



Cultivation to Community

Practical Tools for Harvesting, Sharing, and Building Food Resilience

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Tool 1: Garden Micro-Business Starter Checklist

Identify Your Product

- Fresh produce (leafy greens, root crops, herbs, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, etc.)
- Value-added products (jams, sauces, salsas, pickles, dried herbs)
- Seedlings or starter plants for other gardeners
- Produce boxes for neighbors or CSA-style shares

Estimate Startup Costs

- Seeds and starter plants
- Soil, compost, or amendments
- Gardening tools (hand tools, watering cans, hoses)
- Raised beds, containers, or trellises
- Packaging for sales (bags, boxes, jars)
- Optional: irrigation setup, preservation supplies (canning jars, dehydrator)

Track Your Yields

- Keep a harvest log (date, crop type, weight, destination)
- Record what grew well and what struggled
- Adjust planting plans each season based on results

Explore Local Outlets

- Farmers' markets
- Local restaurants and small grocers
- Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) or produce co-ops
- Neighbors and community produce boxes
- Donation outlets (food pantries, free fridges)

Know Regulations

- Check local **cottage food laws** (for jams, pickles, sauces, dried goods)
 - Review food safety requirements for fresh produce sales
 - Research labeling and packaging requirements if selling preserved goods
 - Explore small business licensing options if expanding beyond community scale
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Tool 2: Community Integration Guide (Gardening Version)

Purpose: Help gardeners connect their produce with local community systems for greater impact.

Steps:

1. **Identify community needs**
 - What foods are scarce in your area? (greens, herbs, culturally relevant crops)
 - Where are the food deserts or under-served areas?
2. **Choose your entry points**
 - Partner with food banks, free fridges, mutual aid groups.
 - Join or start a **CSA share program** with neighbors.
 - Offer produce to schools, churches, or senior centers.
3. **Create visibility**
 - Share your harvest on community boards, social media groups, and farmer collectives.
 - Use word of mouth in your neighborhood.
4. **Build consistency**
 - Plan your garden to provide regular harvests.
 - Track your yields so you can promise weekly or monthly produce.



Tool 3: Community Food Resilience Worksheet

Reflection & Planning Tool

Step 1 – Map Your Current Capacity

- How much land or container space do you have?
- How much food can you produce in one season?
- What types of crops are easiest for you to grow?

Step 2 – Identify Community Gaps

- What crops are missing in your community?
- Where do people usually get produce now (grocery, corner stores, food pantries)?
- What barriers exist (price, distance, access)?

Step 3 – Your Contribution

- How much of your harvest could you donate or sell affordably?
- Who could benefit the most? (families, elders, cultural groups, schools)
- What partnerships could make your garden more impactful?



Tool 4: Food & Workforce Development Pathways Tool

Purpose: Connect gardening skills to economic opportunity and job creation.

Pathways:

- **Personal Income:** Sell produce boxes, seedlings, or preserved foods.
- **Community Income:** Join co-ops, farmers' markets, or group CSA models.
- **Education & Training:** Teach workshops, mentor youth gardeners, or run garden tours.
- **Employment:** Skills from gardening (crop planning, soil management, customer service) can transfer into jobs with urban farms, nonprofits, or food justice organizations.
- **Entrepreneurship:** Launch a small garden-to-market business, a catering service using local produce, or a farm-to-table meal prep program.



Tool 5: Harvest & Sales Log

Purpose: Track harvests, donations, or sales to build habits of recordkeeping and show outcomes for business or community projects.

Instructions: After each harvest, record the details below. Use one row per harvest batch.

Date	Crop Harvested	Quantity (lbs, bunches, etc.)	Condition (Fresh/Dried)	Destination (Home, Donation, Market, Restaurant)	Sale Price or Value	Notes

Tips for Use:

- Record **every harvest** — even small amounts build your data.
- Note crop quality and conditions (helps you improve next season).
- If you sell, calculate income totals monthly.
- If you donate, note number of households impacted.
- Use data to adjust planting plans and prove impact (important for **grants and community proposals**).



Tool 6: Budget & Profit Calculator Worksheet

Section 1: Startup Costs (One-Time)

Item	Cost	Notes
Tools/Equipment	\$_____ (e.g., shovels, racks, dehydrator)	
Beds/Containers/Shelving	\$_____	
Irrigation/Humidity System	\$_____	
Preservation Supplies	\$_____ (jars, bags, labels)	
Licenses/Permits	\$_____	
Total Startup Costs	\$_____	

Section 2: Recurring Costs (Monthly/Seasonal)

Item	Cost	Notes
Seeds/Spawn	\$_____	
Soil/Compost/Substrate	\$_____	
Utilities (water, electricity)	\$_____	
Packaging (bags, boxes, jars)	\$_____	
Marketing (flyers, table fee at market)	\$_____	
Labor/Time (optional, if paying helpers)	\$_____	
Total Recurring Costs	\$_____	

Section 3: Income (Per Month/Season)

Product	Quantity	Price	Total Income
Fresh Produce/Mushrooms	_____ units	\$___ per unit	\$_____
Value-Added Products	_____ units	\$___ per unit	\$_____
Grow Kits/Seedlings	_____ units	\$___ per unit	\$_____
CSA Boxes/Subscriptions	_____ units	\$___ per unit	\$_____
Total Income			\$_____

Section 4: Profit/Loss Calculation

- **Total Income – Total Recurring Costs = \$_____ (Profit/Loss)**
- Factor in **Startup Costs** to see when you break even.

Tips for Use:

- Update monthly/seasonally.
- Compare crops/products — which ones give the best return?
- Use data to adjust your business model or support grant proposals.



Tool 7: Community Engagement Plan Template

Purpose: This worksheet helps you think through how your harvest can support not only your household or business but also your wider community. Use it to identify partners, set goals, and design an engagement strategy that fits your resources and community needs.

Step 1: Identify Your Community Goals

- Increase access to fresh food in food deserts
 - Provide education on growing/using mushrooms or produce
 - Support local food banks or mutual aid groups
 - Generate income while giving back
 - Build community gardens or share growing space
 - Other: _____
-

Step 2: Map Local Partners

List at least 3 groups or individuals you could connect with:

Partner	Type (e.g., nonprofit, school, market)	Possible Role	Contact Person
Example: Local Food Bank	Nonprofit	Accepts produce donations	Ms. Lopez

Step 3: Decide on Engagement Activities

- ✓ Donation (food banks, shelters, mutual aid)
 - ✓ Education (workshops, cooking demos, school visits)
 - ✓ Community Garden Collaboration (sharing land, seeds, or compost)
 - ✓ Market Presence (CSA shares, sliding-scale sales, farmers markets)
 - ✓ Other: _____
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Step 4: Create a Sharing & Sales Balance

- How much of your harvest will you keep for your household? _____ %
 - How much will you sell for income? _____ %
 - How much will you donate or share? _____ %
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Step 5: Communication Plan

- How will you let the community know about your offerings?
 - Flyers / posters
 - Social media
 - Community bulletin boards
 - Partner newsletters
 - Word of mouth
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Step 6: Reflection Prompt

“How would sharing your harvest change the health, nutrition, or resilience of your community?”



Tool 8: Food Access Mapping Worksheet

Purpose: Identify areas in your community where fresh foods can make the biggest impact.

Instructions: Use this worksheet to reflect on where food is and isn't available in your area.

1. Map Your Food Environment:

- Closest grocery store to me: _____
- Closest farmers' market to me: _____
- Food pantry / co-op nearby: _____
- Areas with no fresh food access ("food deserts"): _____

2. Transportation Barriers:

- Do most people in my area have easy access to a grocery store? Yes / No
- How far is the nearest source of fresh food (in miles or minutes)? _____

3. Opportunities for vegetables:

- Could vegetables be grown and shared in:
 - A community garden? Yes No
 - A church basement or classroom? Yes No
 - A neighborhood vacant lot or small space? Yes No

4. Potential Distribution Models:

- Donation boxes
- Community fridges
- Free meal programs
- Low-cost market tables
- CSA shares

5. Reflection Questions:

- What gaps in food access did you notice in your neighborhood?
- Where could mushrooms fit in as a **quick, affordable, nutritious** food?



Tool 9: Community Cook & Nutrition Guide for Vegetables

Purpose:

This guide provides simple, low-cost ways to prepare and enjoy common vegetables while boosting nutrition in your community. It's designed to help families maximize harvests, reduce food waste, and eat healthier on a budget.

1. Common Vegetables & Their Nutrition Benefits

- **Leafy Greens (collards, kale, spinach):** High in iron, calcium, and Vitamin K. Great for bone health and energy.
 - **Tomatoes:** Rich in Vitamin C and lycopene (supports heart health).
 - **Carrots & Sweet Potatoes:** Packed with beta-carotene, good for vision and immunity.
 - **Beans & Peas:** Excellent plant-based protein and fiber.
 - **Cabbage & Broccoli:** Full of Vitamin C, folate, and cancer-fighting compounds.
 - **Onions & Garlic:** Boost immune health and flavor without added salt.
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2. Cooking Methods That Preserve Nutrition

- **Steaming:** Best for leafy greens, beans, and broccoli (keeps vitamins intact).
 - **Quick Sauté:** Use a little oil and garlic for fast, flavorful veggies.
 - **Roasting:** Enhances sweetness in carrots, squash, and onions.
 - **Soups & Stews:** Great way to stretch harvests and feed many people.
 - **Pickling & Fermenting:** Preserves veggies and adds probiotics for gut health.
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3. Simple Community Recipes

Garden Stir-Fry (Feeds 4–6)

- 2 cups mixed vegetables (greens, peppers, beans)
 - 2 tbsp oil
 - 2 cloves garlic (minced)
 - Soy sauce or salt to taste
- Quick, nutritious, and easy to cook in large batches.*

Hearty Veggie Soup (Feeds 6–8)

- 4 cups chopped vegetables (tomatoes, carrots, cabbage, beans)

- 6 cups broth or water
- 1 onion, 2 cloves garlic
- Herbs (oregano, thyme, or bay leaf)
Perfect for community meals; freezes well.

Roasted Sweet Potato Wedges

- 3 sweet potatoes, cut into wedges
 - 2 tbsp oil + pinch of salt/pepper
 - Roast at 400°F for 30 min
Kid-friendly and nutrient-rich.
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4. Stretching Your Harvest

- Combine veggies with **beans or grains** for filling meals.
 - **Batch cook & freeze** extra portions for later.
 - Share recipes with neighbors and rotate meals.
 - Use leftover greens in smoothies, omelets, or stir-fries.
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5. Reflection & Community Use

- How could you use a **community cooking night** to share recipes?
- Could you create a **shared recipe book** from everyone's gardens?
- How does cooking together **build resilience and connection**?