

GARDENS ON WHEELS

A home grown way to improve the quality of life of Seniors

SCOPE OF PROJECT

Cultivate, plant, and deliver potted tomato plants and other vegetable plants to Seniors. The first year might just be tomato plants, in order to develop the program in the community. For subsequent years, after the program has been evaluated and tweaked, other varieties of garden plants should be considered.

The rule of thumb should be **SHOP LOCALLY** & drive local economics. (Consider the economic benefit of creating a high demand that results in a shortage of an item {e.g., wire garden cages.})

MATERIALS

- Tomato plants (Suggest prolific plants with smaller tomatoes, suitable for growing within a small container. The variety I gave my parents was Juliet: football shaped, 1" dia. X 1.5-2" long.)
- Cheap, black, plastic 2-3 gallon nursery pots.
- Soil w/tomato food.
- Wire garden cages to contain tomato plant in pot. (Most expensive item. I bought them for about \$1.25 @ Wal-mart.)

Estimated cost = \$2-\$3 per container plant.

GENERAL PROCEDURE

- Define the project service area (e.g., county or community) and organizational structure.
- Establish Gardens on Wheels Steering Committee for each service area.
 - Calling committee – Picks up the telephone, calls people, recruits sponsors & resources.
- Schedule public recruiting meetings and events
 - Throw it wide open. Interested parties & sponsors will come. Make announcements @ city & county council meetings.
- Conduct local recruiting meetings and events for sponsorship
 - In this depressed economy, the tax money pie has shrunk.
 - Assume that no tax money available for this new program.
 - Make this is program to be done cheap w/government doing very little.
 - Assume that the community will sponsor the program, or it will not get done.
- Utilize local resources – **SHOP LOCALLY** & drive local economics
 - Businesses (e.g, seed companies/plant nurseries/growers)
 - Farmer's Markets (e.g, give growers credit toward the cost of market booth rentals for cultivating plants)
 - Local organizations (e.g., garden clubs, Meal on Wheels)
 - Churches (e.g., w/garden clubs)
 - Schools (e.g., FFA)
- Senior Potting Day (e.g, Mother's Day Weekend)
 - Volunteers gather together, and plant & deliver potted tomato plants
 - Community blitz – plant delivery day
- Recycle pots, soil, wire cages
 - Volunteers pick up containers after first freeze has killed plants.
 - Recycle materials next year to reduced cost to \$1/potted plant.
- Senior Soup Day – (Analogous to Stone Soup)
 - Local fundraising/dining event with Senior grown produce.
 - Funding mechanism for next year's event
 - Gardens on Wheels becomes a self-funding program.