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ACTION SHEET: ORGANIZING A WORKSHOP ON THE SFG METHOD FOR AN OASIS **Gardening Toolkit**

The Oasis Program offers participants the opportunity to learn about the benefits of a plant-based diet while enabling them to experience firsthand the powerful health impacts. It advances PlantPure Communities' (PPC) mission of creating strong, healthy, sustainable communities. PPC has partnered with the Square Foot Gardening (SFG) Foundation in order to enhance sustainability efforts in Oasis Pilot communities.

Framework

The SFG Foundation teaches self-sustainability and self-reliance through gardening via the Square Foot Gardening (SFG) method. The SFG method offers a simple system that can be implemented in just about any home, even those with extremely limited access to green space. Integrating the SFG method into Oasis will provide families with locally grown, fresh, nutritious, organic food and help them become self-sustainable. While the initial 10 days of the Jumpstart serve as the foundation of the Oasis Program, integrating the Square Foot Gardening method into the larger 13-week Oasis Program will powerfully reinforce the connection between health and food, and increase the likelihood of achieving long-term success and lasting changes.

Integrating the SFG Method with an Oasis Jumpstart Pilot

A workshop on the SFG method should be conducted within a week following the initial 10 days of the Jumpstart. Select the best day and time for your group, possibly on the weekend. Schedule a 1-hour Square Foot Gardening workshop and seek to have it facilitated by a local individual, ideally a SFG Certified Instructor (CI), or organization representative familiar with the method. Participants will learn how to build a Square Foot Garden and grow fresh, nutrient dense food with “no work, no weeds, and no worry.”

Seek Materials from Local Resources

Family owned and run garden centers, as well as stores with building and gardening departments like Home Depot, Lowes and Costco, are sometimes able to donate materials for a project like this. Consider asking building contractors, pediatricians, hospitals, and community groups like Kiwanis or Knights of Columbus, who support health & wellness programs for youth, veterans, elderly and inner city initiatives for their support. This help should be sought at least 2 months in advance of the workshop so logistics can be determined. Another option is to raise funds to purchase SFG materials from the Square Foot Gardening Foundation's [approved vendor](#). Creative construction of a SFG box is also encouraged by reusing, recycling, and repurposing available free materials such as suitable discarded lumber, an old book case or bed frame, even stone, brick or rocks. Remember though, your gardening box must have a grid to be a Square Foot Garden. Grants are another option to procure funding of materials and can be found at the local, national, and global levels.



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Conducting the Workshop

In order to give participants a good overview of the SFG Method, participants should be shown [this 1 minute video](#). The organization should include the building of a 4-foot by 4-foot garden as a model. Once participants have the necessary knowledge and materials, they may build their gardens at their homes, by utilizing their knowledge gained through the Pilot, and also through the use of PPC's *Info Sheet: The Square Foot Gardening Method* (created in conjunction with the SFGF).

Estimated Cost of the Materials for the Workshop

The cost of the materials for a DIY 4'x4' by 6" deep SFG box frame can run less than \$20. Depending on your budget, fundraising efforts, choice of materials, access to materials, etc. the cost of a 4x4 gardening box may run significantly higher. The building instructions in the SFG book will guide you through the recommended method of construction and insure that all aspects of the SFG method are met (e.g. frame, weed cloth, grid, etc.). Refer to the [3rd Edition SFG Book](#).

If you use the Mel's Mix recipe (described in the book), the cost of the soil will be your highest expense at approximately \$150. However, this investment is a one-time commitment and you will find that veggies, fruits, herbs and flowers will thrive in this soil mix. Eight (8) cu. feet total will be needed to fill the bed, 2 cu. feet by volume of each of the key 3 ingredients. You will need to source your ingredients, or contact a local SFG CI for guidance & support. Peat moss or coco coir, and a variety of composts can be found easily. It is best to source at least 5 types of compost. Coarse vermiculite sometimes can only be found in small bags or not at all in the big box stores or smaller garden centers, but can be purchased and delivered to your door through [ULINE](#).

The total cost for a DIY 4'x4'x6" deep SFG box complete with Mel's Mix (8 cu. feet) usually can be just under \$200. This cost may be reduced or eliminated if the organization is able to acquire donated resources from a community partner, supporter, business, or grant. There may be an additional cost for education should you choose to include a trained SFG CI as an onsite educational presenter.

Plan and Plant, Harvest and Plant Again, and Again

Understand cold and warm weather crops. Select what you will plant according to the weather and season in your area at the time of your workshop. Then plant according to the seed spacing and how the plant grows 1 - 4 - 9 - 16 seeds or plant starts (small plants in plastic cell packs commonly found at home and garden centers) and in each square according to your 4x4 SFG placement. Everything you can grow in a conventional row garden can be planted in a SFG. SFG teaches crop rotation and sustainability by harvesting one square at a time, replenishing the square with compost and planting again and again. Interactive [online planning and planting resources](#) are available for free such as this one from the SFGF friends at Gardeners Supply. Seek and share donations of organic, non-GMO, heirloom seeds and starts from your local seed companies, seed libraries, farmers, and farmer markets.

PPC would like to thank the Square Foot Gardening Foundation for their collaboration on developing the content of this document.

We welcome you to send suggestions and ideas to info@plantpurecommunities.org This material may not be used out of context. Please refer to PPC's terms and conditions for more information. Updated January 2020.