



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

**COMMUNITY GARDEN**

# Rooted in Community

## UA Community Garden Event Series - Final Report

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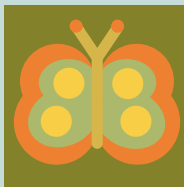
# Project Goals



## 01 Spread Awareness

Get more community members involved with the U of A Community garden. Bringing friends can create a domino effect of awareness across the whole campus.

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## 02 Create a Community

Allow individuals to find a community of people with similar interests and passions (gardening), which could also help alleviate climate anxiety.

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## 03 Collect Data

Collect data on how people feel after attending an event in the garden. Did the event help improve their mood?

With these goals in mind, we came up with the idea to host events in the U of A community garden. We thought of different activities and presentations that could happen to motivate people to come to the garden.

# About Our Project

## Rooted in Community Event Series



For our project, we hosted an event series in The University of Arizona community garden. We planned three different events, all connecting to this theme. Our first event, “Art in the Garden,” was hosted in February, the second event, “Cultivating Calm,” was hosted in March, and the third event, “Earth Day Garden Party,” was hosted in April. For each event, we planned various activities, heard from multiple guest speakers, and gave attendees a tour of the community garden space.

People seemed to really enjoy spending time in the garden and socializing with one another, which were our intended goals at the beginning of the year. We got great feedback, and people were curious about future events to spend more time in the community garden.



# Inspiration



Office of Sustainability



The University of Arizona's Office of Sustainability and Compost Cats gave us a lot of inspiration for our project. They helped us get started and gave us ideas for guest speakers and activities.



We were inspired by events that the Tucson Community Garden held, such as:

- Crafting
- Food trucks
- Food preparation demonstrations (like pickling)
- Vendors



Tucson Lavender Farm holds dinner nights where people can sit in the garden for catering or crafting.

# Methods

## 1 Event Series Theme and Choosing Dates and Times

We first thought of an over-arching theme for the series and chose dates and times for each event that worked for our group

## 2 Theme Development and Goal Setting

We came up with a theme and main activities that connected to the theme of each event. We also set goals that we wanted to achieve by the end of each event

## 3 Activity Planning

Once the theme was determined, we designed activities to complement the event's focus.

## 4 Guest Speaker Outreach and Research

We sent out emails requesting that people be guest speakers. We researched various people based on the theme of each event.

## 5 Materials and Resource Planning

We then came up with a materials list, including tables, chairs, food, beverages, activity supplies, sign-in sheets, etc.

## 6 Marketing and Advertising

We started advertising 1-2 weeks before via flyers, Instagram posts, newsletters, and word of mouth. Attendees RSVPed through a QR code

## 7 Event Setup

All materials were gathered the day before or the morning of the event. We spent about an hour setting up tables and activities. Sign-in stations were established to track attendance

## 8 Participant Engagement and Facilitation

During the event, we facilitated activities, encouraged interaction, and ensured a welcoming and inclusive environment. Guest speakers and a garden tour took place.

## 9 Cleanup and Breakdown

After the event, all materials were collected and put away, waste was taken out (compost, recycling, landfill), and the garden space was restored to its original condition

## 10 Post-Event Evaluation and Reflection

Feedback was collected from participants through a post-event survey. Attendance data and engagement levels were analyzed to assess the event's success. Reflections were used to improve future event planning and execution

# Event Overview

Every event included a tour of the community garden, lead by Garden Coordinator Nat Schwark. The garden tours lasted for about ten to fifteen minutes each and allowed time for questions from the attendees.

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Nat presented the sustainability strategies implemented at the garden, including rainwater harvesting and the Compost Cats program. The attendees were introduced to the soil bed rental programs, free Wi-Fi, and public availability of the garden. Attendees were also able to sample the ripe, sweet snap peas being grown for the community pantry, and were invited to take advantage of the community citrus trees and herb beds.

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In addition to the tour, the first two events each included a guest speaker presentation. All three events included at least one relaxing activity, as well as a complimentary snack table and ice water.

# Art in the Garden

Event  
#1



Once several attendees had arrived, the event began with the community garden tour while the guest speaker got set up.

Guest Speaker Jess Roberts presented her art made entirely from naturally derived and hand-foraged materials, and discussed the history of the sustainable art movement. There was a short Q&A section at the end.

The rest of the event time was set aside for rock painting. Attendees enjoyed painting in the shade and showing each other their creative projects while listening to music. Most attendees took their art home, while some donated them as decorations for the garden beds.

# Cultivating Calm

Event  
#2



This event also began with the garden tour while our guest speaker set up. After walking around the garden space, guests were invited to pick whatever position was most comfortable for them in a semi-circle under the covered ramada.

Guest Speaker Dr Yang provided a short introduction to her professional career and the CALM workshops on campus. For the main portion of the event, she performed a soothing sound bath and guided group meditation using various instruments and tools such as singing bowls.

# Earth Day Garden Party

Event  
#3



For the last event, we pivoted away from a rigid schedule. We upgraded the snack table to include additional refreshments (orange juice, coffee, and pastries), and held the garden tour about halfway through the event, when there were the most attendees present.

Instead of a guest speaker, we offered two activities. We brought back the rock painting and music due to popular demand, and also provided supplies and written instructions to make native seed balls using the garden's very own compost. Attendees were able to bring their seed balls home in a paper bag.

Thanks to a very successful turnout, we decided to extend the event time by about half an hour before packing up.



# Project Results

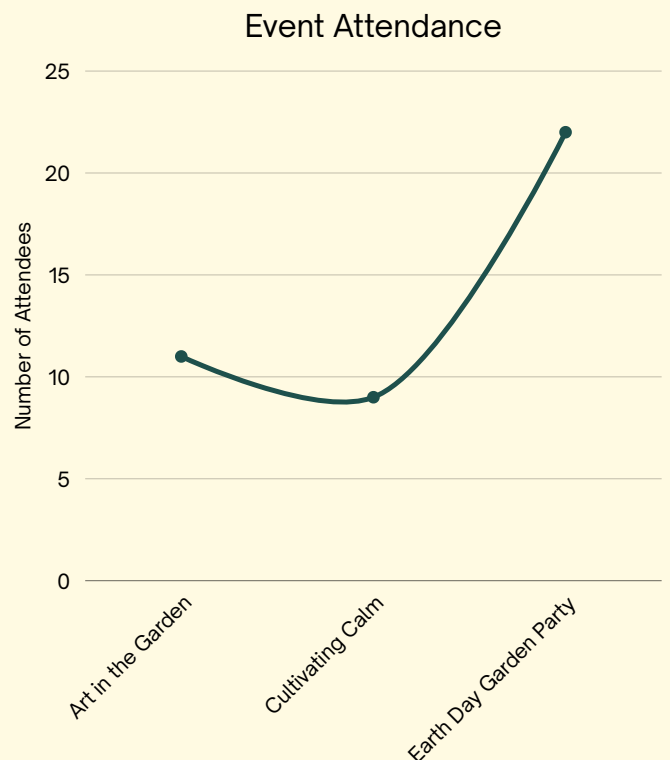
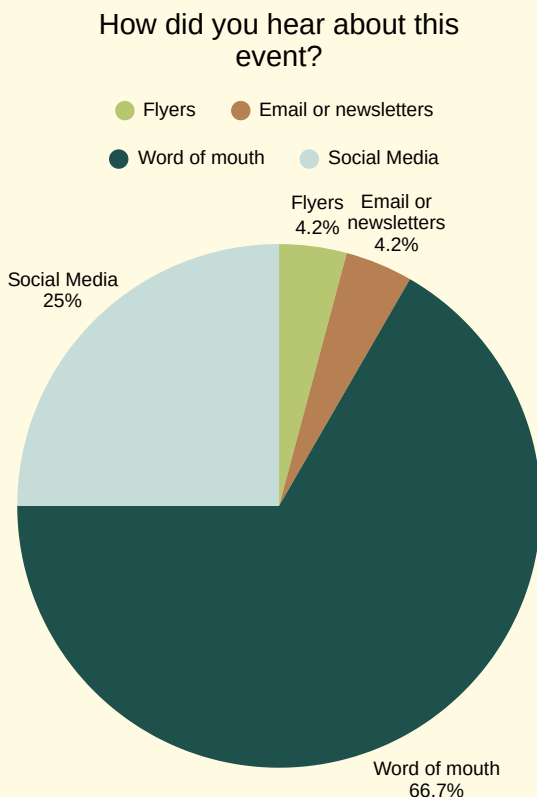
## Overview

Overall, our events attracted 38 attendees with various affiliations to the U of A: from students, to alumni, or community members. The majority of our attendees had never been in the garden space before attending an event, and almost all of our attendees said that they would be interested in attending other events in the U of A Community Garden. In our post-event survey, we received positive and constructive feedback about the various activities at the events, as well as suggestions for improvements for future events that we were able to implement.

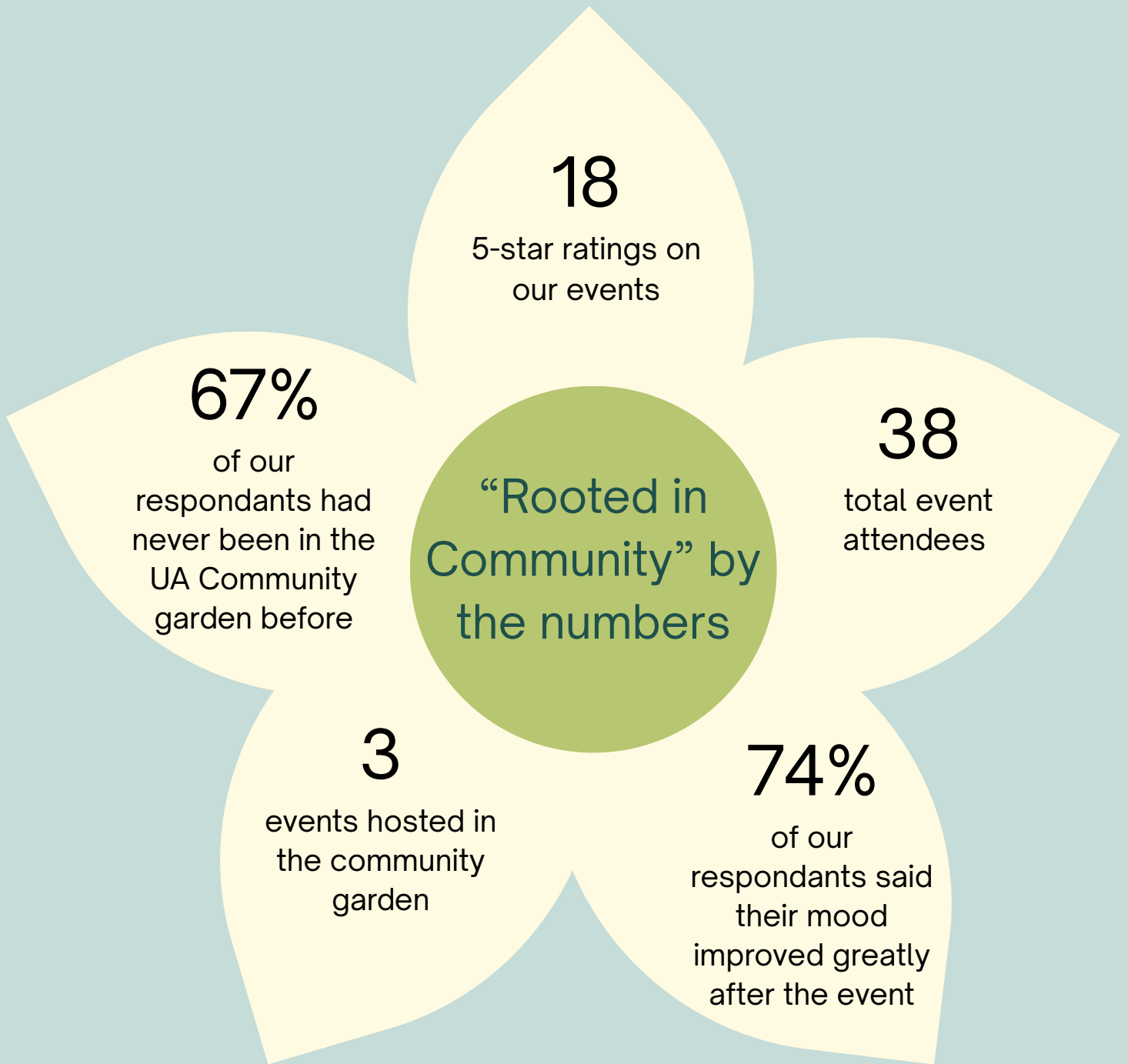
As a team, our planning and implementation for these events improved over time. We were able to develop a replicable plan for each event, as well as adapt our strategies and plans for each event.

## Post-Event Survey Responses

As a vital part of our project, we asked all event attendees to fill out a Post-Event Survey when they left our event. This survey included questions like “Have you visited the UA community garden before today?”, “How can we improve our events in future?” and “What was your favorite part?”. As a team, we then used these survey responses as both a way to measure success and information to utilize to improve our future events. We received 24 total responses to our surveys.



Some of the results from our Post-Event surveys across all three of our events are summarized here.



## Quotes from our event attendees!

“Painting rocks was my favorite. Play more music!”

“I loved meeting all the people and seeing the garden.”

“I loved being a part of this community, and making art.”

“I loved the mediation and the garden tour. This was a very well planned event.”

“I loved painting the rocks and also the garden tour, it was cool to see how much is done here!”

“I love your events. Today’s event was very relaxing. After the event I feel well and rested. Thank you for making me discover the community garden.”

# Discussion and Conclusion



**Direct impact:** A majority of our attendees had never been to the community garden prior to one of our events, and many said they would return and/or recommend the space to a friend.

## Setbacks:

- Not every attendee responded to the post-event survey for the second event
- Our initial picks for guest speakers were not always available, and waiting for responses took time

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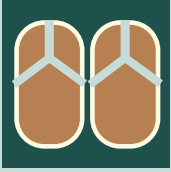
## What we learned:

- A more flexible event schedule was easier to run and just as enjoyable for our attendees. For the third and final event, we opted to include a second activity instead of trying to find a guest speaker at the last minute. This went over well and enabled us to hold the garden tour at the apex of our attendance turnout.
- Scheduling the third event for earlier in the day helped us beat the Arizona heat and resulted in a higher turnout
- Attendees particularly enjoyed hands-on activities where they could work at their own pace

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**We recommend focusing future events on immersive, entry-level activities. We also suggest reminding attendees about the post-event survey as they leave, or sending out a post-event email blast.**

# Tips and Tricks For Event Hosting



## 01 Identify who you want to attend the event

When you have a target audience in mind, it can be easier to create activities and marketing materials that are better suited for that audience.

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## 02 Start thinking about advertising early

The sooner you start, the better! It is not too early to begin making the materials you need to advertise with. The more you put the information out, the more likely it is that someone who is interested in your event will see it.

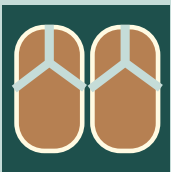
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## 03 Keep all your materials organized

There are a lot of small details that go into hosting an event, so making sure you keep your planning materials like budgets, to-do lists and event agendas organized, and in a way where you and your team can find all the necessary information.

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## 04 Meet with the event planning team regularly

Sometimes it may not seem like you have anything to talk about, but team meetings are important to make sure that everyone is aligned. We found that they facilitate group decisions, brainstorming ideas, and boost confidence in the progress of our project.

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## 05 Use various methods of advertising

There are many effective ways to promote your event, and we found the more you use, the better! Some of the things we did: hang flyers around campus, tabled at events, made Instagram posts, submitted our event flyers to newsletters, advertised to campus clubs, and even used word of mouth to tell our friends!

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## 06 Don't be afraid to ask for help

We found that asking our advisors or networks for ideas or help made the process so much easier!

# Special Thanks to...

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