

Addressing concerns and strategies for building partnerships for Community Gardens

Community Growing Network
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OVERVIEW

Many communities in Ontario face similar challenges when establishing community gardens, including (1) addressing provincial and municipal policies; (2) insurance costs; and needs; (3) building partnerships; (4) opportunities to establish land trusts.

EXAMPLES TO BUILD UPON

1. A 2013 **report to the Halton Food Council** listed the following considerations for community gardens as they relate to provincial regulations: soil testing, respecting species at risk, noise control guidelines, odour standards, meeting accessibility requirements, adhering to pest control regulations, and guidelines on donating food.
2. The **American Community Garden Association (ACGA)** provides liability insurance to eligible community gardens throughout the US. They have negotiated collective liability insurance for member community gardens.
3. **LifeCycles**, based in Victoria, BC has been working on a Growing Schools program for over 20 years and has excellent resources on building community gardens on school properties.
4. An example of a land trust that incorporates community gardens and urban agriculture is the **Greater Boston Community Land Trust Network** which has a partnership with the Urban Farming Institute that teaches agriculture and gardening skills and employs many local residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Developing Supportive Policies:** Sustain Ontario could help communities advocate for changes to municipal policies that support the development of more community gardens. For example, municipalities should be encouraged to develop Urban Agriculture Programs that would support a diversity of urban gardening and agriculture activities across city departments.
2. **Collective Liability Insurance:** Sustain Ontario is well suited to negotiate a collective insurance plan that covers all community gardens in the province. This could save individual community gardens from the burden of the cost while also sharing the risk involved amongst a larger network.
3. **Soil testing:** Sustain Ontario could negotiate a suitable rate for soil testing from a reputable company. This could result in better services to community gardens while also ensuring the company is aware of the needs of community gardens and can provide them the services they need.

For an in-depth discussion of the above, please see the full research of the Community Growing Network paper available at <http://bringfoodhome.com/bfh-papers/>.