

NeighborSpace  
Where Chicago Communities Grow Together



Grow Your Gardening Skills  
Community Garden Water Audit

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Garden Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Watering Techniques and Tools**

*Does your community garden group...*

- Water early in the morning or the evening? Avoid evaporation caused by the afternoon heat.
- Use a soaker hose?
- Use hand-watering practices with a watering can or spray nozzle?
- Apply water directly to the base of the plant where the plant needs it most, its roots?
- Use a drip irrigation system?
- Use a rain gauge to determine amount of rainwater captured naturally on site? Edible gardens typically only need one inch of water per week to thrive. Perennial gardens need even less
- Use high quality hoses, spray nozzles and other tools that help reduce leaks and inefficiencies?
- Regularly inspect the lawn hydrant and hose connection for leaks and inefficiencies?
- Turn the water off AT THE SOURCE every time?
- Use recycled water from a rain barrel instead of the faucet?
- Have a water conservation plan?
- Train the garden team to implement water conservation best practices?

**Gardening Techniques**

*Does your community garden group...*

- Group plants by water requirements?
- Adjust water levels according to plant specific water needs and microclimates?
- Choose drought-tolerant and/or native perennials as a conservation strategy?
- Use intensive planting techniques?
- Review the soil quality and drainage rate in each growing area?
- Check soil moisture levels before watering? Dig down two-three inches to check for moisture.
- Apply compost and organic matter to the growing beds annually? Improved soil quality is the secret to plant health **AND** water conservation.
- Apply mulch to the growing beds annually? Mulch helps retain soil moisture by 70%, inhibits weed growth and prevents erosion.

Work with your garden team to develop a water conservation plan that works for your site. Including at least three practices from each section each year as a way to reduce water usage. Contact NeighborSpace for advice.

