

Benicia Community Gardens  
Benicia Sustainable Backyard Program

***Memorandum of Understanding for the Demonstration “Seed Plot” Food Forest***

Proposed timing for the second part of the Program: one food forest installation / lawn conversion to be completed in the fall of 2015; the remaining three or four demonstrations food forests will be installed in February – May 2016. The final number of the food forests will be announced at a later date; it depends on the final timing and scale of a proposed elementary school food forest installation in Benicia.

**I. Selection Process**

- Application for the demonstration “Seed Plot” Food Forest is available to every homeowner in Benicia from August 20 through November December 15, 2015.
- Applications received before September 10, 2015 are eligible for an early food forest installation / lawn conversion in September – October 2015.
- During the application process, the Benicia Sustainable Backyard Team will visit each site to determine its suitability for a demonstration food forest and a laundry-to-landscape greywater system. Benicia Community Gardens Board and the Permaculture Advisory Board will make a final selection. The selection criteria are specified in the “Seed Plot” Definition”.
- The remaining finalists will be announced in January 2016.

**II. Before the Installation**

- If your site is selected, you will sign the Agreement with Benicia Community Gardens specifying roles and responsibilities of both parties. Proof of homeownership and proof of home insurance will be necessary to complete the process. The Agreement includes a pictures and video release form.
- You will sign a separate agreement with our partner, Greywater Action, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting greywater in California. Greywater Action instructors will facilitate the installation of a laundry-to-landscape greywater system at your house during a public workshop. The Program will pay the cost of the workshop and a laundry-to-landscape greywater conversion kit and other material. Make sure to obtain laundry detergents suitable for a laundry-to-landscape greywater system *prior* to the “Seed Plot” installation date.
- Together with you, Benicia Sustainable Backyard project team will design a permaculture food forest for your property based on the “Seed Plot Definition” plants list.
- While we will do our best to accommodate personal tastes and preferences, the plant selection is limited by the list in the “Seed Plot Definition”. However, the “Seed Plot” is a flexible, ever changing and growing design; you will be able to incorporate other trees and plants after the initial planting.
- You will approve the final design and the work plan presented by the Benicia Sustainable Backyard team prior to the installation of the “Seed Plot” Food Forest.
- It will be your sole responsibility to insure that the proposed design is in compliance with any and all city ordinances, codes and regulations, HOA rules and regulations, home insurance and any other potential limitations on landscaping of your property.

- The Benicia Sustainable Backyard team will locate and deliver all the plants and material necessary for the “Seed Plot” Food Forest installation, as defined in the final design, at no cost to you.
- The “Seed Plot” Food Forest includes basic drip irrigation system at no cost to the homeowner. However, if major addition(s) to the current irrigation system are required to complete the installation, you, the homeowner, will be responsible for the cost of additional components and labor. The irrigation system design will be included into the final “Seed Plot” design for you site; all the additional components/missing parts will be specified and approved by you **prior to the work’s commencement**.
- The designated site will be available for plants and material delivery and Benicia Sustainable Backyard team members’ visits **2 weeks** before and shall remain available until the scheduled project commencement date.
- You will physically clear the designated Seed Plot area of any and all structures, roots, rocks, vegetation that will not be included in the design, as well as any other impediments of our impassioned enthusiasm to create a long lasting sustainable food forest **3 weeks prior to the project commencement date**.
- You will call 811 to avail yourself of the free service to locate underground utilities **3 days prior to the project commencement date**.

### **III. During the Installation**

- **We expect your active participation at each stage of the installation process.**
- Installation of your “Seed Plot” Food Forest will be scheduled for one full weekend. You will receive a few potential dates of installation for you to choose from. Please be advised that in the case of heavy rain or other adverse weather conditions, the installation will have to be rescheduled.
- The main objective of the Program is to educate the community through active participation in the planting and maintenance of the “Seed Plot” Food Forests in Benicia. We will provide the expertise and on-site guidance during the installation. There will be an open call for volunteers from the community to help with installations of each “Seed Plot” Food Forests. We encourage you to invite your friends and family to join a team of volunteers.
- We plan to complete the major part of the installation during one weekend. However, we might have to come back to the site a few times after the initial installation weekend to complete the work. All return visits will be scheduled for mutually agreed upon dates and time.
- We encourage you to make all necessary accommodations for volunteers who will be working with you on your food forests and laundry-to-landscape greywater systems (water, warm drinks, snacks, bathroom and a hearty lunch).

### **IV. After the Installation**

- Another way to achieve the main objective of the Program – to educate the community - is to allow community members to visit the sites for a number of years and witness its further growth and transformation. We are asking you to make your Seed Plot Food Forest open to the public for five years after the installation date on mutually agreed upon dates for the Benicia Sustainable Landscapes Tours (the exact name of the tour is to be determined). We believe that this will be once or twice per calendar year.

- You will be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of your “Seed Plot” Food Forest after the installation. We will visit your “Seed Plot” a few times during the year to provide the guidance, advise on further development and maintenance, and document the progress.
- One of the Program’s objectives is to launch a few small local businesses in edible landscaping maintenance (completely independent from this Program or Benicia Community Gardens). In order to accomplish this goal, Benicia Community Gardens, together with Solano County Small Business Administration, introduced Land Caretakers Training program to prepare local residents with horticulture background to run successful small businesses in sustainable edible landscaping. The first class of the Land Caretakers Training Program graduates in October 2015. We might refer you to these paid professionals for partial or full maintenance services, if you so desire.

Homeowners:

*(please print your name)* \_\_\_\_\_

*(signature)* \_\_\_\_\_

*Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

*(please print your name)* \_\_\_\_\_

*(signature)* \_\_\_\_\_

*Date:* \_\_\_\_\_