

Self-Assessment

We often neglect to ask our participants to critically reflect on themselves and what they are learning and enjoying (or not) as participants in our programs. You might want to ask participants to **assess their own experience**.

Many educators already include journals, often as nature or garden journaling. Explicitly asking them questions to reflect upon in their journals can provide more useful information about what your participants are getting out of the program.

Ask them questions that focus on:

Program impacts:

- What have you come to understand about gardening and how did you come to know it?
- What has had the biggest impact on your learning?
- How have your thinking, opinions, and beliefs about the garden changed through this program?

Personal statements that indicate what might be influencing those changes:

- "I never realized that there is so much to do in the garden...."
- "There's a lot more to organic gardening than I knew..."

Problems and challenges (related to program *content* or to the *process* of learning):

- What difficulties did you encounter and how did you resolve any problems?
- Were there any challenges you haven't been able to resolve?

The learning experience:

- What contributed to your successful learning? Unsuccessful learning?

- Why do you consider it to be successful or not so?

Personal opinion and experiences, or statements of belief:

- “The hands-on experience helped my learning a lot because...”
- “I enjoyed learning this topic in particular because...”
- “I didn’t like that activity so much because....”