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## WELCOME TO YOUR REGIONAL GARDEN EDUCATION CENTER COURSE!

HEALTHY WORKS<sup>SM</sup>  
VICTORY GARDENS SAN DIEGO  
REGIONAL GARDEN EDUCATION CENTERS  
GARDENING 301: HOW TO START AND SUSTAIN A SCHOOL GARDENING PROGRAM

Victory Gardens San Diego (VGSD) is a project of San Diego Roots Sustainable Food Project. Our mission is to help people start growing their own food through collaborative garden builds, hands-on garden education and community outreach.

VGSD has helped start dozens of gardens throughout San Diego County, including several school and community gardens. VGSD offers ongoing garden education classes and has started many participants on their way toward homegrown food. VGSD garden education participants and teachers make up a growing network of gardeners that you can tap into or become a part of at anytime.

Healthy Works<sup>SM</sup> is helping support the next phase of garden education in San Diego County. Healthy Works<sup>SM</sup> is a program of the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHS), funded by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). In partnership with the University of California San Diego (UCSD); San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative, a project facilitated by Community Health Improvement Partners (CHIP); and VGSD, Healthy Works<sup>SM</sup> is establishing community-based hubs for basic, school, and community garden education.

The Regional Garden Education Centers (RGEN) program is designed to create central establishments for the development of garden knowledge and expertise. The RGEN program is modeled after the Victory Gardens San Diego (VGSD) "University of Gardening" or "UGardening" education courses and includes garden courses on community garden management and school integration in addition to basic gardening.

VGSD is partnering with agencies countywide to train staff and volunteers at regional sites to deliver RGEN courses and establish gathering places for garden knowledge and expertise. After training, VGSD will monitor and certify each site to deliver the RGEN curriculum. It is our hope that these VGSD-certified RGEN sites spark dynamic conversations between local agencies and community residents on the role gardens can play in creating a healthy, more sustainable future. RGEN sites will connect residents interested in the local food movement and provide hands-on garden and project planning experience. Additionally, the RGEN sites selected, trained, and funded through Healthy Works will host regional tool lending libraries that allow residents to borrow tools for garden projects in the community or at home.

We invite you to attend one or several classes at your local RGEN site. Ask questions. Share garden stories and resources, and get to know neighbors with a similar interest in growing healthy communities. A formal avenue for feedback will be offered at the end of each course and ongoing feedback is also welcomed.

In good health,

The Regional Garden Education Center Team



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