Path to Smart Garden Certification

- First, complete the instructional modules.
- Then, complete at least 16 of the action steps from the modules to fill your bushel and certify your garden!



Each action step equals a ½ gallon.



16 action steps are needed to reach a bushel and attain certification.

If you want to take it a step further, work toward a peck, too (4 additional action steps).



Action Steps

Module 1 | Right Crop, Right Site, Right Time

What are your food production goals?

- [ ] Describe goals for producing food in terms of annual vegetables, perennial fruits, and crops that support sustainability or biodiversity.

What are the conditions at your site?

- [ ] Assess your site in terms of light levels, soil fertility, and water availability and movement.

Which crops will meet your goals and fit your site?

- [ ] Select for production, management needs, disease resistance and more.

Module 2 | Manage Soils

What kind of soil do you have?

- [ ] Describe soil health in terms of chemical, biological, physical properties.

How healthy is your soil?

- [ ] Employ soil testing and interpret the results.

How can the soil health be improved and maintained?

- [ ] Select and utilize soil amendments and cover crops.

Module 3 | Fertilize & Water

How will you feed your soil and plants?

- [ ] Develop and utilize a fertilization plan based on soil test results.

How is water moving on your site?

- [ ] Understand and map water on your site to make sure growing plans support water stewardship.

How will you get adequate water to your plants?

- [ ] Develop and utilize an irrigation plan.

Module 4 | Plant, Mulch, & Care

How can you start your plants on the right foot?

- [ ] Select healthy seeds and seedlings and plant them properly.

What is the best soil covering for your site?

- [ ] Select and install mulch appropriately.

How can you best support your plants?

- [ ] Implement effective plant support and training methods.

Module 5 | Support Biodiversity

What does your garden calendar look like?

- [ ] Develop a year-long planting schedule for multi-season growing and incorporation of cover crops.

What are practical ways to support pollinator populations?

- [ ] Incorporate plantings to extend the blooming period.

What does success in increasing biodiversity look like?

- [ ] Plan a whole garden system: healthy soils, plants, and community.

Module 6 | Managing Pests & Diseases

What's your rotation plan?

- [ ] Utilize crop rotation and develop a four-year plan to reduce disease risk.

How healthy are your plants?

- [ ] Scout for and identify pests and diseases

How will you manage issues that arise?

- [ ] Select and utilize control materials that are most effective while supporting the sustainability of the garden system

Module 7 | Reduce Stormwater & Pollutants

What pollutants are present?

- [ ] Identify potential pollutant/runoff risk areas on your site.

How efficient is your soil at infiltrating water?

- [ ] Employ strategies to encourage infiltration.

How can you maximize your water resources?

- [ ] Utilize rain barrels or other rainwater capture strategies.

Module 8 | Reduce, Reuse, & Recycle

How will you reduce your garden's environmental footprint?

- [ ] Select and utilize 1 input reduction strategy (plastics, water, excess nutrients, chemical pest control) that is appropriate for a given site.

Where will your waste and scraps go?

- [ ] Prepare and develop a compost system.

How will you utilize your recycled amendments/ inputs?

- [ ] Incorporate compost into soil management.

Module 9 | Protect Waters Edge

Where is your garden located?

- [ ] Find you watershed address and identify the health level of the closest surface water.

What plants are around? Should they be here?

- [ ] Survey for and identify pressure from invasive species.

How can you help your local watershed?

- [ ] Stabilize streambanks to reduce erosion.