



IREJN

Interreligious Eco-Justice Network

Starting an Organic Community Vegetable Garden at YOUR house of worship!

Letty Naigles and Charmaine Craig
Green Houses of Worship Gardening Project
A program of www.irejn.org

Two major threads

- PRACTICAL
- Where to garden
- How to garden
- Organic tricks of the trade
 - Compost
 - Bugs
 - Diseases
 - Critters
- ORGANIZATIONAL
- Your clients
 - Fellow congregants?
 - Greater community
- Your assistants
- Some simple ways to get everyone involved

What do you need for
gardening?

SUNLIGHT



WATER

From the
hose or
faucet



Consider
drip
irrigation

SOIL1

- Use your own



- Check with UConn extension:
<http://www.soiltest.uconn.edu/>
- Free ph testing 2x/year

- Amend with compost



- Mulch with wood chips between rows



SOIL2—other ways!



Compost from UCONN

<http://www.extension.uconn.edu/>

<http://blog.extension.uconn.edu/2017/04/24/spring-compost-sales/>

Sources of compost across the state:
[http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.a
sp?A=2718&Q=325352](http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.a
sp?A=2718&Q=325352)



Compost at your house of worship

- Start a compost pile!
 - grass clippings and leaves from last fall
 - coffee grounds from coffee hour and any other food leftovers that are fruit/vegetable based
 - (so NOT meat/fish/dairy scraps, although egg shells are OK).
 - Generates rich soil that you can add to the garden in future years.



SEEDS

Vegetable Seeds



Vegetables to grow from seed:
 Beans
 Peas
 Greens
 Carrots
 Squash



The Chas. C. Hart Seed Co.

304 Main Street Wethersfield, CT 06109
 www.hartseed.com
 nicole@hartseed.com

DONATIONS FORM

Phone 860-520-2537
 Toll Free 1-800-326-HART
 Fax 860-563-7221

The Donations Department of The Hart Seed Company was established to distribute quality seed to deserving organizations or individuals for just the cost of shipping & handling. Our main focus is on organizations helping feed underprivileged communities and educating the public on gardening from seed.

PLEASE PRINT

Unsold seed packets from the 2015 season are available in sets of 100. Varieties in each set will be based on availability, but each set is sorted in order provide you with a good mixture of seed.

If you are one of the following:

- Missionary interested in taking seed overseas
- Teacher looking for seed for a classroom project or school garden
- Cooperative extension service, community garden, or prison yard wanting to grow produce for low-income areas or food pantries

All we ask of you is to send us a brief letter to describe your project including:

- Who is receiving the seed or produce grown from it
- What you are planning on doing with the seed
- Where you are taking the seed, or where the seed or produce grown from it will be distributed
- Why this is a worthy cause for us to donate seed to
- How the people receiving the seed will benefit, not just from the immediate donation, but how it will help them improve standard of living in the future

We would also appreciate follow-up emails with pictures of the project (before and after) so that we can not only see how the seed is being used, but to also gather beneficial ideas for other organizations similar to yours.

If you have a request for specific variety or varieties, we will do our best to accommodate your request.

There will be an additional \$5.00 per 100 packets for any custom orders (i.e. specific lists).

Contact Name	Shipping & Handling fees	
Organization	First set of 100 packets \$14.95 East of Mississippi River \$19.95 West of Mississippi River	
Street Address for UPS delivery	First set of 100 packets if picking up @ \$5.00	
City	_____ Additional set(s) of 100 @ \$5.00 each	
State	Zip	Custom orders (lists) please add an additional \$5.00 per 100 packets
Phone		Total
Fax	Please make checks payable to Hart Seed Co. All orders must be prepaid We do not accept Purchase Orders	
Credit Card- we accept MasterCard, Visa and Discover Cards		
Card Number		
Expiration Date MMYY	Billing Address if Different than Ship To	
CVV Code (last 3 digits on back)		

Please address all correspondence to the Donations Department
 Please allow 2-3 weeks for processing donations

www.hartseed.com

NESEED.com 800-825-5477

122 Park Ave, Building H
 East Hartford, CT 06108

SEEDLINGS



Vegetables to grow from plants:

Tomatoes

Peppers

Broccoli

Cauliflower

Brussel Sprouts . . .

If possible, support your LOCAL
Garden center

STOP!

Time for some organization!

- Who are your clients?
- Who are your collaborators?
- Which vegetables do they like?
- Which vegetables can they grow to like?
- Consider also garden *products*
 - Grow pumpkins, bake pumpkin pie to sell
 - Grow herbs, make pesto to sell
 - Grow tomatoes, make tomato sauce
- Use proceeds for the garden!

What do you need help with in the
garden?

EVERYTHING

Specific 'jobs' for helpers

Once/season

- Build the beds
- Acquire the soil
- Test and amend soil
- Acquire the seeds
- Acquire the seedlings
- Plant the seeds
- Plant the seedlings

Multiple times/season

- Mulch the plants
- Water the garden
- Weed the garden
- Harvest the produce
- Bring the produce to your clients

How attract and keep your helpers?

- Talk about it as a 'community garden'
- Plant with blessings
- Give updates during services as plants grow
- ASK for help!
- Bring your harvest as an offering, to be blessed during services



Collaborative community garden model

- Gather interested collaborators
- Small garden committee
 - Visualize what goes into the garden
 - Find the location
 - Teach how to build, add soil, plant, weed, water
 - Teach about bugs and other challenges
 - Teach about harvesting times and how to 'put the garden to sleep' over the winter
 - Teach about how to use the produce! Healthy habits
- Develop community spirit through gardening
- Discuss community garden concerns like water, compost, cleanup
- Discuss community food concerns like food security, knowing where food comes from → workshops for others?

Back to the gardening thread . . .

Let's think about ORGANIC

WHY garden organically?

- *Biblical perspective* (Genesis 1):
- On Day 3 of Creation, God gathered together the waters, and let the dry land appear. And God enabled the earth to put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed . . . And God saw that it was good.



Genesis, continued

- On Day 5 of Creation, came the creatures of the seas, and of the air.
- On Day 6 of Creation, came the creeping things of the earth . . . and us.



- All of Creation is connected in this story, in God's plan

Wisdom from the Qur'an

Islam teaches that human beings have been placed on the earth as khalifa (stewards) of the environment.

In this instance, human beings have been appointed stewards over the earth to take care of it on behalf of its Creator and Owner, God.

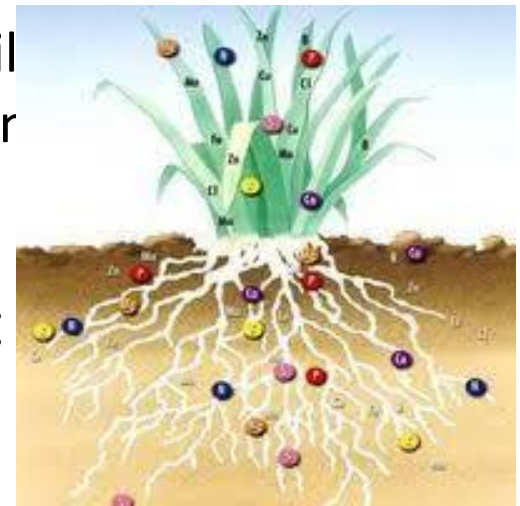
In return, He has “given you the earth for a dwelling place and the heavens as a canopy” (Qur'an 40:64), while enjoining us to “eat and drink the sustenance God has provided and do not cause corruption in the land” (Qur'an 2:60).

Therefore . . .

By gardening organically, you think of your plants as part of a whole system within Creation that starts in the soil and includes the water supply, people, wildlife and even insects.

A bit of biology and chemistry

- Good soil is full of living microorganisms
 - Bacteria are decomposers for plant matter, returning its nutrients to the soil
 - Bacteria bind compounds so they stay in the soil
 - Bacteria collaborate with legumes to fix nitrogen in the air and add it to the soil
- Chemical fertilizers contain mineral salts that plant roots can absorb quickly. Hence, they get big, quickly.
- BUT
 - These fertilizers 'starve' the bacteria, so they disappear
 - Then the soil structure declines, water is no longer retained
 - Then more and more chemical fertilizers are needed to stimulate plant growth b/c they are the only things 'left'!



Plus

- Manufacture of most chemical fertilizers depends on nonrenewables like coal and natural gas → greenhouse gasses → global warming



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- ALSO, the runoff from chemical fertilizers goes into our lakes and rivers, and ends up suffocating and killing the living things there— fish, crustaceans, water plants!

Drawbacks of pesticides

- NONorganic pesticides are indiscriminate: they kill everything in their path.
- Applied to soil → they kill the beneficial bacteria as well as blights and diseases.
- Applied to the plants themselves → they kill the beneficial insects (ladybugs, butterflies) as well as the problematic ones
- AND they harm birds and herbivores (squirrels, voles, moles) that eat the plants and nuts and seeds (remember DDT?)
- AND they harm the mammals/carnivores that eat the birds (foxes, hawks, and also our dogs and cats!).
- AND they could even harm us, the long-term effects of the buildup of these chemicals in our bodies is not good!

So, HOW garden organically?

- Use COMPOST as much as possible
- If needed, purchase *truly* organic fertilizers:
 - Made from natural plant and animal materials
 - Made from mined rock minerals.
 - Look for products labeled “natural organic,” “slow release,” and “low analysis.”
 - Ask a reputable garden center owner to recommend fertilizer brands that meet organic standards.

Be proactive!

If you MULCH your plants



You won't have to
WEED so much!



Download from
Dreamstime.com

Download from
Dreamstime.com

Be proactive!

- Encourage the 'good'/beneficial bugs, like ladybugs and nematodes.
- Flowers surrounding the garden attract ladybugs (marigolds are great),
→ you will have fewer problematic bugs



Be proactive!

If you
FENCE your
garden,
the critters
will find it
HARDER to
get in



IF you do get pests

- Spray them away with jets of water, or with gentler applications of soapy water or pepper/garlic water.
- Pick them off—sooner is better—and place the pests in sealed jars/containers to kill them.
- Use organic controls like BT (cabbage loopers eat leaves with BT, cannot digest, bulks in their digestive tracts, they die).
- Neem
- Diatomaceous earth

WHERE to find organic controls?

- www.organicgardening.com
- www.gardensalive.com

Don't forget . . . Harvesting!



Last words

- WEIGH your harvest
- Estimate its VOLUME (for greens)
- Go and TELL