

The following excerpts were taken from a document titled, "The Multiple Benefits of Community Gardening," and are being used with permission from Gardening Matters in Minneapolis, MN.

Municipal Costs

Community gardens are economically beneficial to local governance:

- Community gardens provide a place to retreat from the noise and commotion of urban environments; they attract people (including the "creative class" of the new economy and small businesses).
- Community gardens have been shown to actually increase property values in the immediate vicinity where they are located.

"Pocket Parks"

- Community gardens add beauty to the community and heighten people's awareness and appreciation for living things. In a Chicago survey, this was the number one reason given for the importance of community gardens.
- "A 1995 Regional Plan Association poll of individuals nationwide found that the major components of a satisfactory quality of life are safe streets and access to greenery and open spaces.

Exercise

- Gardens can be areas for recreation and exercise. According to the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, the "creation of or enhanced access to places for physical activity combined with informational outreach" produced a 48.4 percent increase in frequency of physical activity in addition to a 5.1 percent median increase in aerobic activity, reduced body fat, weight loss, improved flexibility and an increase in perceived energy.

Improved Diets

- Studies have shown that community gardeners and their children eat healthier, more nutrient rich diets than do non-gardening families.
- Eating locally produced food reduces asthma rates, because children are able to consume manageable amounts of local pollen and develop immunities.

Food Production

- Community gardens allow families and individuals without land of their own the opportunity to produce food. Oftentimes gardeners take advantage of the experiential knowledge of elders to produce a significant amount of food for the household.

Youth Education

- Community gardens can serve as outdoor classrooms where youth can learn valuable skills, like those involving practical math, communication, responsibility and cooperation. They also provide the opportunity to learn about the importance of community, stewardship and environmental responsibility.

Cultural Opportunities

- Community gardens offer unique opportunities to establish relationships with and across physical and social barriers.

Horticultural Therapy

- Exposure to green space reduces stress and increases a sense of wellness and belonging.

Crime Prevention

- Community gardens increase a sense of community ownership and stewardship. They foster the development of a community identity and spirit.
- Community gardening is recognized by many police departments as an effective community crime prevention strategy.