



Garden Start-Up Program

Program Description

Since ancient times, gardens have provided humans with a source of food, art, expression, and enjoyment. In recent years, the home garden has been losing its important place in our everyday life. In hopes of reviving interest in gardens, Simple Living Institute, Inc. ("Simple Living") is pleased to offer a Garden Start-Up as one of our **core programs** focused on education and sustainability.

The program is quite simple. A "host" (school, church, community center, park, or other public entity) simply sets aside a plot of land and grants permission for use to its school children, church members, community members, etc. Simple Living can then lead your group through the garden start-up steps, which begin with choosing a theme for the garden. Themes can include Fruits & Vegetables, Ornamental, Cacti, Florida Native Plants, anything the group would like!

Timeline

The Garden Start-Up is accomplished with the Host group and Simple Living working together in **two educational sessions**, each one week apart:

- Week One: Site Preparation (measuring/mapping the site, weeding, and turning the soil)
- Week Two: Planting (plant installation, watering, and maintenance instruction)

Once the garden is in, the Host group maintains the Garden. Simple Living is available for support in the form of answering questions and recommending solutions to problems. Simple Living also performs **follow-up work visits**, the first being one month after the planting, and periodically thereafter.

Cost

Garden Start-Ups are performed for **free** by Simple Living as a public enrichment program. However, depending on the theme of the garden, some cost for plants may be incurred by either the Host group or Simple Living, or both. This is best determined on a case by case basis. When adults make up the host group, it is generally easiest for each adult member to purchase one plant for the garden. When kids make up the host group, it is best to get a budget from the host, or allow Simple Living to gather seeds and plants for the garden.

Past Sites

August 2004: **Bithlo Community Center** – Kids' Gardening Program, Bithlo, FL

November 2004: **Threshold Development Center**, Orlando, FL

October 2005: **Frangus Elementary School** with after-school creative arts program The Karma Project, Orlando, FL

Contact Information

If you are interesting in coordinating a Garden Start-Up for your site, please contact Tanya Hall, Program Coordinator, via email at tanya@simplelivinginstitute.org.

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