

## Garden Leadership Committee Toolkit

# Spring plotting

### Overview

Mark plots and pathways, keep map updated to reflect site layout.

**Time commitment: Annual one-time task between March and May**

### Keys to success

- Unless you have permanent plots, plotting is a task that needs to happen every year. This will allow gardeners to recognize their plot and its boundaries.
- Plot the garden when the conditions are right! In tilled gardens, plot immediately after tilling. In no-till gardens, permanent markers may be used.
- When plotting, it's helpful to have a team of 2 to 3 people working together.
- Place names (especially of new gardeners) within each garden plot.
- Reinforce information by providing it in multiple formats. Find multiple ways to identify plots so that gardeners can easily find theirs.

### Making the map

It is worth the time and effort to create a solid template to work off every year.

- Orient the map from the point of view of a gardener trying to find their plot (e.g., orient the map from the perspective of the main gate and include adjacent streets).
- For those with limited English proficiency, pictures are always better than words.
- Keep a separate map to indicate irrigation lines and site infrastructure. This map can be shared with contractors, delivery drivers, volunteers, etc.

- It is easier to make updates and changes to maps in real time! Don't wait until the end of the season; update as you go.

### Suggested features to include:

- Legend, including a compass to indicate north/south directions
- Water access points
- Pathways
- Sheds
- Communal garden plots
- Gates
- Compost drop spots
- Other key garden landmarks

## Plot size

- Plot size can be decided by the committee by considering who is using the garden and what their needs are (e.g., an elderly population may need small plots, but a refugee family would appreciate a much larger plot).
- Offering a variety of plot sizes can be helpful for a diverse group of garden participants.

## Pathways

- Pathways are important for gardeners to access their plots, but the size is up to you. Remember pathways will always shrink as crops grow, so if you need them wide enough for a wheelbarrow (3 ft), plan accordingly.
- Make sure every plot has path access!
- Place irrigation spigots to the side of a path, not in the middle of a pathway, or a wheelbarrow can not pass through.

## Plotting the garden

### Tools

- 300-ft measuring tape or wheel
- Stake to hold measuring tape in place
- Mallet
- Map
- Plot markers & Sharpie

**Plot maker options:** Bamboo sticks with end spray painted, colored flags, 2–3-ft wooden stakes.

**Plot marker colors:** Consider if it will be visible on bare ground and with vegetation.

**Identifying plots:** Order your garden plots by assigning each plot a number. Write plot numbers on the garden map and put individual numbers within each plot.

## Measuring

- Find or create a fixed point to measure from each year. It can be a fence line, T-post, tree or a marker you place.
- From there, stake your measuring tape in place and walk the distance of the garden.
- Once you know the distance, use the following equation to determine number of plots: **Total distance – (number of pathways X path width)/ number of plots = length of plots.**

### Example

The garden measures 175 feet across, has three 5-ft pathways and will be 8 plots wide.

- $175 - (3 \times 5) / 8 = 20\text{-ft-wide plots}$
- Now that you've determined plot size, place a marker every 20 feet, keeping in mind the 5-foot pathways.

## Additional documents

- [Plotting supplies photos](#)
- [Sample garden maps](#)

## Further reading

- [Canva](#)
- [Garden Planner v3 App](#)