



Introduction to the Garden Mentoring Program

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We are excited to announce the launch of Feeding Laramie Valley's Garden Mentoring Program and want *you* to build it with us. Growing in Laramie can be challenging, but having a beautiful garden full of fresh and healthy produce is possible and this program can bridge the gap between the many experienced and new gardeners in our community to strengthen our gardening community as a whole. Whether you want to give help to new gardeners or get help with your gardens, we want to help you do it!

What is a Garden Mentor and Mentee?

A garden Mentor is someone that helps educate and guide another gardener. They are a resource for other gardeners on how to get started, what to plant, and how to care for their gardens. **A garden Mentee** is someone who is looking for guidance on how to grow, maintain, and harvest their garden successfully and is paired with a garden Mentor.

What Do Garden Mentors Do?

Garden Mentors provided garden Mentees one-on-one Mentorship and guidance on how to accomplish particular gardening tasks. Garden Mentees receive help from someone who is experienced and knowledgeable about garden plants, including those well suited to your particular climate, and tips on how to plant and care for them. Garden Mentors will assist new gardeners in setting and reaching their garden goals through one-on-one coaching and sharing resources either: in-person, by phone, or online.

How to Become a Garden Mentee?

Are you brand new to gardening, or have very little experience? If you feel you need some guidance to get started, you can sign up to become a garden Mentee. To sign up you contact the Garden Mentoring Program Coordinator, Candace Teems, either by phone or email at 307-223-4399 or candace@feedinglaramievalley.org.

If you have already contacted Candace, then an email will be sent to you with the application. Mentees will submit their application, which details information about their gardening experiences, needs, wants, and plans for their garden. Once submitted the new Mentee will be paired with a garden Mentor who will be their new gardening point of contact. Mentors will help you select plants to grow, help plan your garden, teach you

about sowing, weeding, harvest, thinning, plant support, provide advice about watering and anything else you may encounter or be curious about throughout the season.

Mentees will receive a welcome packet and other resources from Feeding Laramie Valley staff. Mentees must also commit to communicating with their Mentor throughout the growing season and with Program Coordinator, Candace Teems. In return, you'll get personalized help from an experienced gardener who can teach you tips and tricks it might take years to learn otherwise.

Mentee Benefits:

- Gain one on one gardening help and advice.
- Advance your gardening knowledge and skills.
- Learn gardening methods to increase your harvest yield.
- Become a part of our network of gardeners.
- Enhance community relationships.
- Access to Feeding Laramie Valley staff for supplies, technical support, and resources.
- Receive a welcome packet which includes:
 - Program Materials
 - Free Seed Starter Kits
 - Feeding Laramie Sticker
 - Feeding Laramie Valley Journal

How to Become a Garden Mentor?

Whether you have been successfully vegetable gardening for just a few seasons, are a Master Gardener, or are someone with tons of experience growing food on a home-gardening scale, we hope you will join our network of Mentors and build this program with us!

Most people looking to become a garden Mentor have extensive knowledge of gardening. While formal education isn't required, garden Mentors should, at the very least, have gardening experience, have a passion for plants and a desire to share your interest with others. Garden Mentoring is a great way to help anyone new to gardening learn the basics. But even experienced gardeners can benefit from valuable feedback on new garden projects or ideas. There is always more to know, and as with any type of teaching, it's an opportunity to learn from everyone involved.

Strong Garden Mentors Should:

- Work and communicate regularly with their garden Mentee (in-person, by phone, or online).
- Give basic garden advice and encouragement.
- Respond to correspondence from the Program Coordinator, Candace Teems.
- Log garden Mentee interactions.
- Be willing to undergo a background check.

Mentor Benefits:

- Make a difference in your community.
- Become a part of our network of Mentors.
- You get to help novice gardeners succeed and they reap the rewards of the harvest.
- Build garden leadership and teaching skills.
- Enhance community relationships.
- Access to Feeding Laramie Valley staff for supplies, technical support, and resources.
- Be a part of a peer-to-peer support network.
- Receive a welcome packet which includes:
 - Program Materials
 - Feeding Laramie Valley T-Shirt
 - Feeding Laramie Valley Garden Mentor Certificate
 - Feeding Laramie Valley Sticker
 - Feeding Laramie Valley Journal
 - Garden Mentor Volunteer Tracking Log

How does the Mentor application process work?

Those who wish to become garden Mentors will submit a Garden Mentor Information Sheet to Feeding Laramie Valley's Garden Mentoring Program Coordinator, Candace Teems. This will be emailed to those who contact Candace Teems. Mentor Information Sheets should be filled out, and dropped off or mailed to our office at 968 N. 9th St. Laramie WY 82072, or can be can be emailed to candace@feedinglaramievalley.org.

Once your Mentor Information Sheet has been submitted and approved, you will be asked to undergo a background check and receive all instructions. After your background check has been cleared, we will partner you with one or two people in your surrounding area who have joined the program. You help them select plants to grow, help plan their garden, teach about sowing, weeding, harvest, thinning, plant support and provide advice about watering. And you are their first go-to person when they have questions.

What is expected of Garden Mentors?

How active you are depending on the needs of your assigned gardener(s) and how much time you have. While there is not much time involved, you will have a lot of impact. We expect Mentors to reach out every few weeks and check out how things are progressing for gardeners to catch small mistakes before they cause problems and reply to the occasional email or phone call during the growing season. We also ask garden Mentors to keep a log of their interactions with their Mentees and send them to us at the end of the season.