What is a community garden?
A community garden is a shared space where members learn to grow fruits and veggies, work together, and share in the rewards of their labor by receiving fresh, nutritious produce.

Who can join?
Anyone can join! The garden is a true "community garden". So, any RCC student or member of the surrounding community is eligible to volunteer in the garden and share in the harvest.

What does a "garden day" typically involve?
A typical day will vary depending on time of year and various activities that might be happening in the garden. Activities may include planting seedlings or seeds, weeding, watering, harvesting, turning compost, pest management, and maintaining and/or repairing tools or garden structures. Alysa, the student garden mentor, or Dr. Huff, the garden manager, will be there during each garden work day to help direct you toward appropriate tasks and teach you how to perform those tasks if necessary.

What do you plant and when do you plant it?
The majority of our plants are edible crops. We do plant some flowers to beautify the garden and attract pollinators but our focus is on vegetables and fruits. We plant both summer and winter crops (we are so lucky in Southern California to be able to do that!) Typical summer crops include things such as tomatoes, peppers, corn, melons, beans, artichokes, squashes, cucumbers, eggplant. Winter crops include most greens (lettuce, spinach, kale, chard, etc.), broccoli, cauliflower, beets, carrots, peas, onions, and herbs.

What items do I need to participate in “garden days” as a volunteer?
You should bring water to drink and gardening gloves if you have some. Additionally, be sure to wear clothes and shoes that can get a bit dirty.

How much gardening experience do I need to have?
No experience required! We are happy to teach volunteers the basics of gardening. In fact, this is one of the goals of the garden!

Where are you located on campus?
We are directly next to the Math and Science building.

Are you nonprofit?
Yes, the RCC community garden is a non-profit entity. We are a part of the RCC Foundation.
What physical activities and/or physical fitness level is required of me?
Gardening does require a moderate amount of physical activity but the various tasks can be tailored to your personal fitness abilities. You should be able to comfortably work outdoors. Beyond that, we can adjust your participation to meet your needs. The garden is wheelchair accessible and is equipped with raised planting beds for those who are unable to bend/reach at ground level.

Are the garden plots organic?
Yes, the RCC garden is organic - we do not use synthetic pesticides or fertilizers.

Where does the food go?
The garden is currently undergoing a transition. As of now the garden volunteers share the harvest and any leftover produce is donated to RCC students. Long-term, we are working to give a majority of the produce to the RCC cafeteria and a share to the garden volunteers.

How does the garden receive its water?
RCC provides water for our garden. All of the garden plots are currently hand-watered by volunteers. Frequency of watering depends on the weather, but during hot days the plots must be watered 1-2 times per day. This year we are working on fundraising in order to install automatic drip irrigation.

How do I prove my volunteer hours to my teacher (or employer)?
When you attend a garden work day, the student garden mentor, Alysa, or the garden manager, Dr. Huff, will ask for your name and email address. We will then send you a letter on official letterhead to prove that you have donated your time in the garden.

Does your garden compost? If I have compost, can I donate it?
Our garden does compost all of the organic waste that it generates. We also obtain larger loads of compost from Burtec Waste Management. We would happily accept donations of compost.

Is the garden handicap accessible?
The garden is handicap accessible and contains raised beds for those who are unable to bend/reach garden beds at ground level. Additionally, the gates and pathways are wide enough for wheelchair access.

How do I get involved?
Send an email to the garden manager, Dr. Tonya Huff (tonya.huff@rcc.edu) or just come to one of our regular garden work days (Tues and Thurs from 7-9am or Sun from 8-10am in the garden).

I am unable to participate at those volunteer times. What are other ways I can support the garden?
If you are unable to attend scheduled garden work days, you can still contact the garden manager and ask to be put on the garden email list. That way, you can find out about special events that might be happening in the garden (which we would gladly accept help at different times or in different ways). Additionally, the garden would appreciate any donations of new or gently used gardening items (see our wish list for specific needs).

How can I spread the word?
You can spread the word about the community garden by inviting your friends and family to join you on a garden work day, inviting friends to join our Facebook page, and telling classmates about the garden. You might also consider asking your professors if it would be ok for you to make a brief announcement about the garden at the beginning or end of a class.