



The Total Wellness Garden Project

Chapter 3

TOTALWELLNESS

Hello Again!

We've reached the end of our inaugural worksite community garden project, and wow! What a project it has been. Through the ups and downs and learning experiences, one thing has remained incredibly clear:

If we can grow a garden at work, you can too!

Hopefully that fact has been made clear throughout this garden toolkit. You don't need a fancy corporate campus. A worksite garden can be made to fit with your worksite and your company culture.

In Chapter 1, we explained how to find and prepare key elements of your garden including engaged employees, leadership and organization.

In Chapter 2, we discussed how we nurtured those elements and maintained our garden project efficiently all summer long.

We want to help you learn as we learn, so this third and final chapter will dive into what we learned and the changes we would've made. We'll also throw in a short cookbook of recipes we really enjoyed making to utilize our garden goodies.

As always, feel free to adjust this information as you need to. We enjoyed our garden, but it's important you make a garden that is best for you and your workforce.

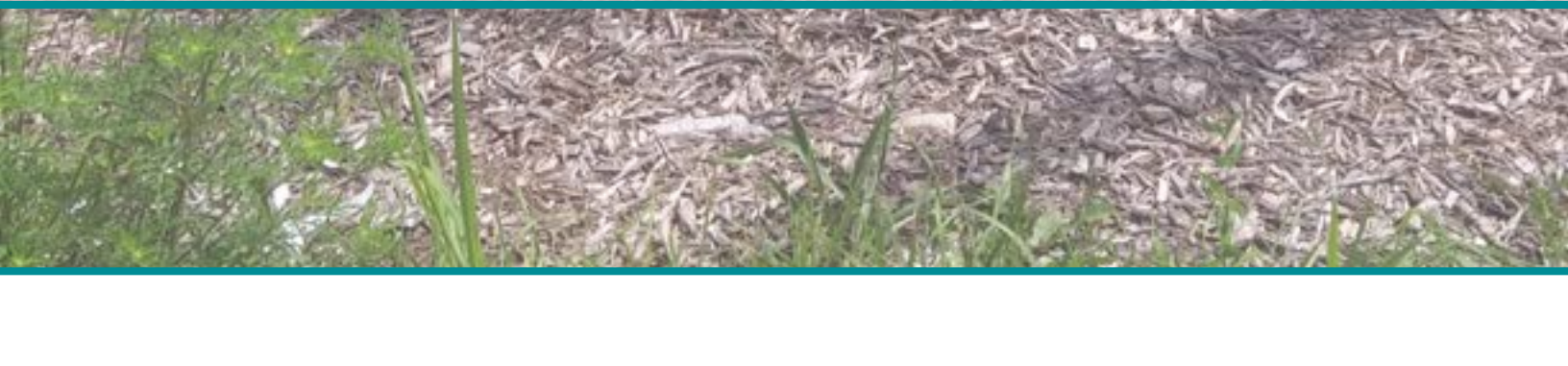


Garden Project Recap

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What We Learned

As with any new project, there were definite lessons to be learned. We took a lot of those lessons in stride, but wanted to share the common themes with you so you have all the knowledge you can before getting started.

Utilize the Rain

As we mentioned in Chapter 1, our wonderful garden guru crafted a super innovative watering system to take care of our garden plants. It was an excellent option to have on hand, but we learned utilizing the rain was much much easier.

We had a very wet summer here in Nebraska, so we rarely had to water the garden manually. That made for a much simpler process, and less time spent on that part of garden maintenance. So, keep an eye on the weather and let the rain do the hard work.



Schedule and Communicate

When we first started the garden project, we did the actual gardening sporadically. People would go weed and check on plants when they had a minute, and we'd received our produce when our garden guru had free time to go out and harvest.

We learned, however, that in order to involve more people and avoid wasting food we needed to set a routine. People would still walk through the garden or weed when they had some free time, but we set a harvest day every week. On Friday morning, anyone who had some availability could go out to help harvest. Everyone could expect their produce sometime during the day on Friday.

We encourage employees to let our garden guru know if they'd be out of the office on any given Friday. That way they could get their produce a different time, so we didn't have leftovers after harvesting for the week.

We communicated this schedule by email. We made a special garden section in our weekly newsletter to keep everyone up to date. If anyone had questions, they could ask the garden guru himself. Once we settled into the routine, it worked great! Take the time to set your own routine and find a communication channel that works for garden news.

Thank the Garden Guru

We're very lucky to work with a man who truly has a passion for gardening. Our garden guru did a lot of the planning and coordinating because he enjoyed it and clearly had the most experience. If you're lucky, you'll find your own garden guru within your company!

Regardless of whether you have a garden guru, a leadership team or even an intern who takes on the grunt work, show your gratitude. A worksite garden project needs some form of leadership, but it really benefits everyone in the company. However your garden hierarchy shakes out, thank the people who put in the hard work to ensure everyone has a share in the garden.



The Public Enjoys Butternut Squash

We only had one issue with intruders in our worksite garden. Someone stole all of our butternut squash! Now we're tucked back in an industrial part of town, so the public isn't coming through our area too often. Take a look at where you plan to plant your garden and really consider who has access to that area.

It's important to give the public the benefit of the doubt, and don't let paranoia sink in. If you're planting in a high-traffic area, and you plan to include popular produce like butternut squash, it might be necessary to implement some type of security or video system.

Woodchucks Do Live in the City

We also had one animal invasion to match our one human altercation. When we were first clearing the space for our garden, we noticed a couple woodchucks in the area. We were pretty surprised considering we were working in an urbanized part of town. We were able to safely trap and relocate our woodchucks to a local lake area.

Before you begin planting, it's important to canvas the area to get a feel for the wildlife that might live there. We don't condone destroying a whole ecosystem for the sake of your garden, but if you notice some pesky critters and have a way to safely relocate them to a better environment, it might be a good idea!



What We Would Change

Overall, there wasn't a lot we'd like to change about our garden project (besides making it bigger, maybe?). With the budget, resources and location we had available to us, our garden project was almost exactly what we had hoped for.

We harvested 968 pounds of garden goodies total. Our most lucrative crops were cucumbers (222 individual cucumbers) and tomatoes (172 pounds of tomatoes). We were so impressed with the turnout!

While we loved every minute of our garden project, we were constrained by a few things that might be helpful for you all to think about as you plan your own garden next year.

First, building a garden thirty feet from a water source is very difficult. We were lucky to have the rain, but utilizing the nearest water source on dry days was a bit tricky.

Second, some crops just didn't do well. There's no way to explain or predict when some crops will struggle. This year our green beans didn't necessarily flourish, but there's not much we can control on that front.

Finally, melons and squash grow best in well-conditioned soil. Next year, if we have the proper resources, we'll try to prepare the soil to help facilitate better growth from those types of plants.

We loved every minute of our garden project, and couldn't be prouder of the hard work and planning our garden guru put in to make it fantastic. As we continue this project year to year, we hope to perfect the process and continue to grow an outstanding, lucrative garden we can all enjoy!



The Final Cookbook

Zucchini Pizza Bites

- Zucchini (number of zucchini depends on the amount of pizza bites you'd like to enjoy)
- Pizza sauce
- Shredded cheese
- Pizza toppings you enjoy (i.e. beef, pepperoni, onion, etc.)

Slice the zucchini into flat, round pieces and spread out on baking sheet. Layer pizza sauce and cheese on top, adding any additional pizza toppings you enjoy.

Broil or bake, but keep an eye on them so the cheese doesn't burn.

Enjoy your mini zucchini pizzas!





Pumpkin Bars

For Bars:

- 1 cup oil
- 1 cup sugar
- 4 eggs
- 2 cups pumpkin
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 cups flour

For Icing:

- 8 ounces cream cheese
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 2 teaspoons milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 6 tablespoons butter

If using fresh pumpkin, half the pumpkin and discard the stem, stringy pulp and seeds. Fill the bottom of a shallow dish with water, and place the pumpkin halves face down in the dish. Cover with tinfoil. Bake at 375 degrees until tender.

For the bars, grease and flour a jelly roll pan. Mix all ingredients together and pour batter in pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 20-25 minutes. Allow to cool before icing.

For the icing, combine all ingredients. Spread on cooled bars.

Zuppa Toscana Soup

- 1 lb ground Italian sausage
- 1 1/2 tsp crushed red peppers
- 1 large diced white onion
- 4 Tbsp bacon pieces
- 2 tsp garlic puree
- 10 cups water
- 5 cubes of chicken bouillon
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 lb sliced Russet potatoes, or about 3 large potatoes
- 1/4 of a bunch of kale

Sauté Italian sausage and crushed red pepper in a large pot. Drain excess fat, refrigerate while you prepare other ingredients. In the same pan, sauté bacon, onions and garlic for approximately 15 minutes or until the onions are soft.

Mix together the chicken bouillon and water, then add it to the onions, bacon and garlic. Cook until boiling. Add potatoes and cook until soft, about half an hour. Add heavy cream and cook until thoroughly heated. Stir in sausage. Add kale just before serving.

This soup freezes well (with the kale in it); however, I usually add in extra potatoes when heating after frozen.

Kale Salad

- Kale
- Olive oil
- Fresh lemon
- Course salt
- Salad pairings of your choice

After a thorough rinse and dry, massage kale with a drizzle of olive oil, fresh lemon, and coarse salt.

Toss with pairings- I chose dried cranberries, crumbled goat cheese, and a few candied pecans. I used this salad as a side, but would add chicken for a complete meal.



Zucchini Chocolate Cake

- 1/2 cup butter or margarine, softened
- 1/2 cup oil
- 1 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1/2 cup buttermilk or "sour milk"
- 4 Tbs baking cocoa
- 2 1/2 cups flour
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 2 cups finely shredded zucchini
- 1/4 cup chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup nuts (optional)

Cream butter & sugar. Add oil, eggs, vanilla and milk: beat well. Stir together dry ingredients. Slowly add to creamed mixture until all blended well. Stir in zucchini. Pour mixture into a greased 9x13" pan. Sprinkle chocolate chips and nuts on top of batter. Bake at 325 for 40-50 minutes.

Zucchini Casserole with Sausage

- 3-4 cups diced zucchini
- 1 lb bulk sausage
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1/2 tsp minced garlic
- 1/2 cup cracker crumbs
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 cup cheddar cheese
- Salt and pepper to taste

Cook sausage, onion and garlic together until sausage is cooked through. Drain fat. Stir together with remaining ingredients and place in a greased 2 quart casserole. Sprinkle with grated parmesan if desired. Bake at 350 25-30 minutes or until zucchini is tender.

Hungarian Tomato Cucumber Salad

- 4 large juicy fresh tomatoes, sliced
- 2 cucumbers, peeled, sliced thick, and halved
- 1 small red onion, chopped
- 3 Hungarian yellow wax peppers or banana peppers, sliced
- 2 teaspoons fresh dill, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper, or to taste

In large bowl, mix together tomato, cucumber, onion and banana peppers.

In a small bowl, whisk together dill, garlic, vinegar, olive oil, salt, and pepper. Pour over vegetable mixture in large bowl, stir to coat vegetables, and chill for 30 minutes to an hour. Taste salad before serving and add more salt and pepper, if desired.





Spaghetti Squash Burrito Bowl

- 2 medium sized spaghetti squash
- 1 tablespoon high heat oil (I use sunflower oil)
- 1 (14.5 ounce) can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (16 ounce) jar of salsa (use your preferred level of spiciness)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil (or preferred cooking oil)
- 1 large bell pepper or two small, cored and sliced
- 1 large red onion, sliced
- 2 cups corn kernels, frozen and defrosted or fresh
- 1 cup fresh cilantro, finely chopped
- 2 jalapeños, cored and sliced (optional)
- 6 green onions, sliced (optional)
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- Salt & pepper
- 1 cup shredded cheddar/monterey jack cheese

Preheat oven to 375°F and line a cookie sheet with foil OR fill a 9 x 13" glass baking dish with about an inch of water. You'll probably need two separate cookie sheets or baking dishes (or one of each!).

Cut each squash in half lengthwise and then use a spoon to scrap out the seeds and stringy pulp. Rub a little bit of high heat oil on the inner edges of the squash and then place each half face down on the baking sheet/dish. Roast in the oven for 30-45 minutes, depending on the size. Test to see if it's done by scraping the inside with a fork. Strands should come loose as you scrape all the way down to the flesh.

While the squash is roasting, warm one tablespoon oil in a large pan over medium heat. Sauté red onion. Add peppers and jalapeño. Sprinkle with salt, pepper and cumin. Cook to desired tenderness.

When the squash is done cooking, allow it to cool and then scrape the inside and begin stuffing. Scrape about 3/4 of the inside into a dish and layer the filling inside (black beans and corn, peppers and onion, salsa and cilantro). Top with the spaghetti squash, and add another layer of filling. Sprinkle green onion and shredded cheese on top.

Broil in the oven for about 5 minutes or until the cheese is bubbly and golden brown.

Happy Gardening!

As we said, we want you to learn as we learn because...

If we can grow a garden at work, you can too!

Take all of our garden tips into consideration as you plan your own garden for next year. You can follow us on social media for more updates and pictures as we go along.

-  [Facebook.com/TotalWellnessHealth](https://www.facebook.com/TotalWellnessHealth)
-  [Twitter.com/TotalWellnessUS](https://twitter.com/TotalWellnessUS)
-  [Pinterest.com/TotalWellnessUS](https://www.pinterest.com/TotalWellnessUS)
-  [Instagram.com/TotalWellnessUS](https://www.instagram.com/TotalWellnessUS)



Thank you!

Don't forget to check us out on social media and share your thoughts with #TWGardenProject. Let us know if you have any questions at all, or if you're doing a similar project at your workplace.

You can keep an eye on our website for more tips, updates and general info about creating a happy, healthy workplace:

TotalWellnessHealth.com

Best of luck!

