



Event and Activity Guide for Open Garden Day NYC

NYC Parks GreenThumb wants to share some ideas for events and activities that community garden groups can organize to celebrate the 5th Annual Open Garden Day NYC on Saturday, June 4th and Sunday, June 5th, 2022. We welcome your new ideas for in-person activities in the gardens as part of this annual tradition. Don't forget to register for Open Garden Day NYC at bit.ly/OGDNYC2022.

Event Planning Tips:

- Review the most up-to-date policies and service changes due to COVID-19 on the [GreenThumb website](#).¹
- Consider activities that passively engage visitors throughout the garden. Examples include self-guided tours of the garden and treasure hunts for children
- Host short activities to keep people circulating through the garden. These activities can include educational workshops, compost demos, garden tours, plant and garden trivia, and seed giveaways.
- Design activities that can be done in increments of 15 minutes such as chalk art, storytelling, and book exchange.
- Encourage all visitors to visit any other nearby gardens participating in Open Garden Day NYC.
- Create an outreach plan to promote the event. Flyers, postcards, posters, and social media posts can go a long way in inviting neighbors to join your event.

Find additional resources in the [GreenThumb Group Development Toolkit](#)² Event Planning section and the [GreenThumb Gardener's Handbook](#) Events section (page 54).³

¹ Visit the GreenThumb website at nyc.gov/parks/greenthumb

² Check out the GreenThumb Group Development Toolkit at greenthumb.nycgovparks.org/news.html?news_id=497

³ Download the GreenThumb Gardener's Handbook at greenthumb.nycgovparks.org/pdf/GreenThumb_Gardeners_Handbook_2021.pdf

Arts & Culture

Participatory Art Project

Provide materials for a short craft activity such as sidewalk art or a collective art mural. Craft activities can be paper flowers, plants, or pollinators and participants can write an answer to a fun question on it such as “what’s your wish for this summer?”



Painting outside 9th Street Community Garden & Park in the East Village on Open Garden Day NYC in 2021. Photo by Elena Dubas-Ruiz, GreenThumb



Watercolor painting at Clifton Place Memorial Garden and Park. Photo by Ariana Arancibia

Botanical Drawing Sessions

Gardens are great spaces to observe the beauty of nature. Your garden group can provide art supplies that participants can keep and/or invite neighbors to bring their own supplies to draw portraits of the garden. Participants can display their art around the garden or take them home with them.

Chalk Art

If your garden has enough sidewalk space to allow participants to create art along the sidewalk. Make sure there is at least 3 feet of walk space for pedestrians to walk by. If the chalk art project is inside the garden, then you should dedicate space for participants to create art.



Sidewalk chalk fun outside Pleasant Village Community Garden in East Harlem. Photo by Elena Dubas-Ruiz, GreenThumb

Making Sun Prints

A photographic print made by a process involving direct exposure of the plate to sunlight. Place a leaf, flower, or something else from the garden on the sun print paper and leave it in the sun for a few minutes. Then rinse the paper in water and watch as a beautiful image appears! The background will turn deep blue, and the leaf or flower will stay white.



Sun prints out to dry at Java Street Garden on Open Garden Day in 2019. Photo by K.C. Alvey, GreenThumb



Music and Performances in the Garden

Gardeners generally are an eclectic group so check if there are any musicians or performers in your membership that would like to play acoustic music or organize a performance. Depending on the expected attendance, consider planning music sets and performances in increments of 15 minutes (if you have a people waiting this will allow for more people to enjoy the performance).

Batala performing at Brooklyn Bears Carlton Avenue Community Garden for Open Garden Day NYC in 2020. Photo by Genea Foster

Storytelling and Book Exchanges



There are great books about food, gardens, and nature to bring families through the garden gates. Our public libraries are a great resource for these books if no members have any in their collection. Also, depending on your garden network, you may have some authors or poets that would like to read their work to visitors with some planning, the garden group could also host a neighborhood book exchange or set up a [little free library](http://littlefreelibrary.org) (littlefreelibrary.org) so visitors can go home with a new story. Be sure to promote the book exchange before the event so neighbors know to bring books with them.

A community garden is a great place to have a discussion on a book. Photo by GreenThumb

Art Gallery Walk

With some planning, your garden group can reach out to artists and art groups in the neighborhood and invite them to display their art around the garden space over the weekend. This will allow the public to take a tour of the garden while viewing some great art pieces.



Artist Yvonne Shortt (R) speaking to community gardeners about her community sculpture as part of her Afro-Pick Series focusing on memories of flowers and the stories of youth from Southeast Queens at Garden of Resilience. Photo courtesy of Clarisa James

Workshops

Educational workshops

Workshops are a fun way to bring people into the garden. Garden groups can repeat a short gardening workshop throughout the day, like growing microgreens on your windowsill or set up DIY stations in the garden to keep participants circulating through the space. Visit the NYC Parks GreenThumb YouTube channel at [youtube.com/GreenThumbNYC](https://www.youtube.com/GreenThumbNYC) to watch the “Grow Your Own Microgreens at Home” tutorial.



Outreach Coordinator, Eric Thomann how to grow your own microgreens at home. Photo by Bill Pape, GreenThumb



Compost Demonstration

There's a growing interest in compost! The group can give visitors a chance to explore composting through different stations in the garden. For example, there can be a station where participants guess what can and cannot go into a compost pile, a station that gives different examples of composting systems, and a station with small bins that show different stages of composting with samples from your group's 3-bin station.

Compost workshop at Prospect Heights Community Farm in Brooklyn during Open Garden Day NYC in 2021. Photo by Mara Gittleman, GreenThumb



Plant and Garden Trivia

Gardeners are a wealth of plant knowledge. You can create plant and nature trivia stations around the garden for visitors to learn more about nature and offer small prizes. Topics can include edible plants, flowers, trees, and pollinators. If you're looking for inspiration, you can go through past GreenThumb workshops or visit our [YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/c/GreenThumbNYC) at [youtube.com/c/GreenThumbNYC](https://www.youtube.com/c/GreenThumbNYC) for ideas.

GreenThumb Youth Leadership Council participants and gardeners at LaGuardia Corner Community Garden in 2018. Photo by GreenThumb

Garden Tour

Your garden group can host walking or biking tours to visit other gardens in the neighborhood or create self-guided tours for visitors to bring special parts of the garden to their attention. Members can create small, bright signs in different languages with their name and their favorite part of the garden or a short garden story they'd like to share with visitors.



Garden tour at Brooklyn Bears Pacific Street Garden during the 1st Annual Open Garden Day NYC in 2018. Photo by K.C. Alvey, GreenThumb



Planting seeds using recycled materials at Taqwa Community in the Bronx during the 1st Annual Open Garden Day NYC in 2018. Photo by T. Bush, GreenThumb

Seeds, Plant Starts and Herb Giveaways

Giveaways are a small way to draw in new visitors and introduce the garden to its neighbors. Herbs tend to grow plentifully and peak the senses. If your garden has a robust rosemary bush, a patch of mint, or some lush lavender, it could be a fun option to offer small herb bundles to give visitors a token of appreciation. Similarly, gardeners tend to have plenty of seeds to spare so with some planning the group can start some seeds ahead of Open Garden Day NYC and give them out to visitors so they can take a piece of the garden home with them.