



Steps to Host a Gardening Class at your School, Recreation Center, or Place of Worship



SFC's Grow Local program offers two types of holistic, introductory gardening classes: Citizen Gardener and Basic Organic Gardening. Below you will find information about these classes and how to host a class at your school, recreation center, or place of worship.

Citizen Gardener

Citizen Gardener is a 3-part gardening class that teaches new gardeners, and gardeners new to Travis County, how to grow food in Central Texas. Classes are taught in English. They are publicized widely and are open to all Travis County residents aged 15 and up. They take place during the spring and fall planting seasons (March-April and September-October) and are held on a Saturday from 9am-1pm, the following Wednesday from 7-8:30pm, and the following Saturday from 9am-1pm. Attendance costs \$45. Host sites receive five scholarships that they can give out as they see fit. During the class, participants build and plant a 4x4-foot raised bed, which is donated to the host site.

Citizen Gardener classes are ideal for schools, recreation centers, and places of worship that would like to start a garden but need encouragement and support. They are also ideal for sites with gardens but whose staff, clients, and members would appreciate free education so that they can better use and develop the garden.

In exchange for hosting a Citizen Gardener class, host sites receive:

- 5 free Citizen Gardener tickets
- A 4x4-foot raised bed, filled with soil and planted with vegetables and herbs

Requirements to host a class:

- An indoor meeting space that can comfortably hold up to 30 students
- Access to water and a toilet
- An outdoor space where participants can build and leave a 4x4 raised bed
- Space to store 2 cubic yards of soil as well as 2 flats of plants between delivery and the first day of class (usually 2-3 days)

To host a class, a site must:

- Ensure it fulfills class requirements listed above

- Establish a point person for SFC to communicate with
- Work with SFC to set class dates 2-3 months before class starts
- Ensure access to the building during each class, including 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after classes
- Gather piles of newspaper and cardboard to place under raised bed

SFC commits to:

- Provide a teacher
- Conduct outreach to fill the class
- Provide class materials, including materials to build and plant raised bed
- Treat the host site respectfully and leave it as it is found

Citizen Gardener Planning Timeline

Task	Date	Notes
Set class dates	2-3 months before class starts	Classes are held on a Saturday from 9am-1pm, the following Wednesday from 7-8:30pm, and the following Saturday from 9am-1pm.
Meet with SFC staff	2 months before class	Finalize: -Meeting room -Space to build and leave raised bed -Building access -Storage space -Compost system (optional)
Give out scholarships	2 months - 2 weeks before class	Let SFC know how the names and contact information of persons using scholarships.
Gather cardboard and newspaper	2 months - 1 day before class	We will use cardboard and newspaper to suppress weeds around the raised bed.
Accept delivery of garden materials	2-3 days before class	SFC will arrange delivery of soil and plants for raised bed.
Ensure access to meeting room and outdoor space	During classes	Facilitator will need access to the building 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after class.

Basic Organic Gardening

Basic Organic Gardening (BOG) classes also teach new gardeners, and gardeners new to Austin and Travis County, how to grow food in Central Texas. However, these classes are free and seek to serve low-income earners who face financial barriers to gardening. They are therefore not advertised widely but are instead publicized amongst schools, recreation centers, and places of worship that serve and work with low-income communities. Host sites assume primary responsibility for publicizing the class and must commit to enrolling at least 15 students. SFC will help with publicity efforts where possible and needed.

BOG classes are offered in English or Spanish and are family friendly for youth ages 8 and up. Each BOG series last 4.5 hours. Class time can be divided into two sessions, one long session, or three shorter sessions. At the end of each series, participants receive free compost, plants, and seeds to take home.

In addition to teaching individuals and families how to garden, BOG classes attempt to start, revive and/or and strengthen gardening projects at schools, recreation centers, and places of worship. In order to accomplish this goal, host sites work with SFC staff to tweak BOG curriculum and activities so that the class benefits and increases participation at host site gardens.

BOG classes are ideal for schools, recreation centers, and places of worship that serve and work with low-income communities and that would like to start or develop a food garden but need educational support, financial assistance, and assistance increasing the involvement of staff, parents, clients, and community members. BOG classes require more work on the part of the host site, but they also offer host sites the opportunity to use the class to develop and improve their specific gardening projects and to cultivate a community of gardeners who will sustain these projects.

In exchange for hosting a BOG class, host sites receive:

- A free, family-friendly gardening class open to staff, parents, clients, and community members
- Assistance with the site's gardening project, including the establishment of new garden beds, trellises, compost systems, etc.

Requirements to host a class:

- An indoor meeting space that can comfortably hold up to 30 students
- Access to water and a toilet

- An outdoor space where participants can establish a garden and/or work in an established garden
- Space to store gardening materials between delivery and the first day of class (usually 2-3 days), including pots, flats of plants, and bags of compost and soil (Amount of materials varies according to the number of class participants)
- A space for childcare for children aged 7 and under

To host a class, a site must:

- Ensure it fulfills class requirements listed above
- Establish a point person for SFC to communicate with
- Work with SFC to set class dates 2-3 months before class starts. Host sites will choose dates and times according to what works best for their staff and community.
- Work with SFC to modify curriculum in order to ensure that class activities benefit the host site's garden
- Conduct outreach. Classes require a minimum of 15 participants.
- Ensure access to the building during each class, including 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after classes
- Collaborate with SFC (when possible and suitable) to gather tools and supplies for gardening activities, such as shovels, trowels, wheelbarrows, cardboard, newspapers, etc.

SFC commits to:

- Provide 1-2 teachers
- Arrange for childcare (when requested)
- Provide translators (when requested)
- Provide class materials, including plants, compost, and seeds
- Assist with publicizing class
- Treat the host site respectfully and leave it as it is found

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BOG Planning Timeline

Task	Date	Notes
Set class dates	2-3 months before class starts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose adult or family friendly class Choose English or Spanish class
Meet with SFC staff to finalize curriculum	2 months before class	Discuss how class can support the host site's garden. For example, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can the class increase participation in the garden? - Does the host site need help establishing a compost system?
Outreach	2 months - 2 weeks before class	Host site staff will publicize class to staff, parents, clients, community members, etc.
Confirm attendance with SFC	2 weeks before class starts	Let SFC know if participants need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Translators Childcare
Accept delivery of gardening supplies	2-3 days before class	SFC will arrange delivery of pots, soil, and plants for class instruction and for students to take home
Ensure access to meeting room and garden	During classes	Facilitator will need access to the building 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after class.

Contacting SFC's Grow Local Program

If you would like to host a Citizen Gardener or Basic Organic Gardening class, or if you have additional questions about hosting, please contact Katie Pace, Grow Local Education Coordinator, at 512-220-1083 or Katie@sustainablefoodcenter.org.