot you are considering that are hazardous or that you don't want to keep, you will need to budget for tree removal. Costs can range from \$150 to \$1,500, with the average cost between \$500 and \$800 per tree. The difficulty of the job, the height of the tree, proximity to power lines, tree condition, and tree species will all affect the final price. Stump removal is not usually included in the tree removal price and you can expect to pay between \$60-\$100 per stump, depending on the size. Trees that have already fallen are typically much cheaper to remove. Similar to landscaping work, it usually pays off to get multiple quotes for a tree removal job.

SOIL CONDITIONS FOR AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS





JOSH BENISTON

Josh is a long time gardener and landscape designer. He recently completed a PhD in soil science at The Ohio State University and managed the Mineral Springs Research Garden in Youngstown.



TESTING SOILS

Working towards healthy soil is a critical starting point for sustainable gardening and agriculture efforts. Soils in cities, however, are widely variable. Urban soils can range from soils that are essentially “natural soils” in parks and greenspaces, to highly degraded soils in areas where topsoil has been removed or the soil has been subjected to industrial pollution. Soils on lots that used to contain houses can be subject to compaction, lack of organic matter, contamination, debris, and other remnants of the demolition process. Given the variability of soil in urban areas, it is important to have soil tested both for nutrient content and possible contamination before starting gardening and park projects at a site. See the resources section of this guide for information about where to get soil tested.

Vacant land in cities has generally undergone a long history of different uses. Soils in vacant lots have often been degraded by many years of residential or commercial land use. Depending on the previous use of the land, soils may be affected by issues of pollutants, debris, and compaction. Improving soil conditions is a key part of revitalizing vacant land for greenspace projects. The following information will help you remedy or avoid common problems with urban soils.



Soil health refers to a soil’s overall condition and its ability to function properly. Soils provide many valuable services to society including supporting plant growth, storing and filtering fresh water, and breaking down or decomposing waste materials. A healthy soil is able to provide all of these services, while degraded soils do not function as well, which can lead to further degradation of fresh water and decreased plant growth. Just as human health is complex, soil health is the sum of many different soil properties. These properties include structure, drainage, organic matter, nutrient content, and the presence of toxic materials. In the following sections we will explore the soil conditions that will affect agricultural projects on vacant land.

COMPACTED SOILS

- Soil compaction occurs when moist soil is pressed together, which decreases air and pore space. Often, this is from heavy machine traffic over soil, which is assured during a demolition process.
- Compaction decreases plant growth, water infiltration and drainage, and soil biological activity.
- To tell if your soil is compacted, dig a small hole about 6" deep and pour water into it. If water sits in the hole without absorbing after a minute or so, then the soil is compacted or has high clay content. Depending on the nature of your project, this may be a problem.
- Tilling the soil and/or adding topsoil, compost or soil amendments can remedy this problem.
- A simple solution for gardens is to construct raised beds.

LOW ORGANIC MATTER

- Soil organic matter is one of the most important components of a healthy soil. Soil organic matter supports good soil structure, holds water and nutrients, and provides a food source for soil organisms.
- Urban soils often lose large amounts of organic matter when topsoil is removed during construction activities. This also results in soils with very low biological activity
- Organic matter can be added to the soil through the addition of topsoil, compost, or cover crops.



POLLUTANTS

- Because Youngstown is an older industrial city, it is especially important to have soils tested for heavy metals. Urban soils should be tested for lead (Pb) before using the site for gardens or parks. Many urban soils contain unsafe levels of lead that were deposited from lead paint and leaded gasoline. Lead from soil can contribute to lead poisoning through accidental ingestion of soil, eating contaminated produce, and inhalation of contaminated soil dust. Children are especially at risk for lead exposure.
- You should have a soil test performed to determine if the site is safe to work on. The US EPA considers total soil lead levels of less than 400 ppm to be safe for park spaces, so this is often considered the safe level for gardens. Sites with lead above 800-1000ppm lead are not safe for food gardens.
- Soil testing should be done prior to any commitment to buy or lease the site.
- Because soil lead levels can vary across a site, it is best to send in a few samples, each from a different area of the lot.
- Do not select a site that was previously used for industry, a dry cleaner, or a gas station unless you are working with someone knowledgeable to help assess the risks.
- If you find lead contamination, some things that you can do to reduce risk include: mulch, cover, or plant grass over all pathways and bare soil areas, use raised beds with imported soil material and a barrier beneath, and at lower levels of lead, use lime to bring pH to neutral and add organic matter.

WAYS TO IMPROVE SOIL CONDITIONS

COMPOSTING

What is it?

There are many different types of receptacles in which you can store and produce your compost. The simplest storage units are composting bins. These bins feature special chambers to aerate and store compost at various stages of decomposition. Many people also construct their own composting bins from old shipping pallets.

Another popular unit is the composting drum, which is a simple container that is designed to reduce compost maintenance. You simply add compost material, wet it down, then seal the drum for a specified period of time and rotate it periodically to aerate and mix the compost. Over time, the materials in your compost bin naturally decompose, creating a healthy fertilizer and mulching material that can be used anywhere in your yard or garden. Because most of the materials you add to your bin or drum are plant-based, composting produces no smell. Gardening composting is not only simple and enjoyable; it also helps you save money on expensive fertilizers, mulch and soil conditioners.



Finished compost can also be purchased in bags or large quantities from many hardware stores, garden centers, and landscaping contractors. Depending on your budget, purchasing compost can be an easy way of quickly adding a large amount of organic matter to your soil.

A method of composting that is increasingly popular is called worm composting, and it involves using earthworms to do the work of producing and maintaining your compost. To start worm composting, you can purchase “Red Wiggler” worms that eat large quantities of vegetable waste. The worms are then kept in a large aerated box protected from the sunlight. Just as they do in nature, worms eat and tunnel through your compost, transforming it into light, fluffy, mineral-rich humus.

Another possibility for people who are simply interested in producing compost for their lawns is a “green” or mulching lawnmower. They look and handle like regular lawn mowers, but instead of removing grass clippings; they grind them up and redistribute them back to the lawn itself. The result is rich, healthy grass fed by a layer of naturally developing compost.



COVER CROPPING

What is it?

Cover crops are plants grown for the purpose of adding organic matter to the soil. They are of interest in sustainable agriculture as many of them improve the sustainability of agro-ecosystem attributes and may also indirectly improve qualities of neighboring natural ecosystems. Farmers choose to grow and manage specific cover crop types based on their own needs and goals, influenced by the biological, environmental, social, cultural, and economic factors of the food system within which farmers operate.

Why do it?

One of the primary uses of cover crops is to increase soil fertility. These types of cover crops are referred to as “green manure.” They are used to manage a range of soil macronutrients and micronutrients. Of the various nutrients, the impact that cover crops have on nitrogen management has received the most attention from researchers and farmers, because nitrogen is often the most limiting nutrient in crop production.



Useful Cover Crops for Urban Gardens

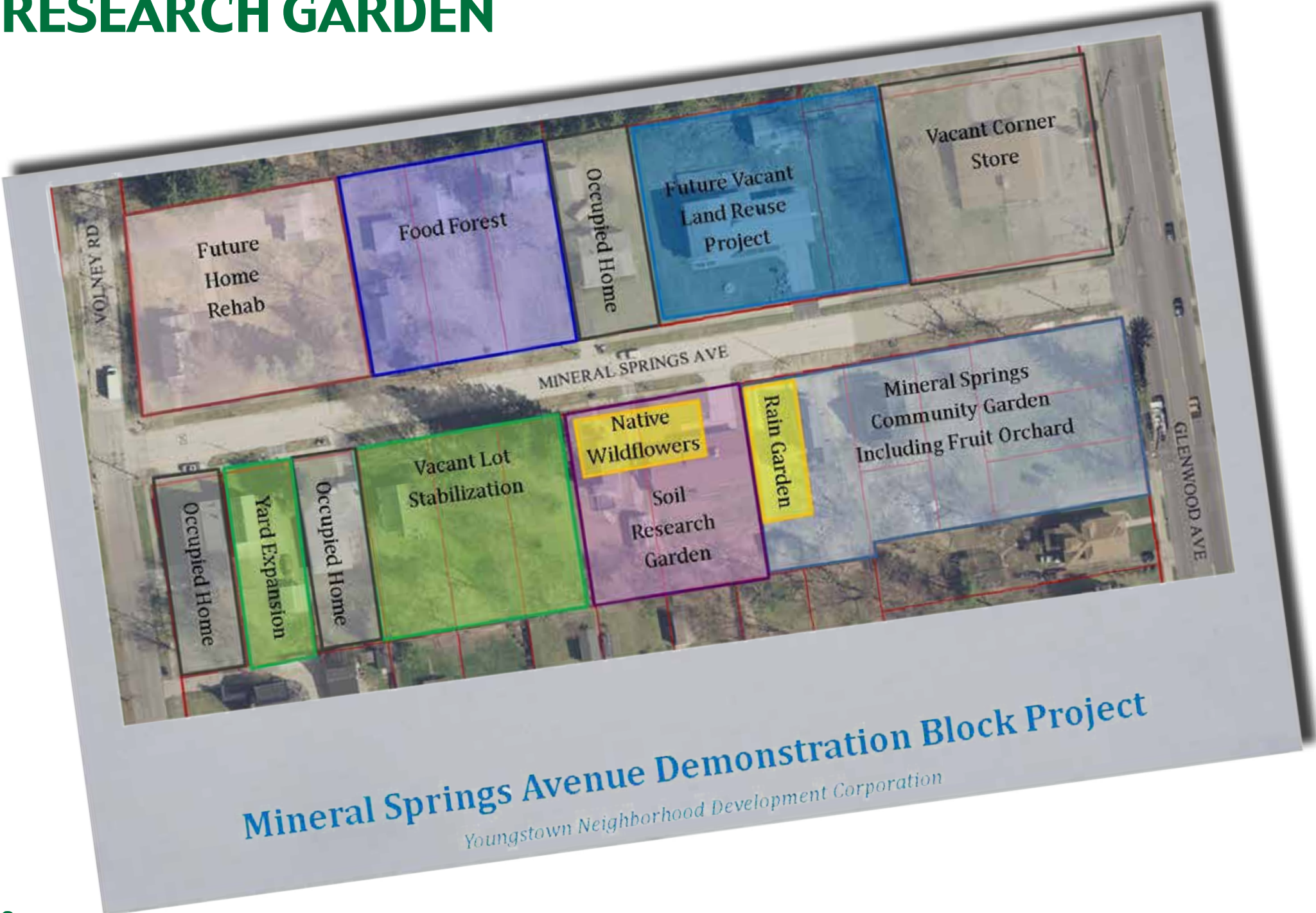
Cover Crops that are Planted in Fall and Grow Through Winter

- **Annual Ryegrass or Cereal Rye** - both are good for building your organic matter, improving soil structure, and recycling nutrients.
- **Hairy Vetch** - produces Nitrogen, often grown in combination with Ryes
- **Oilseed Radish (Daikon Radish)** - good for breaking up soil compaction

Cover Crops Grown in Unused Space During Summer

- **Buckwheat** - cycles nutrients, chokes out weeds and good for bees/beneficial insects
- **Sorghum/Sudan grass** - breaks up compaction and produces a lot of organic matter

MINERAL SPRINGS RESEARCH GARDEN



Mineral Springs Avenue Demonstration Block Project
Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation

WHAT IS THE MINERAL SPRINGS SOIL RESEARCH GARDEN?

The Mineral Springs Research Garden was established in the Idora neighborhood of Youngstown in 2011 as a collaboration between the YNDC and The Ohio State University. Researchers analyzed soil properties and crop production at the site for two summers. The primary goals of the project were to evaluate the condition of an urban soil following the removal of vacant houses and to determine the ability of low cost, organic soil amendments to improve soil health and vegetable crop production in a disturbed urban soil. This information will help future urban garden projects manage disturbed urban soils more effectively.

WHAT TREATMENTS WERE USED HERE?

The lots were turned into the research garden immediately after two houses were removed in spring 2011. It was apparent that the demolition process had resulted in heavy compaction of the soil at the site. A number of soil samples from the site were analyzed for heavy metals and we found that the soil had not been heavily contaminated and was suitable for gardening. Some of the research plots have been managed as a control, without any additional amendments. Other plots have received one of the three primary soil improvement treatments: 1) Leaf compost, 2) Leaf compost and intensive cover cropping, and 3) Leaf composting + Hardwood Bio char. Bio char is essentially charcoal that is used to improve soil. It is a relatively new idea that researchers are just learning about. All of the plots at the Mineral Springs garden featured both vegetables being grown directly in the ground, as well as vegetables grown in raised beds.



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Although many of the soil samples are still undergoing lab analysis, several points have become clear after two years of growing vegetables at the Mineral Springs Research Garden.

- The soil was heavily compacted and had low organic matter following the demolition of the two houses.
- Applying large amounts (about 4-5 inches deep) of leaf compost allowed us to grow large amounts of vegetables in the degraded soil. We were able to amend the majority of two large urban lots with \$250 of purchased compost.
- Applying compost and also using intensive cover cropping that included growing Sorghum Sudan Grass in the summer and annual ryegrass in the winter resulted in the biggest improvements to the soil. The cover crops loosened the compaction and produced large quantities of additional organic matter.
- Vegetables grew surprisingly well in the in ground plots. The raised beds produced larger amounts of root crops, such as sweet potatoes, but overall they only produced a small amount more than the in ground plots. This was a surprise, as we expected vegetable production to be greater in the raised beds.
- Urban gardening can be productive. The Mineral Springs garden produced over 1,000 lbs. of market quality vegetables in 2012, while growing only summer crops. More intensive cropping could lead to much higher yields.

WHERE TO GET SOIL?

It can be very difficult to find high-quality garden soil that is affordable. If you are using raised beds, make sure to do the math to find out how many cubic yards of soil you will need – it is often more than anticipated. If soil tests free of heavy metals, it is usually easier to amend soil on a site than it is to build raised beds and fill them.

If you do need to buy garden soil, call landscaping supply companies for pricing and recommendations. You can also ask other urban and rural gardeners where they got garden soil or amendments – they may be able to help you form a relationship with someone who has soil available.

SOIL AMENDMENTS

Horse Manure - Horse Manure is a great soil amendment if it is well aged or composted. It can be hard to find, but you can usually get for free, though you will have to pick it up and possibly load it yourself. Make sure that it is well aged (uniform in texture and smells like soil), unless you have a space to compost it that is well away from project neighbors, as it can smell bad.

Leaf Compost - Leaf compost is generally available from all landscape supply companies, and costs approximately \$12-\$15 per yard, not including delivery. Leaf compost is not high in nutrients, but it is very effective at adding organic materials to soils. Research at the Mineral Springs Soil Research Garden indicated that a 4-5" layer of leaf compost, especially when paired with a cover crop schedule, could be very effective at remediating compacted urban soils.

Nutrient Amendments – Amendments such as lime and rock phosphate can be added to soil, depending on the results of a soil test. Consult The Ohio State University Extension for advice on soil sampling (see the back of this book for sampling options and contacts).



CALCULATING SOIL AND COMPOST NEEDS

One yard of soil is equal to 27 cubic feet of soil. A raised bed that is 1' deep, 4' wide, and 8' long will require 32 cubic feet of soil, or approximately 1.2 yards of soil. As soil is often found for approximately \$26 per yard plus delivery costs (\$40-\$50 per load up to 14 yards), costs can add up quickly. Filling 10 of these beds would require 12 yards of soil. At \$26 per yard plus delivery, 10 beds (320 sq. ft. of growing space) would cost \$352.

If you are amending soil with leaf compost, an initial layer of 6" of leaf compost can provide significant organic matter to degraded soils. If you have 320 square feet of garden beds planned (10 beds 4' wide and 8' long), you will need 5.9 (round up to 6) yards of leaf compost. At \$12 per yard and a \$40 delivery charge, these amendments would cost \$112.

You may consider ordering a full load, often 12-14 yards, if you are ordering for a large project. Delivery charges are similar for small or large loads, and if you get a small delivery and find you need more soil, you will have to pay another delivery charge. Consider adding growing space, if you find you have excess soil at the end of the project.

GOOD INFORMATION ABOUT SOILS ON THE INTERNET

“Building Soils for Better Crops”

Excellent book on soil management. Available for free download.
<http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Books/Building-Soils-for-Better-Crops-3rd-Edition>

“Managing Cover Crops Profitably”

Excellent book on cover cropping, also available for free download.
<http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Books/Managing-Cover-Crops-Profitably-3rd-Edition>

“Cornell Soil Health Assessment Training Manual”

Good overview of soil health, management, and assessment of soil health. Research focused.
<http://soilhealth.cals.cornell.edu/extension/manual.htm>

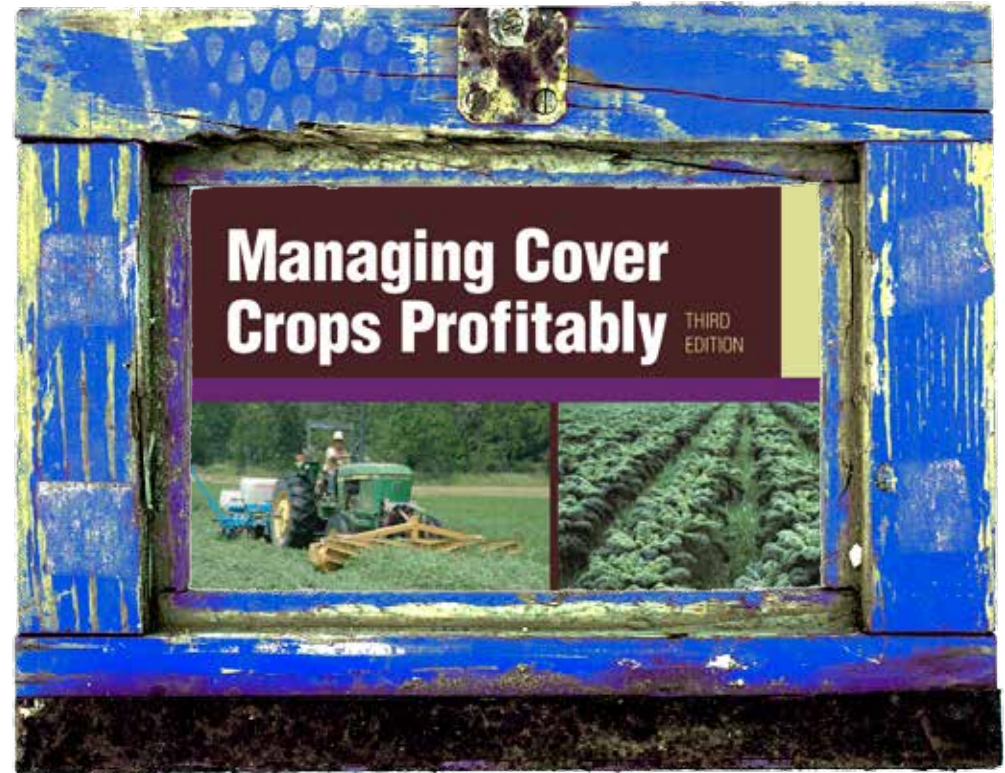
Articles from Cornell University on Soil Contamination:

“Soil Contaminants and Best Practices for Healthy Gardens”

http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/Soil_Contaminants.pdf

“Guide to Soil Testing and Interpreting Results”

<http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/guidetosoil.pdf>



ACCESSING WATER

For nearly all projects, water is required for at least the first year or growing season. If drought tolerant plants native to Ohio are used, water won't be required after the plants are established. All food producing gardens will require water on a regular basis during every growing season. Where possible, rainwater from nearby roofs should be captured by using rain barrels and used to water your garden. Generally, a second source of water is required for watering during a drought. You can ask a neighbor for access to their hose and pay them for the extra water usage. Another alternative for long-term projects is to have a city water tap installed. Youngstown City Council has waived the city tap fee for garden projects – this is the cost to dig up the street. It costs approximately \$850 for a contractor to install a lockable yard spigot and approximately \$200 to the Water Department for a meter. In a limited number of cases, the water department may permit you to borrow fire hydrant tap equipment for tree watering. This option is not available to long-term gardening projects. Contact the Youngstown Water Department for information about first-year tree watering at 330.742.8749. Contact the YNDC for questions about installing city water spigots for gardening or to fill out a fee waiver application.



SOURCES FOR PLANTS



SAVING YOUR OWN SEED

Saving your own seed is a great way to save money and develop plants that are more suited for your growing environment.

SEED SAVING BASICS

- Hybrids can cause problems. For seed saving, always start with a standard vegetable because hybrids do not always breed true to type.
- Try to only plant one variety of flowering plant (for example tomatoes) because they could cross pollinate by wind/insects. This could result in uncertainty of your seed quality.
- Many plants are biennial which means they do not form seeds until their second year.

SEED SAVING TECHNIQUES: WHEN TO SAVE, HOW TO SAVE

- Select only the healthiest produce for saving the seed. Over time this will create a subspecies specifically adapted to your climate and soil.
- For fleshy vegetables such as tomatoes, squash and melons, pick them when they are fully ripe. Scoop out their seeds and spread them to dry in a well-ventilated place.
- Beans and peas need to be left on the vine until the pods are dry and crackly.
- Corn should also be left to dry on the stalk until the kernels dent.

SEED STORAGE

- Labeling is important. You want to remember what plant it is from since some seeds look very similar.
- Envelopes make good storage containers since they can be easily sealed and you can write directly on them. This will only work for small quantities. For larger quantities you can use glass jars (Reuse old salsa/pickle jars, but make sure the container is perfectly dry).
- The key to successful storage is a cool dry storage place.

GERMINATION TESTING TO SEE IF YOUR SEEDS ARE STILL GOOD

Seeds usually last 2-6 years, depending on the type of seed. Often, you may get donated seeds that may not be from this year. Usually, it is fine to plant the seeds and see if they will grow. If you are unsure of how old your seeds are and you would like to test them before you plant them, you can do germination testing. If the seeds sprout, they are fine to use.

- Place a moistened cotton ball in a petri dish or other clear plastic container.
- Place 10 seeds on top of the damp cotton ball or paper towel.
- Cover the dish.
- Leave the dish at room temperature for a week or a few days.
- Count the number of seeds that have begun to grow (if 9 out of 10 seeds have sprouted, the germination rate is 90 percent: This is considered a good rate).

BUYING SEEDS AND PLANTS

Seeds are usually reasonably priced and are the best way to garden economically. Many plants, such as root vegetables, leafy greens, and squash do very well planted directly in the soil. For fruiting crops, you may consider buying transplants from local garden centers.



FENCING



Fencing can be necessary for your project if you desire protection from wildlife, loose dogs, or human traffic. Fencing can also define the edges of your project and help keep it looking nicely maintained.

BEFORE STARTING A FENCING PROJECT

- Discuss your plans with any neighbors whose property lies along your proposed fence line. Make sure that everyone agrees on the fence placement. They also may be willing to contribute the cost or have input on fence styles, if the fence will improve their property.
- Make sure your fence will be on your property.
- Check for easements in your deed. An easement is a right-of-way granted to another property owner or utility company, which may limit the design and location of your fence.
- Draw a scale diagram of your proposed fence and bring it the City of Youngstown Zoning Office to apply for a zoning permit – ALL individuals putting in a fence more than 3' in height must get a zoning permit.
- Apply for the proper building permit as needed. See the permitting section for more information.



TYPES OF FENCING:

- **Split rail** costs approximately \$7-\$12 per linear foot. The most common materials are pine and cedar. Rails are usually 8 feet or 11 feet long. They're round, half-round or square / diamond-shaped. The rails insert into the holes in the posts and are held in place by their own weight.
- **Welded wire** costs can range from \$1-\$3 per linear foot, depending on the style of wire and the type and number of posts used. Welded wire mesh is the term given to the kind of barrier fencing that is manufactured in square or rectangular mesh from steel wire, welded at each intersection. It is usually affixed to t-posts using clips (usually the clips come with the t-post. It looks like a classic agricultural fence. Welded wire is a relatively cheap fencing solution, though it may not be as attractive as other solutions.
- **Deer fence** is usually 7 to 7.5 feet tall and costs less than a \$1 per foot, depending on the type of post used. Deer fence is made of lightweight woven wire fixed to lightweight posts (such as bamboo or pvc). Deer fence is not very durable or attractive unless the post system is constructed very well, but it can be very effective in keeping deer out of gardens. At the rear of gardens, the fencing could be fixed to adjacent trees, reducing the number of posts needed. Gates can be difficult to create in this type of fence.
- **Chain link fencing** is good for projects that require a high level of security, especially when large equipment is being stored, but it can be expensive. Prices can be variable, but are generally over \$10 per foot, depending on height and style. Contact a local fence company to get a quote.
- **Decorative fencing** is available in a wide range of styles, and can be very attractive, but can also be expensive. Materials include wood, metal, and vinyl.
- **Salvaged materials** can be reclaimed to build a variety of different fences. They can also be made to look interesting and artistic. Materials can be found on Craigslist, at the Habitat for Humanity ReStore, or at yard sales.

PERMITS

Permits are a necessary part of working in the city, and they can help you make sure your project complies with local building and zoning codes. Getting permits for garden projects is usually a simple process that can save a lot of time and expense, as the city can make you change the location of something if it is sited incorrectly. Usually, you do not need a building permit if you are not building a fence, a permanent structure or doing any plumbing or electrical work. It is strongly recommended that ALL projects in the city of Youngstown acquire a zoning permit, which is generally \$10 and will ensure that fences, signs, and other project elements are sited according to zoning regulations. The City of Youngstown Zoning Department is located on the 5th Floor, City Hall, 26 South Phelps Street in Youngstown. Bring a basic site drawing with you to the zoning office when you apply. Once the zoning office approves your plans, they can direct you to the building department if your plans will require a building permit.



To acquire a zoning permit and or talk to a zoning official, contact or visit the zoning office, located in City Hall:

5th Floor, City Hall
26 South Phelps Street
Youngstown, OH 44503
330.742.8890

VACANT LAND RE-USE STRATEGIES



IMPORTANT BUDGET INFORMATION

BUDGET DISCLAIMER

All budgets presented in this book are estimates only. Each site and project is different. Costs can vary significantly based on season, variations in material costs, and unique conditions found on your site. The YNDC does not guarantee to accuracy of these example budgets.

Vacant Land Stabilization

Lots that once had homes or businesses on them often have foundations stones, debris, hazardous trees, and weeds on them that can make proper maintenance impossible.

Basic vacant land stabilization can transform a neglected vacant lot into a smooth, green lawn that will be easy to use and maintain. This treatment includes the placement of 2 new street trees per lot and the installation of split rail fencing to make the lot look maintained and keep cars from driving on it.

Budget items:

Debris Removal: \$500

Tree removal: \$400

Grading, Topsoil, and new grass seeding (with straw): \$1200

New Trees: \$200

Split Rail Fence: \$300

Total Estimated Cost: \$2600 per lot



BEFORE



AFTER



Side Yard Expansion

An additional yard can allow for a garden, pathway, deck or lawn, increasing the value of a home and the enjoyment of the owner. In this land treatment, costs are the same as for a Vacant Land Stabilization, but with added cost for any new yard landscaping or a more residential fence style.

Beverly wanted to make the lot look better because it was next to her house and it makes the neighborhood look better if someone's taking care of it. The main benefit of taking care of the lot is that other neighbors start taking better care of their properties. Beverly felt it was a blessing in disguise since she was already cutting the grass on the lot before the vacant homes were torn down. She went to a meeting downtown and figured out how to purchase the property and it turned out to be pretty easy.

"It keeps your property value from going down and beautifies the neighborhood."
—Beverly Cole



BEVERLY
COLE



BEVERLY COLE'S
SIDE YARD



KIDS ON LACLEDE ENJOY EXPANDED YARD

Street Edge Improvement

A cost-effective way to improve a large number of lots when the street frontage is clear and mowable, is a street edge improvement. This would mean creating planting beds across the front of a number of lots on a street when a full cleanup is not possible.

Costs are variable, depending upon your planting strategy and how much of the lot you will work on. Make sure to consider the costs of plants, trees, topsoil, border materials, fencing, and mulch. New trees and perennial plants will need weekly watering in the first year.



STREET EDGE
IMPROVEMENT
ON INDIANOLA

B

Y-63



© C. T. & CO.

Possible costs per 40-ft. lot, with two 15 ft x 3 ft. planting beds with landscape fabric and landscape timber border:

New Soil (3 yd., incl. \$40 delivery):	\$120
Landscape fabric (3' x 50' roll):	\$10
Landscape timbers and fasteners:	\$100
Dyed mulch: (1yd, incl. \$40 delivery)	\$70
Plants (variable) -	

calculated at one perennial plant
or shrub every 2 feet in bed: \$375

Total Cost Per Lot: \$675 - costs can go down
as you add more lots, as you can order in bulk and
save on delivery. Installation is with volunteer labor
under this scenario.

Native Planting

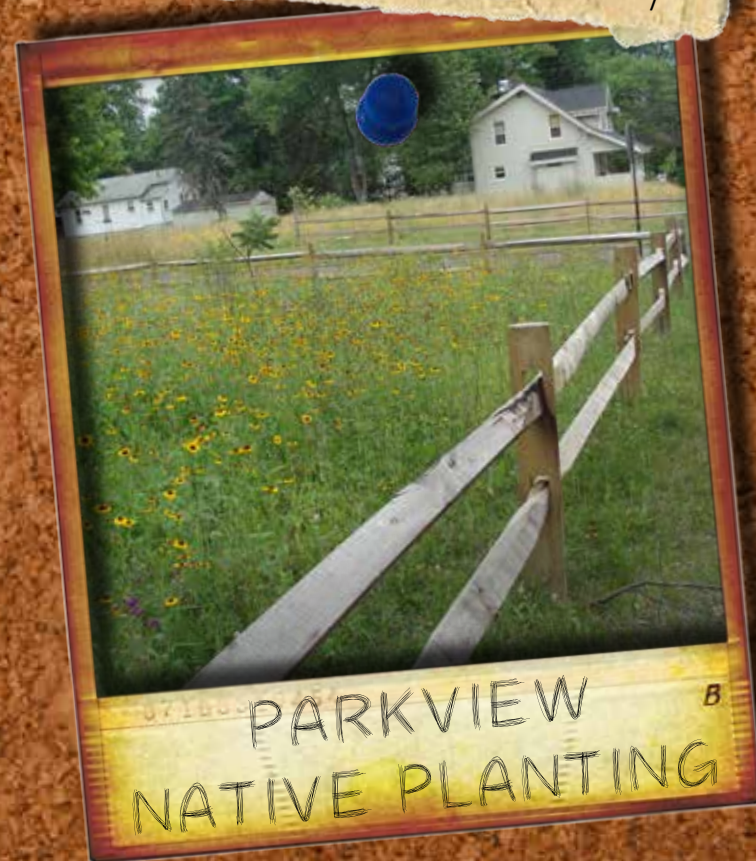
Natural landscaping is the use of native plants, including trees, shrubs, groundcover, and grasses which are indigenous to the geographic area of the garden. Native plants suit current interest in "low-maintenance" gardening and landscaping. Once established, they can flourish without irrigation or fertilization, and are resistant to most pests and diseases. However, while local plants have adapted to local conditions (which includes climate, soil, and other native plants and animals), there will often be instances, especially in cities, where one or more of these will have been radically altered, so seed mixes should be carefully chosen based on site soil conditions.

Be very careful in siting a native planting project. All project neighbors should be on board with the project before it begins. While native planting spaces can be very beautiful in season, they can also appear unmanaged at certain times of the year. Mowing strips and split rail fencing can help sites look better maintained. Someone knowledgeable should be available who can keep sites free of invasive weeds to help them be successful.

Costs are similar to a basic vacant land stabilization, with the addition of wildflower seed. This seed can cost approximately \$300 for enough to cover $\frac{1}{4}$ acre.

"Native plantings play an important role in restoring neighborhood based ecosystems. These plants are tough and durable and are able to establish and reproduce without the expense of frequent mowing or watering. They bring a natural beauty and a chance to explore back to urban environments and provide important habitat for birds and butterflies.

-Bob Kehres, Ohio Prairie Nursery



COMMUNITY GARDENS

COMMUNITY GARDENS ARE GENERALLY DEFINED AS PUBLIC SPACES IN WHICH INDIVIDUALS CAN GROW FOOD FOR THEIR OWN CONSUMPTION (OR TO GIVE AWAY). THERE IS USUALLY AN INDIVIDUAL OR ORGANIZATION THAT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR GENERAL MAINTENANCE OF THE GARDEN AND RESOLUTION OF ANY DISPUTES, AS WELL AS A LARGER NUMBER OF GARDEN MEMBERS OR HELPERS.



LINCOLN PARK GARDEN

Community Gardens come in all shapes and sizes, with many different management schemes, but traditionally they are subdivided into plots which are used by individuals to grow their own produce. While this model has become common in dense cities where individuals do not have space for a garden, they can also serve as a community gathering space and a place for new gardeners to learn new skills, even in places with abundant vacant land.

A Community Garden should be appropriately scaled based on the number of people who will be using a space. It is recommended that you get firm commitments from interested gardeners before starting a project. Also, the group should be ready to assume some responsibility for gardeners whose situation changes or who find that they can't keep up their plot. Often some gardeners who are initially excited may abandon their plots, so there needs to be a group contingency plan. Ground rules should be set up and understood before the gardens open, as well as agreements about who is going to complete mowing and other tasks.

A small plot fee may also be appropriate, depending on the situation. If the garden is providing water, seeds, plants, and soil amendments, these costs should be figured up before the start of the season. Gardens can look very different from each other, and costs can vary significantly, depending on project scale and materials.

Note on Community Garden Budgets

As long as there is sunlight and water access, a community garden can be created with very small project budgets, as long it starts small and grows as materials and plants are found, bought over time, or donated. Community gardens can be no more than a personal garden that is opened to the community, or as large as an acre with over 30 gardeners. The key ingredients are committed members, sunlight, water, soil, and time.

Sample Budget for 50'x120' Community Garden:

Tilling of 50x50 ft area:	\$400
Materials for 5 4'x8' raised beds:	\$300
City Water Tap Installation:	\$850
City Water Tap Meter:	\$200
Load of Leaf Compost:	\$215
14 Yard Load of Quality Topsoil:	\$350
Load of Aged Horse Manure:	\$200
Bucket Benches (3):	\$60
Starter Plants:	\$100
Seeds:	\$50
Field Fencing - Wire (330'):	\$190
Field Fencing - T-posts (50):	\$270
Total Budget:	\$3,185

Rita enjoys gardening and was interested in getting the kids in the neighborhood gardening as well. Rita believes the garden is beneficial in that it helps people be self-sufficient, brings people together, and she is starting to know her neighbors. She advises that you should be aware of what you're getting into.

"YOU REALLY HAVE TO WORK THE SOIL."

**-RITA DUNLAP,
BRENTWOOD
COMMUNITY
GARDEN**



RITA DUNLAP



Urban Farms

An urban farm, also called a market garden, is generally a production-oriented operation run by an individual or small group to grow produce for sale. While many urban farms have public programs, generally the farm is a private venture rather than a public space. Urban farms come in many shapes and sizes, but they all grow produce for sale as well as to feed a family. As such, they need to be designed to maximize production and produce quality products. Generally, an urban farm will involve tilling soil rather than relying on raised beds in boxes, though beds can be mounded to give the benefits of raised beds in a production setting. Key questions when starting an urban farm include:

How much space can I maintain?

What is my budget?

Where will I sell produce?

How much do I need to make to make it worth it?

What do I grow well and love to grow?

What can I learn to grow now that can turn into a profitable venture in the future?

Please contact the YNDC if you are interested in starting an urban farm in Youngstown, as we can provide assistance in planning your operation and finding market outlets, as well as providing space to network with other urban growers.



IRON ROOTS URBAN FARM

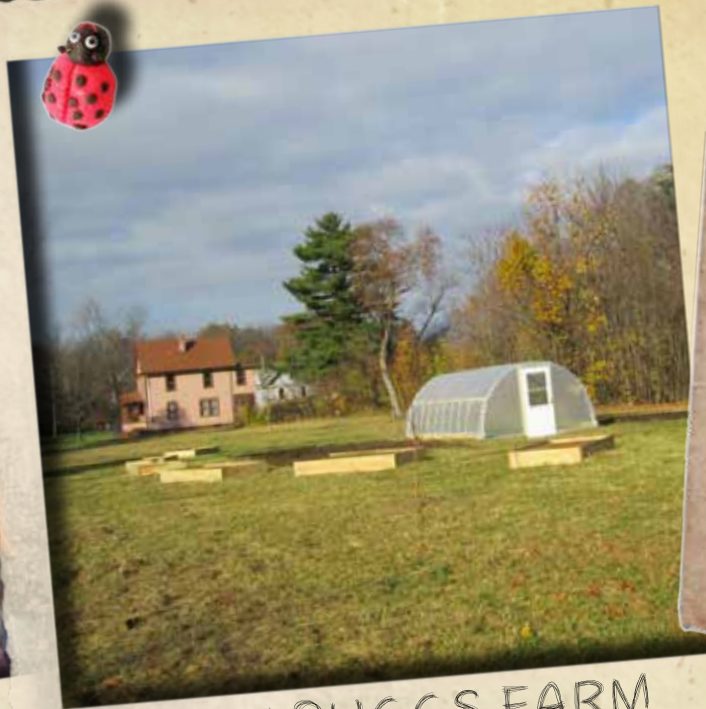


DELLA HUGHEY,
2011 MGTP GRADUATE,
AT FARMERS MARKET





PRODUCE!



LADY BUGGS FARM

Sophia has a small wellness business and wants to use her own space to provide wellness and agriculture education. Sophia's farm has provided beautification and successfully provided fresh food to her neighbors. She is currently in the process of trying to purchase all nine lots that sit behind her home.

Sophia's advice: "Ask big they can always say no or will say what they can do. Competition isn't that great and there's lots of opportunity for growth. Realize that this is a great opportunity and that it's potentially a very long-term project. Community gardens have a tendency to not be used by community members and are going unplanted. Be committed to your project!"



-Sophia, Lady Buggs Farm



SOPHIA BUGGS

RAIN GARDEN

A rain garden is a planted depression that allows rainwater runoff from impervious urban areas like roofs, driveways, walkways, parking lots, and compacted lawn areas the opportunity to be absorbed. This reduces rain runoff by allowing storm water to soak into the ground, rather than entering the sewer system. As household sewer and stormwater enter the same system, during heavy rain events the system can overflow, spilling raw sewage into our waterways. Reducing stormwater runoff can ease pressure on the sewer system.

Rain gardens often need to be excavated with heavy equipment. It is recommended that you do significant research and/or talk to a professional if you are having a rain garden installed. The budget can vary significantly depending on the site, size and design.



RAIN GARDEN AT
MINERAL SPRINGS

"RAIN GARDENS ARE A DYNAMIC AND LIVING WAY TO COLLECT RAINWATER AND RETURN IT TO THE WATER TABLE WHERE YOU LIVE. USING THE NATIVE SPECIES THAT ARE ADAPTED TO RAIN GARDEN CONDITIONS REINTRODUCES THESE IMPORTANT SPECIES, AND ADDS THE BONUS OF PROVIDING IMPORTANT HABITAT FOR NATIVE POLLINATORS."

-BOB KEHRES
OHIO PRAIRIE NURSERY

NEIGHBORHOOD PATHWAY

A neighborhood pathway can be a great use of a lot that is already being used as a cut-through in your neighborhood. If the lot is not currently being used for foot traffic, this use will require significant outreach, as pedestrian traffic through vacant lots can be controversial if it brings people near occupied homes. All adjacent homeowners should be contacted to make sure that they approve of the pathway project. In addition, fencing or other barriers may be necessary between the pathway and occupied homes.



CRANDALL PARK SOUTH



NEIGHBORHOOD PATHWAY

PATHS CAN BE AS SIMPLE AS A MAINTAINED AND MOWED AREA THAT IS USED FOR PEDESTRIAN CROSSING OR AS COMPLEX AS A GARDEN PATH WITH FLOWERS, BENCHES, AND SOLAR LIGHTING. COSTS VARY SIGNIFICANTLY FOR PROJECTS.

MARIGOLD
GIANT MIXED



TUCKERS' SEED HOUSE
CARTHAGE, MO.

POCKET PARK

A pocket park is a small park accessible to the general public. Pocket parks are frequently created on a single vacant lot or on small, irregular pieces of land. The most important factors in deciding to create a pocket park is to decide who will utilize it and who will maintain it. Is the space public or private? Is there a reason people would congregate or use the space, for example if it is near a business and would provide a good place for employees to eat lunch?



PLANTIFUL POCKET PARK



GLENWOOD POCKET PARK



PARK BENCH INSTALLATION

Expenses for a pocket park include benches, perennial plants, materials for pathways, fencing (if appropriate), and new grass seeding.

ORCHARD

An orchard is an intentional planting of trees or shrubs that is maintained for food production. Orchards are comprised of fruit or nut-producing trees which are grown for commercial production. Orchards are also sometimes a feature of large gardens, where they serve an aesthetic as well as a productive purpose. To avoid frost or freezing conditions, orchards are best situated atop a ridge or high ground as compared to a valley. Fruit trees do best in areas that receive direct sunlight throughout most of the day. Many community activities can be planned around the orchard as it begins to bear fruit. This project requires a group of people who will be committed to its success for years to come. Some maintenance will include regular litter pick-up and seasonal mowing. During the first year watering will be required. Fruit trees require annual spraying and pruning. It is helpful to have someone experienced in tree care with whom to consult. Maintenance will include regular watering, litter pick-up, and seasonal mowing. Fruit trees require annual pruning often need spraying to produce unblemished fruit.

Nick Avila currently has 15 pawpaw trees and is starting 30 new trees from seed in 2013. Eventually he plans to process the pulp for a more commercial product. During the growing season the plants add aesthetic value to the neighborhood. Nick also believes the project introduces people to the possibilities of what they can do with a small space. Nick originally recieved a negative response at first from people using the lot as a cut through, eventually people became respectful of the space once they understood what he was trying to accomplish.

Costs for these projects can be very reasonable, but the drawback is that trees may take years to bear fruit and will need pruning and maintenance every year.



NICK'S PAW PAW ORCHARD

"MAKE SURE YOU DO YOUR HOMEWORK ABOUT WHAT WAS ON THE LAND PREVIOUSLY SO YOU KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT BEFORE YOU START PLANTING IN THE GROUND. USE THE (MAHONING COUNTY) AUDITORS WEBSITE, AND DEFINITELY TEST FOR LEAD."

-NICK AVILA
NORTHQUARTER FARM

SUNFLOWER FIELD

A Sunflower field makes the lot more aesthetically pleasing. It provides sunflower seeds (a healthy snack) for the community to eat. Saving seeds for replanting each year can make this a very low cost project. Seeds can even be packed and sold to make a profit for a local community group or a small side income. Initial lot clean up and planting will require a group of people, a local neighborhood group, church group, or volunteers. After initial planting there's not much until harvesting and potentially roasting the seeds.

Initial costs for this project are similar to the basic vacant lot stabilization. Instead of grass, sunflowers are planted using spacing recommended by the seed company. Buy seeds in bulk and make sure to water them regularly.



SCARECROW AT ST. PAT'S CHURCH



SUNFLOWERS IN MID-SUMMER

The genesis of the project was that the property became available. Since it was an old building space we were worried about growing on it, Sunflowers naturally pull impurities out of the soil. I realized the impact of the project on the neighborhood when I noticed people stopping and getting out of their cars and taking pictures of the sunflowers. However, you can only plant annual sunflowers once and have to rotate with another crop so we are planning to grow corn this year and have a community get together.

-Father Noga

Cover Crops

If a lot is likely to be used for agriculture in the future but is not needed this season, it may be a good candidate for the planting of cover crops. Cover crops can break up compacted soil, fix nitrogen in the soil, smother weeds, and add organic matter. It can be much easier to get an area tilled lightly and plant cover crops for a year than to try to work bare ground in the future. Cover crop selection and costs depend on your needs and your site, but in general it will be much cheaper, and more effective than adding amendments later. Crops to consider are Sorghum Sudan Grass for compacted soil, clovers to fix nitrogen, and Winter Rye for a winter cover crop after summer crops.



WINTER RYE



RED CLOVER

Consult the publication "Managing Cover Crops Profitably" from SARE for more information. This book is available for free download here:

<http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Books/Managing-Cover-Crops-Profitably-3rd-Edition>

IDEAS AND INSPIRATION



IDEAS

SCULPTURE GARDEN

A sculpture garden is an outdoor garden dedicated to the presentation of sculpture, usually several permanently sited works in durable materials in landscaped surroundings. A sculpture garden may be private, owned by a museum and accessible freely or for a fee, or public and accessible to all. Some cities own large numbers of public sculptures, some of which they may present together in city parks. Exhibits range from individual, traditional sculptures to large site-specific installations.



Neue Nationalgalerie Sculpture Garden
Germany



Natural Cycles:
A Celebration of Art in the Forest,
Friends of Tryon Creek State Park

OUTDOOR ART INSTALLATIONS

Creating temporary art exhibitions on vacant parcels that can change monthly/seasonally is a good use for vacant land that is mowed but not fully being used for other purposes. Consider working with neighborhood artists or children to design artistic installations.

FOOD FOREST

Forest gardening is a low-maintenance sustainable plant-based food production and agroforestry system based on woodland ecosystems, incorporating fruit and nut trees, shrubs, herbs, vines and perennial vegetables which have yields directly useful to humans. Making use of companion planting, these can be intermixed to grow in a succession of layers, to build a woodland habitat.



Nick Avila
Planting at Mineral Springs Food Forest



Seed Bombs
Visuallngual
Cincinnati, Ohio

GUERRILLA LANDSCAPING

Make wild flower seed bombs and throw them onto a vacant lot near you.

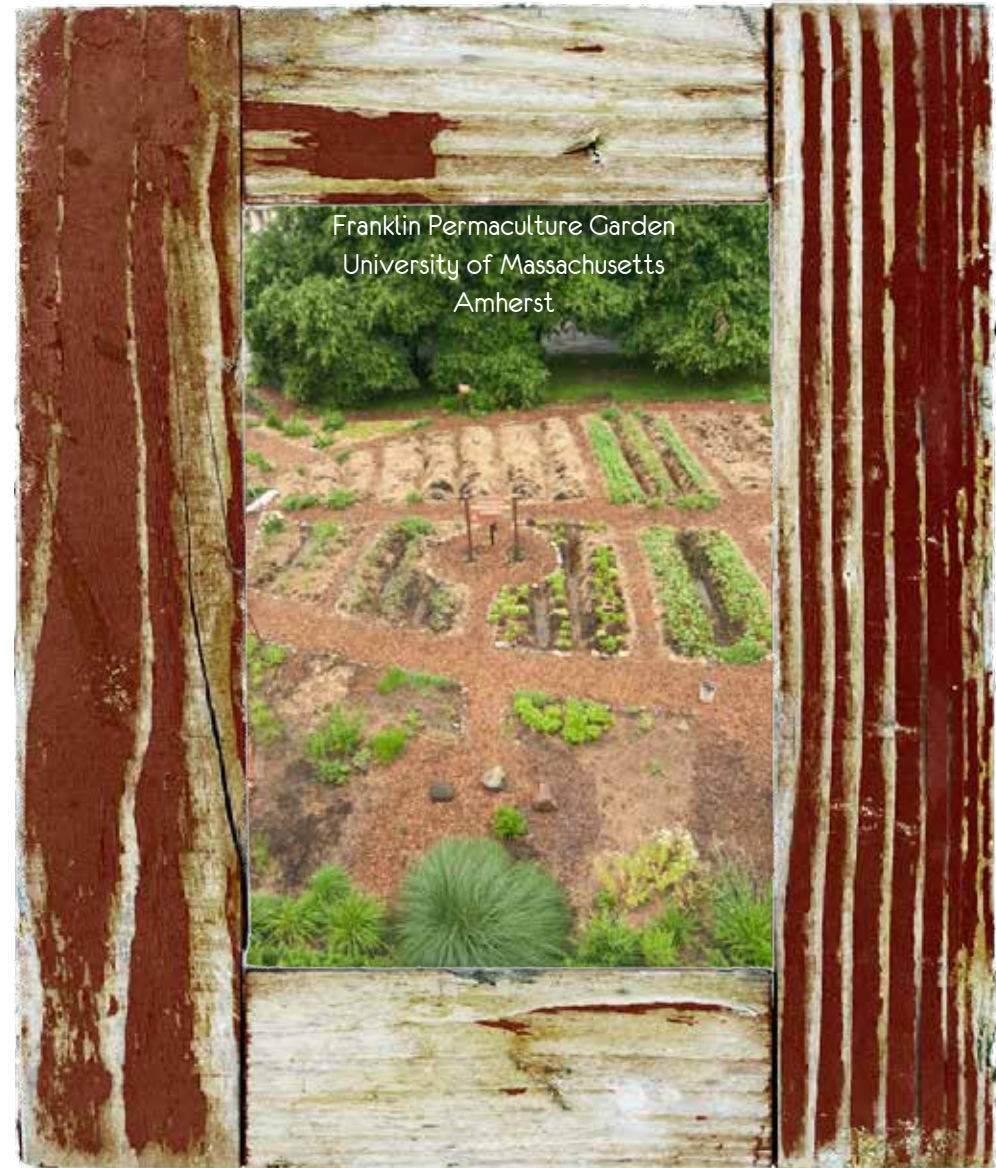
Seed Bomb Recipe

- Dry Red Clay (5 parts)
- Flower Seeds (1 part)
- Water (1-2 parts)
- Dry Compost (3 parts)

INSPIRATION

PERMACULTURE

Permaculture is a branch of ecological design, ecological engineering, and environmental design which develops sustainable architecture and self-maintained agricultural systems modeled from natural ecosystems. The core principles of permaculture are: take care of the earth, take care of the people, and share the surplus. Permaculture design emphasizes patterns of landscape, function, and species assemblies. The central concept of permaculture is maximizing useful connections between components and synergy of the final design. The focus of permaculture, therefore, is not on each separate element, but rather on the relationships created among elements by the way they are placed together; the whole becoming greater than the sum of its parts. Permaculture design therefore seeks to minimize waste, human labor, and energy input by building systems with maximal benefits between design elements to achieve a high level of synergy. Permaculture designs evolve over time by taking into account these relationships and elements and can become extremely complex systems that produce a high density of food and materials with minimal input.



The design principles of permaculture were derived from the science of systems ecology and study of pre-industrial examples of sustainable land use. Permaculture draws from several disciplines including organic farming, agroforestry, integrated farming, sustainable development, and applied ecology. Permaculture has been applied most commonly to the design of housing and landscaping, integrating techniques such as agroforestry, natural building, and rainwater harvesting within the context of permaculture design principles and theory.

RESOURCES

SOIL TESTING

These services will test your soil samples for a variety of nutrients and contaminants. Pay close attention to what each testing option will test for – not all will do heavy metals (such as lead).

University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Has a very affordable heavy metals test
682 North Pleasant Street
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, MA 01003
Phone: 413.545.2311
<http://www.umass.edu/soiltest/>

Mahoning County Board of Health Laboratory Services
50 Westchester Drive
Youngstown, OH 44515
Phone: 330.270.2855

Penn State University – Agricultural Analytical Services Lab
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802
Phone: 814.863.0841
<http://www.aasl.psu.edu>

PERMITTING

City of Youngstown Zoning Department - for zoning permits
Ray DeCarlo
5th Floor, City Hall
26 South Phelps Street
Youngstown, OH 44503
Phone: 330.742.8890

Mahoning County Building Department - for building permits
50 Westchester Drive, Room 201
Austintown, OH 44515
Phone: 330.270.2894

MAPPING TOOLS AND ONLINE INFORMATION ON VACANT LAND

These tools can help you determine who owns a piece of land in Youngstown, and whether it might be available for your project.

Mahoning County Auditor
Mahoning County Court House
120 Market Street, First Floor
Youngstown, OH 44503
Phone: 330.740.2010
<http://www.mahoningcountyoh.gov/DepartmentsAgencies/Departments/Auditor/SearchPropertAuditor/tabid/1087/Default.aspx>

Mahoning County GIS
gis.mahoningcountyoh.gov

YSU Regional Property Information System
Contact: John Bralich, Center for Urban and Regional Studies
Phone: 330.941.2302
<http://rpis.yzu.edu>

ACQUIRING VACANT LAND

These organizations can assist you with acquisition of vacant land.

Mahoning County Land Bank and Tax Lien Foreclosure Information
20 W Federal St # M5
Youngstown, OH 44503
Phone: 330.259.1040
<http://www.mahoninglandbank.com/>

City of Youngstown, Planning Department - City Land Bank
Contact: Karen Perkins
3rd Floor, Suite 315
9 West Front Street
Youngstown, OH 44503
Phone: 330.742.8833
http://www.cityofyoungstownoh.org/city_hall/departments/planning/planning.aspx

VENDING LICENSES

City of Youngstown, Finance Department

3rd Floor, City Hall

26 South Phelps Street

Youngstown, OH 44503

Phone: 330.742.8724

http://www.cityofyoungstownoh.org/city_hall/departments/finance/finance.aspx

Mahoning County Auditor

Mahoning County Court House

120 Market Street, First Floor

Youngstown, OH 44503

Phone: 330.740.2010

<http://www.mahoningcountyoh.gov/DepartmentsAgencies/Departments/Auditor/VendorLicenses/tabid/871/Default.aspx>

FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTIONS

Youngstown City Health District – Department of Environmental Health

Oakhill Renaissance Place

345 Oakhill Ave, Suite 200

Youngstown, OH 44502

Phone: 330.743.3333

<http://www.ychd.com/Services/EnvironmentalHealth.aspx>

WATER ACCESS

City of Youngstown Water Department

1st Floor, City Hall

26 South Phelps Street

Youngstown, OH 44503

Phone: 330.742.8749

http://www.cityofyoungstownoh.org/city_hall/departments/water/water.aspx

GARDENING AND AGRICULTURE

ORGANIZATIONS

Common Wealth, Inc.

1221 Elm St

Youngstown, OH 44505

Phone: 330.744.2667

Grow Youngstown

PO Box 1191

Youngstown, OH 44504

Phone: 330.286.0688

<http://www.growyoungstown.org/>

Jubilee Gardens, Inc.

Contact Person: Mary Bobersky

150 Lafayette St.

Youngstown, OH

Phone: 330.503.2971

Men's Garden Club of Youngstown

PO Box 724

Canfield, OH 44406

<http://mgcy.org>

Goodness Grows

PO Box 241

2310 W. South Range Rd (Route 165)

North Lima, OH 44452

<http://www.goodnessgrows.net/>

TOOLS TO BORROW

Neighborhood Improvement Corps

Community Toolshed

Contact Person: Patti Dougan

Phone: 1.888.642.8665

MATERIALS

Wood Chips

Mill Creek Metroparks

P.O. Box 596
Canfield, OH 44406
Phone: 330.702.3000
<http://www.millcreekmetroparks.org/>

City of Youngstown Street Department

1475 Teamster Drive
Youngstown, OH 44510
Phone: 330.744.3179
http://www.cityofyoungstownoh.org/city_hall/departments/street/street.aspx

Local Tree Contractors

Consult phone book or internet to identify local tree removal contractors. Contractors will typically provide heavy wood chips at no charge.

Horse Manure

Canfield Fairgrounds

265 Columbiana-Canfield Rd.
Canfield, OH 44406
Phone: 330.533.4107

Craigslist

<http://youngstown.craigslist.com>

Local Farmers

Compost Materials

Meal Programs
School Cafeterias
Hospitals
Local Restaurants and Coffee Shops
Landscaping Companies
Leaves – from neighbors, etc.

Used/Salvaged Building Supplies

Habitat for Humanity ReStore

480 Youngstown Poland Road,
Struthers, OH 44471
Phone: 330.743.7244

Star Supply

875 Mahoning Avenue
Youngstown, OH 44502
Phone: 330.746.2969

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE

OSU Extension of Mahoning County

490 Broad St.
Canfield, OH 44406
Phone: 330.533.2424
<http://mahoning.osu.edu/>

Mahoning County Soil and Water Conservation District

Offers rain barrels and other conservation programs
Contact Person: Kathi Vrable-Bryan
850 Industrial Road
Youngstown, Ohio 44509
Phone: 330.740.7995
<http://www.mahoningswcd.org/>

Small Business Development Center at YSU

Offers small business development assistance and advice
One University Plaza
Youngstown, OH 44555
Phone: 330.941.2140
<http://www.ysu.edu/sbdc/>

Mill Creek Metroparks, Davis Visitor Center

Maxine Antonucci Horticultural Library
123 McKinley Avenue
Youngstown, OH 44509
Phone: 330.740.7116

EQUIPMENT

Farmtek

Phone: 1.800.245.9881

<http://www.farmtek.com/farm/supplies/home>

Tunnelvision Hoops

20313 Van Aken Boulevard, Suite 22

Shaker Heights, OH 44122

Phone: 330.283.5717

<http://www.tunnelvisionhoops.com/>

Do-cut Sales and Service

3375 Youngstown Rd

Warren, OH 44484

Phone: 330.369.2345

<http://www.docut.com>

LOCAL FUNDING RESOURCES

These organizations may be able to provide grants, startup funding or loans for your project.

Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber

Information on multiple loan programs

Youngstown Office

11 Central Square, Ste. 1600

Youngstown, OH 44503

Warren Office

197 W. Market Street

Warren, OH 44481

Phone: 330.392.6140

<http://www.regionalchamber.com/>

Mahoning Valley Economic Development Corporation

Offers a variety of loan programs, including local and regional mini-loan funds

4319 Belmont Ave.

Youngstown, OH 44505

Phone: 330.759.3668

<http://www.mvedc.com/>

The Raymond John Wean Foundation

Neighborhood SUCCESS Grants

Contact Person: Jennifer Roller

147 West Market Street

Warren, OH 44481

Phone: 330.394.5600

<http://www.rjweanfdn.org/NeighborhoodSuccessHowToApplyForGrant.aspx>

City of Youngstown – Community Development Agency

9 West Front St.

Youngstown, OH 44503

Phone: 330.744.0854

http://www.cityofyoungstownoh.org/city_hall/departments/cda/cda.aspx

Mayor's Community Foundation

The Community Foundation of the Mahoning Valley

11 Federal Plaza central, Suite 1600

Youngstown, OH 44503

<http://staged.cfmv.org/production/Portals/CFMV/Documents/2007MCFminigrantapp.pdf>

PLANTS AND SEEDS

Local Garden Centers

Ohio Prairie Nursery

Specializing in native plants and seeds

Phone: 866.569.3380

<http://www.ohioprairienursery.com>

Johnny's Selected Seeds

Phone: 1.877.564.6697

<http://www.johnnyseeds.com>

High Mowing

Organic Seeds

Phone: 802.472.6174

www.highmowingseeds.com

PROJECT IDEA WORKBOOK

Title of Project:

Name of Organization/Group:

Primary Person in charge of Project:

Secondary Person in charge of Project:

Location of Project/Address:



PROVIDE A BRIEF SUMMARY OF YOUR PROJECT:

BRIEFLY LIST THE PROJECT GOALS:

PROJECT TIMELINE

What needs to be done?	Who will complete it?	Deadline

PROJECT MAINTENANCE

What needs to be done?	Who will complete it?	How often?

PROJECT BUDGET QUESTIONS

What community resources have you mobilized to help you with this project (such as borrowed tools, skilled volunteers, donations of material?)

What additional funding can your organization commit to this project?

What supplies and equipment do you already own?

PROJECT BUDGET WORKSHEET

Description of Item	Vendor	Cost of Item	# Needed	Total Cost
Supplies/Materials (soil, lumber, seeds, plants, etc.)				
Equipment (shovels, rakes, hoses, etc.)				
Contract Labor (grading, installation, etc.)				
Total Project Cost				



YOUNGSTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

820 Canfield Road | Youngstown, Ohio 44511
(330) 480-0423 | www.yndc.org | info@yndc.org

