

Hosting a Garden Design Charrette

Including the community is the best way to ensure a successful and long-lasting garden project. Hosting a garden design charrette is a fun way to learn what other's hope to get from the garden project and what their visions may be.

You may choose to have one longer session for the charrette or multiple shorter sessions. It may depend on the scale of your garden project and the community you are within.

What is a design charrette?

A planning session where citizens, designers and others collaborate to form a plan or design. It provides a gathering of ideas and offers immediate feedback to the designers. Most importantly, it allows everyone who participates to be a mutual author of the plan.

Before the Event

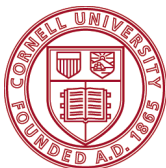
- Host the garden design charrette in an accessible community space where all will feel welcome. Schedule a date and time that will be most appropriate for community members.
- Advertise far in advance, giving plenty of time for individual's to get it on their calendar and set up transportation. Advertise in a variety of methods to ensure a wide variety of people learn of the event.
- Plan to provide light, healthy refreshments for the group.

Setting Up the Event

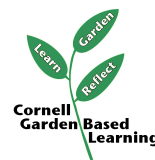
- Set the room up with groupings of tables, conducive to group collaboration. Provide large pieces of paper, markers, and rulers at each table.
- Have a sign-in sheet near the door and encourage participants to provide their names and contact information if they are interested in being involved with the garden project.
- Provide nametags for participants.

During the Event

- Have a key member of the advisory group introduce themselves and provide background information on the garden project.
- Go around the room and have each member introduce themselves and share their favorite vegetable.
 - If the group is quite large, start by having the members of each table grouping introduce themselves to each other.
- Provide the purpose and desired outcomes of the design charrette
 - Purpose is to bring community members together for a planning session of the future garden project. One hope is to allow everyone there to be a mutual author of the plan.



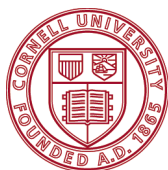
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- By the end of the session, several designs will be made and presented. The core advisory group will collect them, compare them and put them into action.
- If the garden site had been established, describe it in detail and include a map or basic drawing of the plot of land.
- Provide some guidelines for the small group design sessions.
For example:
 - Garden name
 - Garden theme
 - What types of plants will be grown in the garden
 - What structures will be in the garden
 - What will the garden look like? Draw out a plan.
 - Fundraiser ideas
 - Summer care ideas
- Ask that adults in each group include ample input from the youth in each group.
- Give the groups about 30 minutes to brainstorm together and draw out their garden vision. Then ask each small group to present their ideas to the full group. Encourage youth participants to present!
- As a facilitator, compare similar themes and draw parallels between design ideas.
- Work as a team to combine ideas and create the future garden design.

Closing the Event

- Thank all participants and reinforce the amazing work the group did together. Maybe even encourage a round of applause for themselves.
- Stress that participants should continue to be involved throughout the garden project. Provide them a way to get in touch with the advisory group and a place to learn of upcoming events.
- Make sure to collect all drawings and notes to use for future reference!



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