Why Garden with Military Family Members?
Gardening helps people connect

A sense of real belonging in a distinct place can help to balance the turmoil of the deployment cycle. (Bowen, et al. 2003)

Photo courtesy of Defiant Gardens
Gardening helps people connect

Garden settings support frequent, friendly interaction among neighbors--the foundation of neighborhood social ties. (Kuo, F.E., et al. 1998)
Gardening can engage the whole family
Gardening strengthens youth and adult relationships

After gardening, youth possess an appreciation for working with neighborhood adults, and made new friends. (Pothukuchi, K. 2004)

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Gardening strengthens family relationships

School gardening has been shown to increase self-esteem, help students develop a sense of ownership and responsibility, help foster relationships with family members, and increase parental involvement. (Alexander & Hendren, 1998)
Gardening reduces stress

Gardening can promote relief as participation with nature enhances mental health, reduces stress, and can produce physiological benefits such as lower blood pressure and reduced muscle tension. (Relf, D. 1988 & Van Den Berg and Mariëtte, 2011).
Gardening improves wellness through physical activity

Community gardens enhance nutrition and physical activity. (Twiss, J., et al. 2003)

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Gardening leads to eating more fruits and vegetables

Growing their own vegetables encouraged adults and children to try new foods, which in turn improved their eating habits. (Dow & Dow 1999)

56% of community gardeners met national recommendations of 5 a day for fruits and vegetables, compared with 25% of non-gardeners. (Litt J.S., et al. 2011)
Consumption of fruits and vegetables, as a habit in childhood, is an important predictor of higher fruit and vegetable consumption as adults and can help to prevent or delay chronic disease conditions. (Heimendinger & Van Duyn, 1995; Crockett & Sims, 1995)
Gardening can reduce family food expenses

110 NYC community gardeners collectively grew 87,700 pounds of produce worth more than $200,000 on 1.7 acres. (Farming Concrete, 2011)
Soldiers gardening spans history


Photos courtesy of Defiant Gardens

A British soldier of the London Rifle Brigade poses proudly behind his trench garden in 1914.

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Gardening Benefits for Children, Youth and Families

- Nutrition Awareness
- Environmental Awareness
- Learning Achievements
- Life Skills
- Health and Wellness
- Community Building and Social Connections

Go to [www.gardening.cornell.edu/military](http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/military) to discover more research highlights in these areas.
Don’t do it all

Identify and tap local knowledge

Determine if there is an established protocol for starting a community garden

Engage key organizations and leaders

Gardening Success Maximizes Benefits
Keep it Simple

www.gardening.cornell.edu
Gardening Success Maximizes Benefits
Keep it Simple

**Start small** with a design that reflects audience needs and expansion potential

**Find a highly visible location with**
- 6 to 8 hours of full sun per day
- “good” soil or potential for healthier soil
- easy access to water suitable for food gardens
- space for activity/group gatherings
- place for stuff (composting, tool storage..)

**Choose suitable plant**
Vegetable Varieties for Gardeners
http://vegvariety.cce.cornell.edu
Gardening Success Maximizes Benefits
Keep it Simple

www.gardening.cornell.edu

www.gardening.cornell.edu/military

Email: garden@cornell.edu
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