

The Backyard Growers Program is recruiting Garden Mentor volunteers for the 2012 season

C.A.F.M.
BACKYARD
Growers



WHAT IS THE BACKYARD GROWERS PROGRAM (BYG)?

BYG is a program of the Cape Ann Farmers' Market. BYG provides low- to moderate-income Gloucester residents with backyard gardens, training, and on-going support. Our goals are to introduce people to the benefits of home gardening, increase awareness of and access to fresh local produce, build community and self-sufficiency through backyard farming, and improve environmental conditions in downtown neighborhoods. This year we have over 60 participating families and groups!



WHAT ARE A GARDEN MENTOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES?

- Attend a mentor training and program orientation on Tuesday, February 28 from 7-8:30 PM.
- Participate in an interactive Backyard Growers Training in March (Saturdays, 3/24 OR 3/31) where you will work with up to five families/groups to help them complete their garden plans and to demonstrate planting techniques.
- Provide your mentees with your email and phone contact information so they may contact you over the growing season with any questions or to request site visits to their gardens. From last year's pilot mentor program we learned that our participants are quite diverse in their needs—some only need initial help at the training while some request site visits and call with questions.
- Informally contact your mentees a couple times over the growing season to see if they have any questions.
- Help the BYG Coordinator get in touch with your mentees to disseminate important information.

WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS AND ATTRIBUTES OF A GARDEN MENTOR?

- Multiple years of experience growing vegetable gardens.
- Willingness to blend your gardening knowledge and experience with the BYG program's training materials.
- Confidence and willingness to find out answers to mentee questions if you do not already know the answers.
- Independently follow through with your mentor duties and to check-in with the BYG Coordinator if any problems arise.
- Respect and sensitivity toward our participants' diverse backgrounds, gardening skills, backyards, and neighborhoods.

WHY ARE GARDEN MENTORS CRITICAL TO PROGRAM SUCCESS?

- Our main goal for our participants is for them to have a productive and fun growing season so that growing and eating fresh, homegrown vegetables becomes a family tradition!
- Mentors give participants the option of receiving one-on-one, on-going support throughout the growing season, which can dramatically improve their gardening success rates.

WHAT IF I'M NOT QUALIFIED TO BE A GARDEN MENTOR? ARE THERE OTHER WAYS TO VOLUNTEER? YES!

- Work in the greenhouse to prepare seedlings for participants.
- Help the BYG Coordinator distribute seeds and seedlings to participants.
- Promote the Backyard Growers Table at the farmers' market.
- Post information on the soon-to-be-released Backyard Growers Program Google Group.
- Help organize our new BYG mapping project and/or our annual Harvest Day event.

HOW DO I BECOME A GARDEN MENTOR OR BYG VOLUNTEER?

- Email BYG Coordinator, Lara Lepionka, at lara@beaconstreetfarm.org and tell me a little bit about yourself, your Garden Mentor qualifications or other ways you would like to volunteer with BYG, and any questions you may have.
- The deadline for applying to the Garden Mentor program is January 20, 2012.
- To learn more about BYG go to <http://www.capeannfarmersmarket.org/backyard-growers/index.html>.