

How to put on a 1000 Acres More Meeting

- 1- Set place, date, start and end time for your first meeting. Do you want them to RSVP or leave it open?
- 2- Decide if you want it to be a potluck, snacks, bring your own drinks, or?
- 3- Invite your neighbors: contact us for door hangers if you want them, make personal visits or email / text / call those you already know.

Meeting logistic considerations for a successful, ongoing, long term group:

- 1- *Always start on time with no more of a lag than 5 minutes.* Do-ers generally arrive on time and get frustrated if meetings start late. You will lose them within a few meetings, as they will consider it a waste of their time.
- 2- If your first meeting is a potluck, we recommend you schedule it for 1.5 hours: have the meeting first for a half hour or 45 minutes, then eat after that. This will set the stage for future meetings.
- 3- If there is no potluck we recommend meetings last no more than a scheduled hour. Please make it clear that the meeting comes first, then socializing at the end. Remind folks of this process at the beginning of each meeting. It's really important, again, because do-ers get stuff done and are generally busy people, but you also want to make time for networking. This assures both happen and no one gets frustrated.

Flow of the meeting:

Have a sign in sheet so you know who is there and you can contact them again. See downloadable PDF here. Please share the emails with us so we can keep people in the loop, if they want to (there is a place on the signup sheet where they give permission to be added to our infrequent email list). Be sure to capture new contact info at future meetings.

Ask for someone to take notes of the to-dos and great ideas that come up for future reference. If possible, have a flip chart or dry board so ideas can be captured for all to see.

Begin with a short explanation of why we are gathering (see below).

Quick introductions, you go first (model short and simple)- "My name is, I live at ____" Please note: if you give a long intro, everyone will and, depending on how many attend, this can take up the whole meeting. Trust us. It happens. Sometimes you have to remind folks about 5 intros in. Remind folks that you will all get to know each other at socializing time.

If you have a speaker, they will speak for about 15-20 minutes. If not:

Please note: start these conversations with a reminder that we want to let all speak and to keep their sharing to a reasonable length to allow a full, interactive discussion, not a speech. You may have a "prepper" who attends who has valuable information that they feel they will need to tell you all about, and that the group might genuinely have interest in. Feel blessed for this gift/resource and tell them that the group will want to have "workshops" in the future and hope they will be the first one, but for now, you are just getting to know each other.

10 - 15 Minutes: Start a discussion about how folks feel about our current food situation (high prices, supply, local resources, etc.). Ask folks to share their experiences, concerns, questions and such. Make it a connecting experience.

10 Minutes: Ask and briefly discuss who has gardened before, how long, if they haven't but want to, successes, what they love, what they hate about it, etc.

Encourage questions, feedback and sharing – let people show their area of expertise or passion (keep track of questions to be addressed at the next meeting if not able to answer there).

Keep an eye on the time. No more than 10 minutes before the end, take the pulse of the room, and encourage / find out who wants to join in the fun. Does anyone want to help? What do they want to do?

If people have a garden, have them register it on the 1000 Gardens page at <https://tinyurl.com/reggarden> so we can track our county's success getting to 1000 acres. Note that every garden, even pots, counts. Encourage them by stating we only ask for first names, emails to keep in touch, zip codes and size of the garden to keep track toward our goal. Their personal information will not be published and stays only with us.

Winding Down: If this feels like enough, then just stop here and schedule the next meeting for a time in the near future (not more than two weeks, to keep momentum going) that will be a "working meeting." Set a date and time, and if you want to share the facilitator role (we recommend it) it, then ask for someone else who wants to lead the next meeting. Where do you want to have it? Same home? Someone else's home to spread the community feelings around more?

If the group seems like it's on a roll and not wanting to break up yet, remind folks that the meeting is officially over but they are welcome to stay for more discussion (if you are cool with that, that is). If the meeting keeps going, consider exploring what you can do together in broad terms, what your vision of a fun neighborhood that grows food together looks like. Think Big. Inspire each other. Be inspired. Great minds can come up with amazing stuff.

Be sure to communicate your time boundaries with the group and not overstep your family's time.

After the event:

Please report back to us so we can keep track of what's going on around the county to inspire others. Email pamm@bclocalfood.org. Thanks!

Post about your meeting on social media and invite others to have the same kinds of groups in their neighborhoods. Invite others at the meeting to do the same.

If you take pictures, please only post them on social media if you have the permission of anyone in the picture. It matters, as some folks want privacy. Share with us so we can spread the word, too. Email them to pamm@bclocalfood.org with what you want the text to say or not say.

Ideas about next steps and next meetings:

Potlucks are great connectors but sometimes folks feel overwhelmed by them if they are required every time. Take the pulse of the group. Maybe rotate snacks instead, if needed? Just bring your own drinks? Whatever works for your group.

Do you want to have a name for your Neighborhood Garden?

Figure out who has expertise that can help the others and make a list. If they want to be a Garden Brigade Mentor, have them contact us. If not, make a private, neighborhood list and ask them how they want to be contacted.

Do you want to order seeds together in bulk? If so, what seeds? See list on the webpage. (link to 1000 Acres More Resources page).

Discuss ways to "share the wealth" and if you want to do cooperative growing: who grows what and how to swap produce?

Do you want a neighborhood Free The Food Stand or four? If so, how many? Who will help build them? See the resources page for more information.

If you decide to have a stand, why not also make it a Community Billboard to share information? It might help in the future if things get wiggly.

Take ideas for mini-workshops at each meeting. You are bound to have some experts in your neighborhood who can share what they know.

Create a tool share system to save money. As you get to know each other more, go in on cooperatively owned larger ticket items such as chippers, post hole diggers, and other more expensive equipment

Do you want a mentor to come speak to your group to provide guidance? Sign up for mentor program when it's ready. Ensure that help is available to new gardeners or those who are hesitant to join in (mentor program)

Go over the Resources page on the 1000 Acres More page and let us know what other ones you come up with so we can add it to the page to share with all our community.

Final Tips:

Make it fun. Our purpose is to make sure we all have sufficient and healthy food; it's a way of taking care of each other and celebrating / valuing our community. Future contests for largest, ugliest, etc. veggie / fruit...Oldest gardener, youngest, newest to Chico, etc.

Keep it simple: Growing food as a community is at least 10,000 years old and probably more like 50,000. If they could do it back then, we can do it now! There are many nutritious foods that are easy to grow.

Celebrate our luck: We can grow almost any food, and we can grow almost year round in our special climate, beautiful soil, and abundance of sunshine.

Talking points for why we are gathering

1- The food system is imploding and will continue to do so through 2023 at minimum, probably longer

Food prices are rising due to supply chain issues that started during COVID, never recovered, then were exacerbated by war

Weather patterns are changing and impacting crops around the world whether flood, drought or severe storms (hurricanes, tornadoes, hailstorms, etc) on a major scale

Shortage of diesel impacting farming equipment and trucks who transport food

Labor shortages

Policy that does not support farming

Inflation

Increased feed cost for animals means that ranchers are selling their herds, which means shortages

Food costs are projected to quadruple by 2026-2030

...and more all combining to create a perfect storm of a collapse of the centralized, global food system into something new

2- We are The New Food System

We are creating a new food system that is more decentralized and sovereign.

We don't have to wait for any government to feed us, we can do this ourselves.

There are 42,000 acres of land in Chico, Oroville, Paradise and Gridley. We only need 1000 of these aggregated acres of food production that feeds us to feed every person in Butte County healthy, safe, food.

We want to come together as a neighborhood to grow more food together. If we support each other, our neighborhood will have affordable food

If we work together, we will have more of a chance of succeeding.