

Building a garden budget¹

Items	1 st Year	2 nd Year	3 rd Year	Suggestions	Sample 1 st Year Costs
Revenue/Income					
Plot fees				Enough to cover cost of water, lease and insurance	\$30/plot with 25 plots = \$750
Fundraising				Set reasonable goals	\$400
Donations				Include donated materials from gardeners and community	\$500 (skids, tools, hoses)
Balance from last year					\$0
				Total Income	\$1650
Expenses/Costs					
Water				Up to \$100/month, more if need to establish connection	\$75/month, about \$500/year
Hoses/Plumbing				Large initial expense if need to make connection to water	\$200 (new & donated by community)
Shed				Find used sheds or donation of floor model from business	\$0, fundraise towards goal of \$600
Tools				Decide whether there will be communal tools and mark them	\$100 (donated tools)
Compost				Go to City or garden centre for donation or create your own	\$100 (approx \$50/yrd)
Compost bins				Use skids or snow fencing to create large compost bins	\$300 (value of free skids)
Mulch				Source free mushroom compost or straw	\$0 (free mushroom compost)
Soil				Go to garden centre for donation	For 4 6x4 raised beds \$120 (approx \$30/yrd)
Lease/land rental				Will vary garden-to-garden	\$1/year
Insurance				Will vary garden-to-garden	\$5/plot
Tilling				Garden tilled in spring	\$80/rental
Raised beds				Use sizes lumber comes in (6x4, 8x4, etc.) or use cinder blocks	4 ground top 4x6 beds, \$80 lumber
Plants				Depends on garden	\$0 (no communal)
Seeds				Depends on garden	\$0 (no communal)
Fencing				Speak with construction companies for donations	\$0 first year, save towards goal of \$500
Sign				Check with City bylaws	\$0
Outreach/PR/Printing				Create posters, garden info sheets, advertise, etc.	\$40 (posters for community BBQ)
				Total Expenses	\$1646
Net income (= Income - Expenses)					\$4

¹ Adapted from University of Missouri. Sample Community Garden Budget. 2009.

<http://extension.missouri.edu/explorepdf/miscpubs/mp0906budget.pdf>

Approximating costs of materials

Doing rough calculations of the materials needed in garden projects will give your group a more accurate budget and will also give you more realistic fundraising goals.

Raised Beds

When designing raised beds use dimensions that use whole pieces of lumber, for example: 2x6, 4x6, 4x8, 6x8, etc. This will lower the labour needed to build the beds. Contact different lumber supply companies to try and get donations or source your own scrap materials.

Example lumber costs:

Spruce 8x4 raised bed on the ground = \$20

Cedar 4x6 table top raised bed = \$265

Calculate the cubic yards of soil you will need.

Consider how deep you want your soil in the beds to be. Generally 8 inches is a good estimate. If you are building a table top raised bed, use the inside depth of the table. Calculate the amount of soil needed (in cubic yards) by using the formula below:

Width of bed (feet) x length of bed (feet) x depth of soil (inches) ÷ 324 = cubic yards of soil required

For example: an 8x4 bed with 8 inches of soil would need $8 \times 4 \times 8 \div 324 = 0.79$ cubic yards of soil.

Approximate cost of 8x4 spruce raised bed on the ground:

Soil: 0.79 yards x \$30/yard = \$23.70

Lumber: \$20

Labour: \$0 (volunteers)

Total: \$43.70 (build many beds at once to take advantage of discounts for ordering large amount of lumber or soil)

Compost or Mulch

Use the same formula used to calculate the required soil for your garden to determine how much mulch or compost you may require. Approximate costs range from \$0/yard (free mushroom compost or leaves) to around \$50/yard.

Path Materials

Use the garden design you created to get the square foot area for all the pathways in your garden. This calculation is done as follows:

Length of path 1 (feet) x width of path 1 (feet) = Area of path 1 (square feet).

Add the areas of all the different paths together to get the total pathway square footage for your garden. If your paths are not square draw them onto graph paper and use the squares to help you approximate the area.