

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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County-City Continue Partnership to Make Community Garden Grants Available

Recognizing the many benefits of community gardens, the Franklin County Commissioners will provide \$20,000 to support gardening grants through the Columbus/Franklin County Community Garden Grants program this year. Now in its third year, the program supports existing gardens throughout Franklin County and encourages the creation of new ones.

Grant awards will be made up to \$4,000 for supplies and/or contractual services. Partial grants may also be awarded, including funding and/or in-kind product donations compliments of the Scotts Miracle-Gro Company. Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens' *Growing to Green* program will also provide gardeners with on-going educational resources for starting, maintaining and sustaining their community garden.

"Community gardens are responsible for more than just growing healthy, fresh produce," said Commission President John O'Grady. "People coalesce around them, producing communities. They also provide catalysts for development, help reduce family food budgets and preserve green spaces."

"Community gardens are a piece of our county's overall green economy by providing income, skills, and opportunity for a growing number of people and families," said Commissioner Paula Brooks. "Growing up on a farm, I learned the importance of investing in agriculture to improve our environment, our food security, and the quality of life in our communities."

"With rates of obesity on the rise, especially among children, community gardens provide healthy, fresh and affordable food options for local families that might not otherwise make it to their dinner table," said Commissioner Marilyn Brown. "

Community gardens can be dedicated to growing fruits, vegetables and herbs, or simply flowers and other greenery for beautification or stormwater control, as long as the land is gardened by a group of people for the betterment of the community. They can be found in urban, suburban, or rural settings.

To qualify for a grant, an applicant must meet requirements such as a registered 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and be located within qualifying areas of Franklin County or the City of Columbus.

Applications for the Community Garden Grants Program will be available on the Columbus Foundation website (<http://tinyurl.com/CommunityGardenGrants>) beginning on Friday, February 15, and will remain available until March 1, 2013. Winners will be announced at the Earth Day celebration at Franklin Park Conservatory on April 22, 2013.

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