



South Side Community Garden at Bandi Schaum Community Garden Sustainability Report

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey.

Remember this is a starting point. With this information, you are creating a baseline for your garden so you can celebrate strengths, track progress and identify the areas to focus your energies on in the short and long term.

Our mission is to start gardens that will be enjoyed for generations to come. In our experience, a sustainable garden is one made to last, where little is wasted and plants are healthy. A sustainable garden has access to sufficient materials, volunteers, and funds. Additionally, leadership and membership includes a diversity of people and ideas.

In this report you will find:

- Your sustainability score
- A list of definitions
- Your personalized recommendations
- A list of further resources
- Your answers to all the survey questions

Please contact Grow Pittsburgh if you have questions about your results or suggestions for improving the survey: citygrowers@growpittsburgh.org.

South Side Community Garden at Bandi Schaum
has achieved a sustainability score of **83%**
(86 out of 103 possible points)
Date of survey: May 21, 2014

Score by Category			
Category	Possible Points	Points Earned	Percentage
Leadership	15	15	100%
Group Organization	16	13	81%
Zero Waste	8	6	75%
Finances and Funding	9	6	67%
Community Support	18	11	61%
Land Tenure	9	9	100%
Fundamentals	22	22	100%
Gardening Practices	6	4	67%



DEFINITIONS

Community Support: Support of neighbors, businesses, and politicians will help keep the garden strong and successful. The greater the number and diversity of volunteers and participants at the garden, the less work for garden leadership and the more dynamic your garden will become.

Finances and Funding: Every garden has regular expenses, like water, compost, plants and seeds, tools, and party supplies. Having reliable funding from several different sources can relieve the stress of uncertainty from month to month and season to season.

Fundamentals: This category refers to the essential factors of a successful garden—the garden soil is safe and productive, pests aren't a huge problem, people and supplies are secure, etc.

Gardening Practices: This refers to soil testing and how you keep up with pests and disease before they become a larger problem.

Group Organization: How well does your garden group communicate? Appropriate and regular communication will help gardeners know what is expected of them and what opportunities are available at the garden.

Land Tenure: This refers to the length of time the gardeners have access to the garden site. There are so many hours and resources that go into creating a community garden. Making sure it can stay in the same place for as long as possible is crucial for sustainability.

Leadership: Are multiple people sharing the responsibilities of leadership? Are they making decisions with the awareness and support of gardeners? Do they respond quickly and appropriately in times of need?

Zero Waste: There are creative ways to make sure that your garden isn't wasting anything that could be used either on-site or elsewhere. Cover cropping, capturing rainwater, composting, and donating excess harvest will help the garden be more sustainable by saving money and meeting its own needs.



RECCOMENDATIONS

These recommendations were generated in response to your “No” and “Unsure” answers in the survey.

Community Support

- Post flyers around the neighborhood or go door-to-door to invite people to participate in the garden. Invite neighbors to garden events. (2)
- Designate someone to take a head count or create a sign-in sheet at garden events and workdays. This information is very helpful when applying for funding. (4)
- Who and what is the garden for? Share this information on a sign to avoid confusion and gain support. (6)
- Hosting events at the garden (like a potluck, tour, classes, arts & crafts night etc.) is a great way to get new people involved and celebrate successes. (7) *(Ed. Note: tours and workshops at the garden do count! So maybe you get 2 extra points here)*

Finances and Funding

- Keep track of expenses (tools, water, etc.) as well as income (bed holder's fee, donations, etc.). Ask other community garden coordinators about common expenses and costs. Invite gardeners to suggest items to add to the budget. (20)

Group Organization

- Host a fun meeting to brainstorm ideas for the garden's future - thinking short-term and long-term. Prioritize the projects that are the most important for the garden and that people have the most energy to complete. Refer to this plan at least once a year to continue progress. (25)
- Make sure you have the correct contact information for each gardener and follow up with them if it looks like they are struggling. Connect them to a knowledgeable gardener, or a temporary helper if other life matters prevent them from participating. Ask what you can do to help them. (27)

Gardening Practices

- Test your soil to check for heavy metals and get a baseline for your soil's health. Follow the suggestions on the test results to make your soil even better. Heavy metal soil testing from UMass costs \$10 and if you have any questions, contact us. (29)
- Research different techniques to extend the growing season (such as row covers, cold frames, etc.). Try one small project each year to get comfortable with the technique. (30)

Zero Waste

- Consider planting low-maintenance crops like herbs, strawberries and garlic in unused beds to keep them productive. If interest is low, reach out to neighbors and community groups to see if they would sponsor a bed. (46)



RESOURCES

Grow Pittsburgh resources:

- Website: www.growpittsburgh.org
 - The Urban Harvester, a weekly blog covering a variety of growing practices
 - Community Garden Organizing Guide
 - Volunteer and job opportunities
- Classes
 - A Garden Primer course (offered in February, March and April)
 - Community Garden Exchange, a free workshop series
 - Email info@growpittsburgh.org or call 412-362-4769 for more information.

Other resources:

- Soil testing: <http://soiltest.umass.edu/>
- Identifying invasive plants:
<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/conservationscience/invasivespecies/>
- Allegheny County Penn State Extension Hotline: (412) 473-2600 or alleghenymg@psu.org.

SOUTH SIDE COMMUNITY GARDEN AT BANDI SCHAUM
Community Garden Sustainability Survey
Questions and Answers

CATEGORY KEY	
CS =	Community Support
F =	Fundamentals
FF =	Finances and Funding
GO =	Group Organization
GP =	Growing Practices
L =	Leadership
LT =	Land Tenure
ZW =	Zero Waste

#	Question	Category	Possible Points	Score	Answer
1	Our garden has support from neighborhood organizations and/or local governing bodies.	CS	3	3	Yes
2	The majority of garden participants live within walking distance of the garden.	CS	2	0	No
3	At the garden, there is a sign that is visible to passersby that explains how to get involved in the garden.	CS	2	2	Yes
4	Our garden tracks the number of attendees present at garden-related events.	CS	1	0	No
5	The garden membership reflects the overall demographics of the neighborhood.	CS	2	2	Yes
6	The mission/purpose of the garden is posted where visitors can see it.	CS	2	0	No
7	Our garden holds open-to-the-public community events regularly.	CS	2	0	No
8	The neighbors of the garden are supportive of the garden.	CS	2	2	Yes

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9	Since the beginning of my participation in the garden, I have seen growth in the number of volunteers (non-garden members who assist with projects) in the garden.	CS	2	2	Yes
10	Our garden has an invasive weed, such as Japanese Knotweed, that affects our productivity.	F	2	2	No
11	Our garden has access to sufficient tools.	F	3	3	Yes
12	Our garden has access to a reliable water source.	F	3	3	Yes
13	Our garden's soil is currently capable of growing healthy plants.	F	3	3	Yes
14	There is a secure place at the garden to store materials so that they cannot be stolen or vandalized.	F	3	3	Yes
15	The gardeners feel safe at the garden site.	F	3	3	Yes
16	Our garden has access to knowledgeable vegetable growers.	F	2	2	Yes
17	Our garden grows food in soil that has been tested and is considered safe with little or low contamination.	F	3	3	Yes
18	Our garden has money put aside for emergency use.	FF	2	2	Yes
19	Our garden has liability insurance that covers activities at the garden.	FF	2	2	Yes
20	Our garden has a budget that is maintained by at least one designated member.	FF	3	0	No
21	Our garden actively seeks donations of funds and/or materials.	FF	2	2	Yes
22	The rules of the garden are posted where visitors can see them.	GO	2	2	Yes
23	Our garden regularly AT LEAST TWO (2) of following to communicate with gardeners: bulletin board, email, letters, phone, website/blog, social media (such as facebook/twitter).	GO	3	3	Yes
24	All members of the garden have agreed to a list of expectations for their participation.	GO	3	3	Yes

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25	Our garden has a documented long-term strategy/strategic plan (extending beyond next year).	GO	1	0	No
26	Our garden has a process for re-assigning beds that are untended.	GO	2	2	Yes
27	Our garden has a process for supporting gardeners who are struggling to maintain their beds	GO	2	0	No
28	There is a process for orienting new participants at the garden.	GO	3	3	Yes
29	Our garden's soil is tested AT LEAST every other year to assess soil pH, nutrition, and heavy metal levels.	GP	1	0	Unsure
30	Our garden uses season extension techniques (such as row covers, cold frames, etc.).	GP	1	0	No
31	Our garden has pest management strategies in place.	GP	2	2	Yes
32	Our garden allows only organic fertilizers and pesticides.	GP	1	1	Yes
33	Our gardeners are encouraged to inspect soil and plants for pests and disease.	GP	1	1	Yes
34	Our garden members have the opportunity to provide feedback to garden leadership.	L	3	3	Yes
35	If there is a problem at the garden, the garden leadership is proactive in responding to it.	L	3	3	Yes
36	Our garden leadership holds open meetings at least 2 times a year.	L	3	3	Yes
37	Our garden leadership shares news with its participants several times per year.	L	3	3	Yes
38	Our garden has more than one garden leader/coordinator.	L	3	3	Yes
39	Our garden feels pressure that it will need to move to a new location within the next 5 years.	LT	3	3	No

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40	The garden's location is affordable at the current rate.	LT	3	3	Yes
41	Our garden has a formal agreement with the landowner allowing the land to be used for gardening.	LT	3	3	Yes
42	Our garden has one or more compost piles that are regularly maintained and utilized.	ZW	1	1	Yes
43	Our garden has functional rainwater collection system connected to a downspout.	ZW	1	1	Yes
44	Our garden consistently tracks the amount of produce grown and/or donated.	ZW	1	1	Yes
45	Our garden has a process for donating produce to food banks, churches, neighbors, etc.	ZW	2	2	Yes
46	Our garden currently uses all available garden beds.	ZW	2	0	No
47	Our garden uses cover crops to improve soil and reduce erosion.	ZW	1	1	Yes