

## Growing Next Generation Leaders

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### How is your garden leadership structured?

Is there one person doing the bulk of the tasks or are there multiple people involved?

- Advantages of one person fully engaged as main leader or coordinator
  - One person is aware of details that need to be kept track of through the season and from year to year
  - This is particularly important from pre-spring registration to Opening Day
  - One person learns the idiosyncrasies of the garden population
  - Sometimes easier to do it yourself than to get others to help on short notice
- Advantages of multiple leaders
  - Many hands make light work
  - Less risk if main leader leaves the garden
  - Builds community among gardeners
  - Leading by committee is more acceptable to gardener population. It's not just you telling them something; it's the garden leadership committee.

**If one leader has been doing the bulk of the work, consider breaking work into functional areas or by parts of the season**

- Pre-spring registration to registration event
- Plot Assignment
- Plot Marking/Layout
- Open Day
- Plot Monitoring
- Work days

### How to Recruit New Leaders

- Document everything you do throughout the season in as much detail as possible to share with potential new leaders
- Alert everybody of your intention to step down well ahead of time
- Start recruiting possible new leaders early; the longer you mentor new leaders the better. Think one or two seasons.
- Tap individuals who seem to be interested in the garden or are typically at work days or regular meetings
- Don't expect them to come forward via email requests to your entire gardener population
- You need to call them and have a conversation
- Recruit more than just one person, so several are involved in the transition period. Either one will emerge as leader or a group leadership approach may be the answer.

### What to look for when considering new leaders

- Good people skills and a willingness to interact with all members of the gardener population
- Organizational skills
- Someone who has the time

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- Thick skin
- Good computer skills, particularly with the software tools used by your garden, but be willing to train or convert to other tools
- Willingness to be contacted by gardeners via email, texting and phone calls in most cases
- Ability to respond in a timely manner to gardener requests

### Transition Period

- Start the transition at the beginning of the season
- Mentor new leaders the first year by having them involved as much as possible with everything you have been doing; stay available the next year for questions but set limits
- Be flexible by being willing to meet with potential new leaders on a regular basis
- Be flexible in not thinking the way you did it was the best way, particularly if more than one person is taking over from a single leader
- During transition period, bcc: or cc: new leaders on all your communications, so they get a sense of the types of issues you deal with on a regular basis
- If you utilize a shared email for your garden, make sure others have access to it if appropriate. They can start to see what types of queries you get.

### Garden Records/Documentation

- If all your documentation for the gardens is on one person's home computer, it is highly recommended that it be moved to cloud storage or at least backed up to the cloud
- Having files in the cloud makes it easier to share with new garden leaders, for viewing initially and for updating/editing in the future. Examples, Google Drive, Box.
  - These would include things like:
    - Gardener information stored in electronic format (e.g., spreadsheet, database)
    - A task list of everything you do throughout the season
    - List of critical contacts for things such as hay orders, plowing, water turn on/turn off, other leaders you interact with (e.g., work day leader).
    - Plot application
    - Plot map
    - Regular communication templates (e.g., post cards, email templates)
    - Volunteer hour tracking spreadsheet
    - Waiting list
    - Garden meeting minutes or notes
- Make sure to share login credentials for maintaining your website or online registration system
- Leave as much documentation as possible
- Have a backup plan for all your garden records if stored on one computer
- If you deal in paper only for some items, make sure it is kept safe or copies made and stored in another location

## **Growing Next Generation Leaders**

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### **Financials**

- Consider having a separate treasurer to handle the financials and make sure there are checks and balances in place as required by your organization
- Make sure person handling financials has access to checking account and PayPal account if needed
- Consider having a debit card available for garden expenses (e.g., purchasing office supplies, snacks for meetings, items for work days, etc.)
- If you accept cash, make sure you give receipts and save a copy

### **Advice for outgoing and incoming leadership**

- Outgoing - If you continue to garden, you need to wean gardeners away from you and to the new leaders. Be polite and know it may take a while.
- Incoming - Be prepared to be approached at any time you're at the garden. Have a notebook in your garden bag. Consider parking car in a hidden location when at the gardens.

### **Rewards of becoming a Garden Leader**

- Easy to get your volunteer hours done
- Get to interact with a wide variety of people and improve your 'people' skills
- Skills acquired are transferrable to other volunteer or work positions
- First dibs on stuff left in plots
- Come to Summit each year