

# **TWO RIVERS ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD**

## **2023 Front Yard Vegetable Garden Pilot Program**

### **Proposal**

What our society values is very straightforward. We value education, financial & personal security and a clean environment to name a few. We also value our health. We've all heard "Get plenty of exercise, drink plenty of fluids, and eat healthy", and many of us try to live by that mantra.

Unfortunately, the goal of eating healthy is becoming more difficult to achieve as we watch the costs of groceries continue to climb with the higher priced healthy choices becoming luxury items.

Why is this important? Because it affects a wide range of our residents, from the single parent to the senior living on a fixed income, and everyone else in between.

Why is this important? Because 8.8% of Two Rivers residents live below poverty level. There are roughly 8,900 adults living in Two Rivers, 26% of whom are seniors. 41% of students are economically disadvantaged, and roughly 14% of children are food insecure. Our residents need all the help they can get from their local government.

As City leaders, we have an obligation to equip our constituents with every available tool necessary for success. One thing we can do is to allow residents to proactively offset their grocery costs by growing their own vegetables, fruits and herbs. This would also apply to those who crave a wider selection of more nutritious, fresher, tastier veggies and those who want to know where their produce comes from and is pesticide free or is an ethnic food not available in local markets.

Understand that not all residents have backyards that are conducive to growing a garden, they may be too small or too shaded. Not everyone can have a plot in a community garden because they may not have transportation or the kids are just too young to bring along.

And is there really any reason behind the resistance to front yard vegetable gardens (FYVG) other than somebody taking a look at a neighbor's yard and saying 'I don't like what I see'? Don't worry, as you'll see the maximum plant height requirement will not allow for corn or tall sunflower species.

It's time to make a change & augment municipal health-focused efforts by allowing people the freedom to pursue proper nutrition through participation in a well planned, comprehensive, permit driven FYVG program that does not tax the City's staff resources.

This doesn't mean the garden has to take up the whole front yard or be unattractive. You can tuck a small raised bed in an established perennial garden, for example. Or simply dig in vegetables in the spaces usually reserved for annuals that are attractive to passers-by. Create new manageable beds (rectangular 2'x10' max

dimensions, 4'x4' square max dimensions, 4' circumference max dimension) that total no more than 100 square feet in the front yard. What about a lovely container garden? This program would be a great opportunity for residents to challenge themselves while tweaking the traditional constructs of what a front yard should & should not be.

To that end, the Two Rivers Environmental Advisory Board makes the following proposal:

### **Practical**

1. The first year (pilot year) of the Front Yard Vegetable Garden program will gauge public interest & work out the bugs.
2. Participation in the program will require the purchase of a permit & approved garden plan.
3. Before drawing up a garden plan, those interested should consider a few key points:
  - a. Pertinent ordinances to include 10-1-15 "Height and Area Exceptions"
  - b. Line-of- Sight considerations
  - c. Natural Light - For heat-loving veggies & herbs, like tomatoes, melons, cucumbers and peppers, the plants need at least eight to 10 hours of sun a day. You can get away with less for shade veggies & herbs such as kale, lettuce, cauliflower and carrots, parsley & mint.
  - d. Upkeep - Do you have time for weeding? You may feel extra compelled to keep a neat and tidy garden because of it being more visible than if it were in the backyard.
  - e. Water source - Will it be easy to navigate your hose to the front garden? If not, are you okay lugging watering cans around every morning in the summer?
  - f. Diggers Hotline with proof of execution if necessary
4. Interested applicants will receive a packet with:
  - a. a guideline that covers the do's and don'ts of the program to include:
    - i. Acceptable raised bed materials
    - ii. Planting options such as "flower bed" planting, raised garden bed and container gardening
    - iii. Examples of garden layout ideas (links to resources provided in the Guidelines appendix & examples of
    - iv. systems available for sale to the general public <sup>\*1</sup>
  - b. Copies of pertinent ordinances to include 10-1-15 "Height and Area Exceptions"
  - c. Information explaining the 4' setback requirement that lessens rainwater runoff, and line-of-sight requirement.
  - d. Applications <sup>\*2</sup> will be reviewed by EAB, with results reported to City Council as needed
  - e. Survey <sup>\*3</sup>
5. For a resident to qualify for the program and receive a permit certificate, they must:
  - a. Return completed application, April 15th deadline
  - b. Provide a simple garden layout
  - c. Include a list of plants (vegetable, fruit, herb) that they will plant

**NOTE:** Permit Certificate is revocable if garden is not maintained, or if participant is in violation of Ordinance 10-1-15.

6. Applications will be reviewed by the EAB, with a report generated for the Plan Commission and City Council. The Commission & Council will provide a monthly program update - any issues, program changes, progress photos.
7. Residents will then purchase a \$20 permit, receive year specific program participation certificate to be placed in the front window of the home, and a yard sign <sup>\*4</sup> that can be easily seen from the street. Participants will also receive an "End-of-Season" survey that will need to be completed at the end of the growing season and turned in with the yard sign to City Hall.
8. A representative of EAB will occasionally check on the status of the gardens during the growing season, and any issues or violations will be addressed immediately. . Program status will be discussed at the monthly EAB meeting.
9. At the end of the growing season, participants will fill out the survey & return to the City. Data from the surveys will be used to complete a FYVG recap report which will be presented to the City Council. The data will also be used to critique & improve the program.

Ordinance 10-1-15 "Height and Area Exceptions" will be followed. Plus additional considerations of plant height, raised bed min/max height and acceptable materials, and "Line-of-sight" requirements will be included in the program guidelines.

( See \*5 Line of Sight drawing)



**\*1 GARDEN EXAMPLES**







<https://savvygardening.com/front-yard-vegetable-garden/>

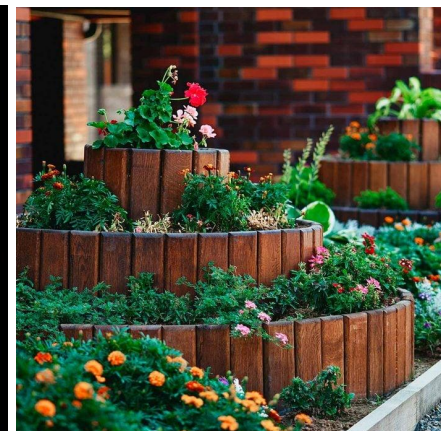
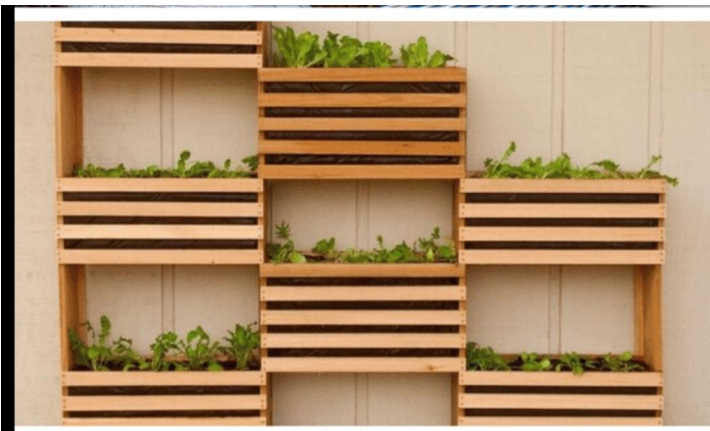
<https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2022/3/14/can-we-please-stop-fighting-about-gardens>

<https://www.attainable-sustainable.net/pretty-edibles/>

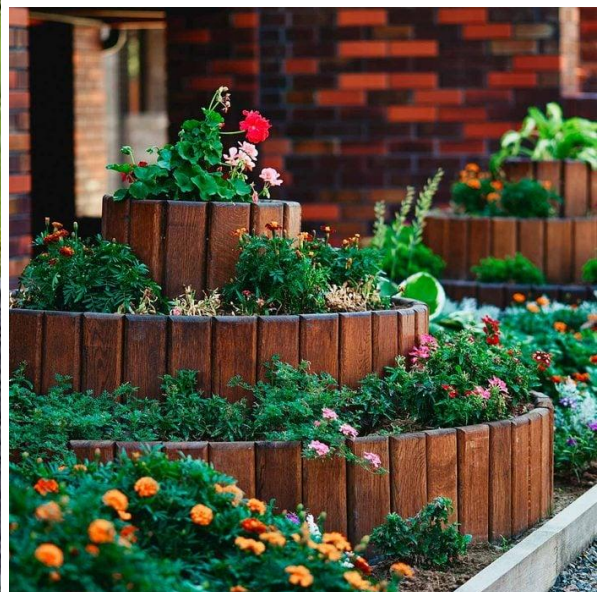
<https://www.bestpickreports.com/blog/post/edible-landscaping-for-beginners/>



**AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT HOME GARDENING & BUILDING CENTERS**







# CITY OF TWO RIVERS

## FRONT YARD VEGETABLE GARDENING 2023

### PROGRAM APPLICATION

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Phone Number:**

**Email:**

Why are you participating in our program? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Eat healthier
- ☐ Save money at the grocery store
- ☐ Produce nutrition & taste are better than store bought
- ☐ Guaranteed to be fresh
- ☐ More variety of produce
- ☐ Know where my vegetables come from
- ☐ Beneficial to the environment
- ☐ Fosters a connection with nature & provides

Do you rent or own your home?     **Yes**     **No**

If you rent, can you provide a letter from your landlord authorizing you to participate?     **Yes**     **No**

Will you be able to meet the height and aesthetic requirements?     **Yes**     **No**

I understand that if the program's guidelines are not followed, my participation in the program will be forfeited & the original landscaping restored at my expense in a timely manner.

**Signature & Date:**



---

---

# <sup>\*3</sup> CITY OF TWO RIVERS FRONT YARD VEGETABLE GARDENING 2023

## END-OF-SEASON SURVEY

1. Why did you participate in our program? (Check all that apply)
  - ☐ Eat healthier
  - ☐ Save money at the grocery store
  - ☐ More nutritious & better tasting than store bought
  - ☐ Guaranteed to be fresh
  - ☐ More variety of produce
  - ☐ Know where my vegetables come from
  - ☐ Beneficial to the environment
  - ☐ Fosters a connection with nature & provides learning opportunities
2. How likely is it that you would participate in future Two Rivers FYVG events?
  - ☐ Absolutely!
  - ☐ Perhaps
  - ☐ No thanks
3. Overall how would you rate the program?
  - ☐ Excellent
  - ☐ Good
  - ☐ Neutral
  - ☐ Just okay
  - ☐ Poor
4. What did you like about the program?
5. What did you dislike about the program?



6. How organized was the event?

- ☐ Extremely organized
- ☐ Very organized
- ☐ Somewhat organized
- ☐ Not so organized
- ☐ Not at all organized

7. How friendly were the organizers?

- ☐ Extremely friendly
- ☐ Very friendly
- ☐ Somewhat friendly
- ☐ Not so friendly
- ☐ Not at all friendly

8. How helpful were the organizers?

- ☐ Extremely helpful
- ☐ Very helpful
- ☐ Somewhat helpful
- ☐ Not at all helpful

9. Were the organizers responsive & knowledgeable?

- ☐ Extremely responsive or knowledgeable
- ☐ Very responsive or knowledgeable
- ☐ Somewhat responsive or knowledgeable
- ☐ Not at all responsive or knowledgeable

10. Is there anything else you'd like to share about the program - comments, questions, concerns

11. Would you recommend this program to a friend?

- ☐ Absolutely!
- ☐ Perhaps
- ☐ No thanks

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK!

# City of Two Rivers

## Front Yard Vegetable Gardening Program 2023



Want more information? Want to Participate?

Contact us at:

(920) 793-5523

[www.two-rivers.org](http://www.two-rivers.org)



