

## Ten steps in collecting and publishing a book of community garden stories and photographs

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1. Develop a plan, timeline, and budget for the research and publishing process. Realize that the entire project from story gathering to published book is labor intensive, but worth the effort if you're seeking to build long term support for your garden program.
2. Decide whether your organization will work with a publisher or self-publish the book. Before seeking funding through grants or sponsorships, be sure that your organization has or can secure the time, skills, technology, and finances needed to complete the project.
3. Provide adequate training and support for interviewers and photographers. Develop a guided series of questions with the goal of collecting as much data and detail as possible for the stories. Plan interviews and photo sessions so that gardeners are comfortable and relaxed.
4. Meet with an experienced designer to help determine the optimum page size, number of pages in the book, the number of copies to print, and what type of binding you will use. Talk with a printer or printers to obtain general estimates.
5. Develop a process for collecting and sharing stories. Be sure that the storytellers represent the cultural, social, racial, ethnic, and generational diversity found within your garden program. Obtain written releases before interviewing or taking pictures of gardeners.
6. Think about adding additional content to help the book appeal to a broader audience. Content might include historical information on your garden program, gardeners' favorite recipes, helpful resources, and editor's notes. Look over other books for ideas.
7. Make decisions about the length of the stories and how they will be edited and formatted. Maintain communication with the storytellers to verify accuracy and to fill in gaps or missing details in their stories. Be sure that the stories reflect positively on the storytellers.
8. Select a title for the book, design the cover pages, finalize the table of contents and page count, obtain an ISBN number if necessary, and assemble the stories and additional content into a manuscript that flows from one section of the book to the next.
9. Solicit feedback at each step in the review process, and list those who have helped in the acknowledgment section. Meet with a printer or printers to go over the printing or copying process and obtain estimates for different quantities. Determine the retail and wholesale price of the book (if it will be sold), and develop a marketing or dissemination plan. Obtain a bar code if the book will be sold in retail stores.
10. Make final edits and revisions to the manuscript and cover files. Work with the designer and printer to ensure that the files and images convert properly. Proof carefully at each step of the way, seek assistance if you begin to feel time pressured, and be patient. Publishing a book that tells the story of your garden program, through the eyes of its participants, can greatly help to increase public awareness and appreciation for the important role that gardening plays in a sustainable community.