



5 Steps to Building Community for Your Community Orchard or Garden

TRANSCRIPT

Welcome

Do you have an orchard space that needs an engagement boost? Let's discuss some best practices and actionable ways you can get people engaged, involved and celebrating your community space.

First, let us introduce ourselves. We are The Giving Grove, a nonprofit based in the heart of the Midwest supporting orchard programs across the United States.

Our program managers are employed with different organizations and are in charge of their local orchard hub.

They are the ones who support stewards and volunteers like you to plan, plant and maintain little orchards.

If you're curious about where we are located, or you're interested in bringing a sustainable program to your city visit **WWW.GIVINGGROVE.ORG**

In this video we will go over five tips to increase community engagement in your space – Let's get started!

Step One: Signage

Not everyone knows a fruit tree when they see one! Especially if it is not fruiting. Having signage in and around your orchard is an easy way to let people know what they are looking at.

If you don't have access to pre-made signs, you can print and laminate your own.

These can be tags identifying specific fruit trees – for example, this tag shows the name of different fruits and when specific varieties are ripe.

Think about the languages in your area and try to offer accessible information.

Remember to use twine or biodegradable string or ties so that you don't run into a problem with the tree growing over, or being girdled (choked) by, a metal or plastic tie.



Do you have signs in your orchard letting people know the purpose of the space? This is a great way to welcome people in and let them know how to use the space.

Tip Two: Establish Workdays

Managing an orchard space is a lot of work – and you shouldn't have to do it alone! Scheduling regular workdays during the growing season is a great way for community members to get involved.

It's good to have two people to manage and organize volunteer days, so bring in someone to help you plan.

Monthly workdays (say every third Saturday from 9-11) are a great start. If workdays have a regular cadence, people know what to expect and can plan to be there.

Advertise your workdays by including it on signage, or by passing out flyers to the surrounding homes around your community. There might even be local nonprofits or community centers who can post about it on their social media.

Keep workdays straightforward with easier tasks like – spreading mulch, fertilizer, or compost – weeding around trees – planting chives at the base of trees for pest prevention – thinning blooms or fruit... These are tasks that most people can easily help with.

When it comes to harder tasks like pruning or applying holistic sprays, make sure you enlist people who know what they are doing.

Tip Three: ABCD!

ABCD stands for Asset Based Community Development. At The Giving Grove we believe in the vitality of neighborhoods – every area is a community and has resources.

To seek out opportunities for connection in your area, go to Google Maps and type in the address of your orchard space.

Now, look at all the businesses, schools, apartments, places of faith, community associations, nonprofits, etc. around your orchard space. These are all possible connections! There may be opportunities to find volunteers, seek funding, donate produce or invite to celebrate.

Getting a map-view of your neighborhood is a great starting point to find possible avenues of collaboration.



Make a goal to reach out to one or two connections from your ABCD research and see where it goes!

Tip Four: Use Data

At The Giving Grove, we love good data! There are some data points that could be really interesting to passersby, volunteers or important research if you're seeking support.

Are you curious about how much carbon your orchard sequesters – or how well it cleans pollution out of the air? Use our guide in the description below to access information from the i-Tree Website and calculate the amazing environmental benefits of your little orchard.

Tree Equity Score – A Tree Equity Score measures how well the benefits of urban tree canopy are reaching those who need it most. The score establishes an equity-first standard to guide investment in communities living on low incomes, communities of color and all those disproportionately affected by extreme heat, pollution and other environmental hazards.

What is the Tree Equity score in your area? Is there some additional advocacy you can do to get more canopy in your neighborhood?

Think about the impact your little orchard is having on our environment – and be proud of the work you are doing in this space that will serve others for years to come!

Tip Five: Celebrations!

Everybody loves a good party! Get creative about the ways you can celebrate your space.

Are the trees in bloom? That's party worthy.... Do you see the first fruitlets coming through? Definitely worth a gathering... Are there fruits or berries ready to harvest? Time to celebrate! Are you putting your orchard to bed for the winter, and wishing it a fruitful next season? Party with coats and gloves on!

When planning a celebration, keep it easy and start simple. We aren't talking music over loudspeakers and food trucks... unless that's in the cards.

A simple gathering to take pictures with the beautiful blooms, to teach people about the different fruitlets on the trees and chat about when they will be ready, a pie baking contest or jam tasting when fruit is harvested, or having warm cider around a winter orchard are great, quick gatherings that can engage and drum up excitement around your space.



In Closing:

We hope these five tips have been helpful as you brainstorm making the most out of your greenspace.

Thank you for taking the time to gather some ideas with us!

You can find links to resources mentioned in this video in the description below – and you can visit our website to find other great resources, like our Field Guide! The field guide is an easy way to help you identify pest and disease issues in your orchard and get holistic tips to prevent or treat.

Thank you for joining us today! And visit WWW.GIVINGGROVE.ORG/ORCHARD-EDUCATION for access to resources and be sure to follow us, and your local program, on social media.

We wish you the best of luck as you engage your community around your orchard space!