# Garden reporting guide 2023-New Garden Data System

Reporting system: https://gardens.extension.illinois.edu/gardens
Public dashboard: https://go.illinois.edu/GardenDashboard.
      (Direct link: https://extension.illinois.edu/community-gardens/extension-supported-gardens)
List of information collected for each garden: available within go.illinois.edu/GardenQuestions

## What to report

**All gardens that receive support from Extension staff or Master Gardener/Master Naturalist/4-H volunteers** during a reporting year should have a record in Extension's garden database.  We call these Extension-supported gardens.  Gardens may be used for demonstration, education, food donation, pollinator support, life skills training, therapeutic uses, and many other purposes.   All Extension-supported gardens need an annual update each year.

**Gardens in our system that were Extension-supported last year, but are not this year**, need an update this year to register this change in status and remove them from our list.

### Continuing gardens
- For **actively supported gardens**, review information and update where needed.
- You will receive a notification for every garden currently in the system for which you are listed as a collaborator.  You may also search for gardens to update directly in the system.   Search by garden name, county, or collaborator.

### New gardens (or gardens not previously in the system)
- Add a garden and tag the site, then complete the information.

- Site information is based on PEARS sites—if site for new garden is not in PEARS, you will need to request a new site at uie-inepdocs@illinois.edu.

## Prior gardens (gardens supported last year that are no longer supported--active or not)

- For gardens no longer actively supported, provide a brief update on the change in status. Once you've answered "no" to the question "was this garden supported by Extension this year", you'll be prompted to answer whether the garden was active without Extension support, and to provide brief comments on the current situation. These questions are required.

## About the new system

A new Garden Data System is available at https://gardens.extension.illinois.edu/gardens. We now have an integrated system for making garden updates and for finding current garden information – for public and internal use. Updates will be published to the public dashboard after the reporting period ends.

## How to report

## How to access the reporting system

1. Go to https://gardens.extension.illinois.edu/gardens
2. You may be prompted to login.
3. Scroll down to see a list of gardens. Filter by county, city, garden name, or collaborator to narrow the list and find gardens to update.
4. Use the "Add a new garden" button if needed.

## Making annual updates

1. **Click on the "manage" button** in the left column for the garden you are updating.
2. Complete or update the primary and secondary contact information if any changes are needed.
3. Scroll down, then **click on "update"** for 2023.
4. You will see a question about whether the garden was supported by Extension. Select your response.
5. If NO, answer the two record closure questions that appear.
   a. **Check the box** that says "check when record is complete," then **click save**. Thank you! Your update is complete. If needed, you can return before 11/30/23 to update the record.
6. If YES, the update screen will appear
7. Check all information on the screen to make sure it is correct and complete, updating as needed. The following required fields are marked with an asterisk (*): collaborators, garden uses, signage, support, Extension group, access, food donation.
8. When update is complete, **check the box** that says "Check when record update is complete. Do not check until final food donation is entered." at the bottom of the page, then **click save**. For food donation gardens, do not check this box until you have entered the total produce donated for the year at the end of the growing season.
9. If you have additional gardens to update, the browser's back button will take you back to your filtered list.

## Information collected

- A list of information collected for each garden is available within the garden reporting folder.
  - **Continuing gardens--Information carried over** from previous year, for annual confirmation or update: primary and secondary contacts; collaborators; square footage (if

available); uses (e. g. food donation, environmental, education, demonstration, therapeutic, etc); support provided; Extension groups involved; Garden signage; Public access information (yes/no/access notes)

- o **Continuing gardens--information not carried over**, for annual update: External funding amounts and sources; Pounds of produce donated
- o **Newly added gardens**: Garden name; Site (uses PEARS sites); plus above
- o **Gardens no longer supported**: Whether the garden is active without Extension support; brief note on current situation/explanation of why support no longer provided

## Garden reporting checklist

☐ Each Extension-supported garden has a record in the Garden Data System

☐ Each garden has a primary and secondary current Extension staff contact listed.

☐ Each garden that was supported last year, but not this year, has been updated with that information in the system.

☐ Information has been updated with 2023 information.

☐ Collaborator list is up-to-date

☐ Food donation total reflects all of 2023 growing season. For non-food donation gardens, zero is entered.

☐ Record is marked "Check when record is complete"

☐ Direct education activities that took place at this garden are reported separately in PEARS.

## Additional notes

1. It's recommended to search at some point by collaborator to make sure all your gardens are listed and you are listed as a collaborator.
2. Public dashboard is visible at https://go.illinois.edu/GardenDashboard. 2023 updates will be published to the public dashboard at the end of the reporting period.
3. See the Community garden list of questions for a summary of the information needed.
4. Acknowledgements. This new system was made possible thanks to the great work by Jason Frye, Web Applications Development Manager, and Emily Frillman, Extension Data Analyst.

## FAQ

How can I find out if I need to update or add a garden entry?
Which gardens should I report on?
For new gardens, what site do I tag—the organization location or a site specifically for the garden?
Why do we have to learn a new system? Why aren't we reporting gardens in PEARS any more?
What is the best way for Units to track produce donations from the gardens they support?
I am SNAP-Ed, 4-H, or CED staff. Should I report on gardens?

## How can I find out if I need to add or update a garden record?

After logging in on the https://gardens.extension.illinois.edu/gardens site, use the filter to see which gardens are currently in the system. Add any gardens that are not in the system.

## Which gardens should I report on?

- **Extension-supported gardens**.   All gardens that received some Extension staff or Master Gardener support this reporting year should be entered in the PEARS program activity section.  Gardens may be used for demonstration, education, food donation, pollinator support, life skills training, and many other uses.
- **Gardens supported last year that are now inactive or not supported by Extension** should be updated in the system.

## For new gardens, what site do I tag—the organization location or a site specifically for the garden?

If a garden is on the property of an organization such as a school, Extension office, Park District, etc, tag that site as the garden site.   For example, if a garden is at a school, tag the school.   You do not need a separate site called "School Name Garden."

## Why do we have to learn a new system? Why aren't we reporting gardens in PEARS program activities any more?

The new system is designed to avoid the downsides experienced by garden reporting in PEARS program activities, including (1) the need to re-enter the same information each year; (2) fussy process of entering irrelevant information in a system designed for another purpose; (3) confusion between direct education entries and garden entries.  Note that SNAP-Ed staff still report garden information in the PSE module.

## What is the best way for Units to track produce donations from the gardens they support?

Units use a variety of ways to track produce donations depending on their situation.  Starting in 2024, the Garden Data System will have a way to track produce donations by date, rather than just a total for the year.  While this system is currently accessible only for staff reporting, we are exploring ways for volunteers to enter produce donations.

## I am a SNAP-Ed, 4-H, or CED staff.   Should I report on gardens following this guide?

Yes, if you do not have an AAB/NREE staff collaborator who has reported on the garden.  Typically, AAB/NREE staff take the lead on garden reporting when they are involved.  If you support a garden independent of any AAB/NREE staff, please update or add garden records following this guide.   The list of Extension-supported gardens is used in Extension-wide reporting such as legislative reports and annual reports, so it should be comprehensive.   SNAP-Ed staff also continue to report garden information as directed in the PSE module. Consult with your data team member or email Karen Winter-Nelson for help in entering garden information.