

Gardening @Work

What is Gardening @Work?

Gardening @Work is a community-building activity that promotes mindfulness. Gather employees to host a fun and relaxing community Gardening Day. Once planted, keep plants outdoors or indoors as a reminder for self-care.

Background:

Stress at work can be overwhelming. Gardening is considered a mindful activity that can be done to help initiate the relaxation response and increase mental focus when things get hectic. One study found that introducing plants to the workplace resulted in a 37% fall in tension and anxiety, a 58% drop in depression, a 44% decrease in anger and hostility; and a 38% reduction in fatigue. Employees who had plants in their workspace were 15% more creative and had 15% higher wellbeing score.¹

How to Start Gardening @Work?

Start Gardening @Work by planning a kickoff event! Employees help make this event a success by donating seeds, pots, and other gardening supplies. Supplies can also be ordered from SFHSS. Throughout the event, the focus would be on self-care and how to use plants as self-care reminders! Then, they have the option to either keep plants in a shared area or take them back to their desk/cubicles.

¹ <https://www.ciphr.com/advice/plants-in-the-office/>

Instructions

Consider Logistics

- **Identify a Space for plants to live.**
 - **Option 1:** An outdoor space that gets enough sun is best. However, a shared indoor space in front of a relatively big window is also a good option.
 - **Option 2:** if your workplace has no accessible windows or if sunlight is limited, then consider asking employees to bring plants back to their desk or office space. There are resilient plants that tolerate low sunlight levels!
- **Plan a Kickoff Event.**
 - **Time & date.** choose a time and date that works for most employees. Allow enough time for people to have a relaxing time and not feel rushed.
 - **Location.** Make sure that there are enough tables for people to work on.
- **Consider gardening supplies.** What already exists at the workplace? What can you bring? And what can employees bring? Here is a list of suggested supplies needed to make this a successful event!
 - Table covers
 - Gloves
 - Shovels
 - Labels (tape or popsicle sticks)
 - Potting mix/soil
 - Pots/containers
 - Watering cans
 - Seeds/plants
 - Plastic covers/wrap (to cover seeds after putting in the soil)

Advertise and promote

- **Distribute flyers.** Use this [flyer template](#) to inform employees of the event.
- **Send invitation email.** Employees are an integral part in creating this event, so start early and email employees using [this template](#). Ask if they can donate seeds, small potted plants, or cuttings from existing plants they own. You can also order seeds and pots from SFHSS by emailing well-being@sfgov.org.

Kickoff Gardening Day!

- **Prepare the space for the event.** Get tables and chairs, bring all supplies needed and use table covers to help with easy cleanup. During the event:
 - **Provide planting instructions.** Use [Planting from Seeds](#) handout, which should cover the whole planting process.
 - **Focus on self-care.** Encourage employees to remind each other to take care of their plants. Keeping each other accountable will ensure that employees not only take care of their plants, but also themselves! Use these resources to further promote this message:
 - [Plants as Self Care Reminders](#)
 - [Self-Care Tips](#)

Tips to encourage participations

- **Make gardening simple.** Here are ways to help make gardening less intimidating:
 - **Use the expert's help.** Find gardening experts at your workplace and have them help during the event! You can even ask them to lead a quick presentation on how to start planting and maintaining a healthy plant.
 - **Visit a local nursery or botanical gardens.** Spark people's interest by providing resources to local gardens or nurseries. Arrange a team outing to help inspire them to find plants they like and to enjoy the great outdoors.