

**Summary of Your Design Narrative:** Please provide a summary of your design in 500 words or less. \*

*Where is it located? Who is the community impacted? Problems solved? What goals does it achieve?*

The community garden at John Marble Recreation Center, located in Bradenton, Florida, is designed to serve the greater surrounding community and patrons of the recreation center. This project addresses several challenges, including food insecurity, promoting healthy food options and activity, and the need for sustainable practices in a rapidly developing area. By transforming a section of land into a thriving garden and another section adjoining it into a food forest, the initiative helps combat local food deserts, providing fresh produce, recreational and educational opportunities for residents.

The garden benefits a diverse group of people, including local families, nearby neighborhoods, and members of the recreation center. It fosters community engagement and strengthens social ties through shared stewardship of the land, offering hands-on gardening experience while promoting environmental conservation. By implementing sustainable practices like rainwater catchment and native plant selection, the garden also protects and supports local ecosystems and reduces environmental impact.

The primary goal of the garden is to create a sustainable food source while providing education on gardening and ecology. It teaches participants practical skills for Florida's unique climate and promotes a sense of purpose and belonging through collaborative efforts. Overall, the project aims to enhance local food access, environmental stewardship, and community resilience.

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**Design Impact and Visibility:** We are looking for designs that reach multiple partners and stakeholders and that shine light on permaculture solutions. \*

*Who benefits from this design? Who sees and interacts with it? What potential does your design have to become a permaculture viral meme (aka catch on with media and spread)?*

Who Benefits from This Design:

The community garden at John Marble Recreation Center benefits a broad range of individuals. Local families and residents gain access to fresh, nutritious produce, addressing food insecurity in the area. The garden also serves educational purposes, offering hands-on learning opportunities about sustainable gardening practices and environmental stewardship. Additionally, the garden strengthens community ties by fostering collaboration among participants and connecting them with nature.

Who Sees and Interacts with It:

The garden is visible to those who visit the John Marble Recreation Center, including community members who use the facility for recreational activities. Residents of Bradenton, particularly those living nearby, will see and interact with the garden through community events, workshops, and casual visits. Its presence enhances the overall community space and invites engagement from a diverse audience.

what potential does your design have to become a permaculture viral meme (aka catch on with media and spread)

Potential to Become a Permaculture Viral Meme:

The design has significant potential to become a permaculture viral meme by highlighting its innovative approach to community resilience and sustainability. A catchy phrase or news title could be: "Manatee County's Green Oasis: How a Community Garden is Cultivating Fresh Food and Local Connections". This title emphasizes both the environmental and social benefits of the garden, potentially attracting media attention and inspiring similar projects in other communities.

Other options include:

"Growing Together: How a Local Garden is Sprouting Fresh Food and Community Spirit"

"Manatee County's Garden Revolution: Cultivating Food Security One Bed at a Time"

"The Secret to Thriving in Food Deserts? Manatee County's Community Gardens Initiative"

"Sowing Seeds of Change: The Community Garden Changing Lives in Bradenton"

"Garden Power: Bradenton's Green Space Making Fresh Food Accessible for All"

"Blooming Hope: How John Marble Recreation Center's Garden is Nourishing Bodies and Souls"

"From Soil to Soul: Bradenton's Garden Project Bringing Fresh Produce and Community Ties"

"Digging In: How a Local Garden is Redefining Community and Sustainability in Bradenton"

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**Budget:** The winner will receive \$5,000 to kick-start their design. Consider this seed money to implement a key portion of your larger vision/design for high-impact, high-visibility permaculture project. \*

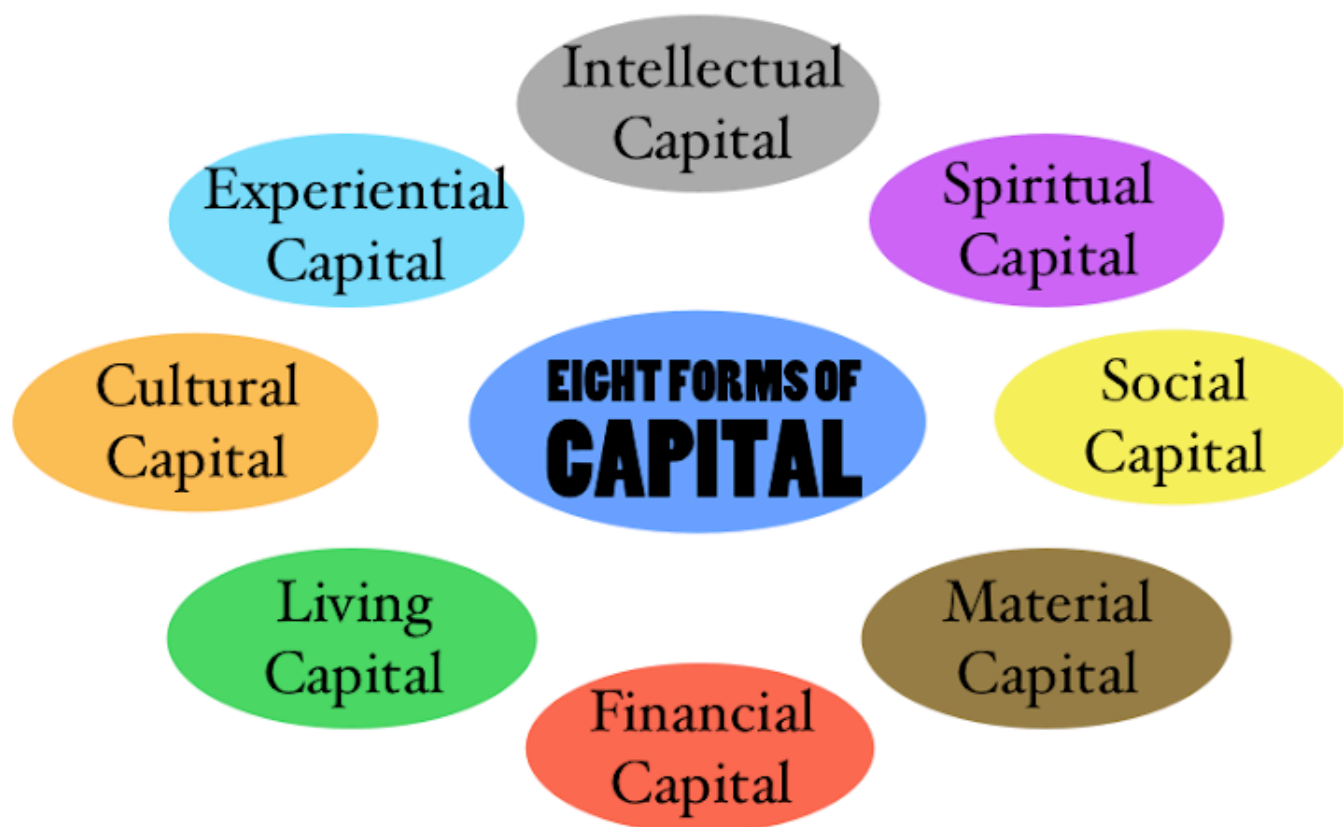
*How would you spend the \$5,000 Grand Prize to implement your design in the next year? Please be as detailed as possible.*

The \$5,000 budget would be used towards a sustainable water system, including cisterns to capture and hold water, and assist in building a bio-swale to support the Tampa Bay Estuary. These two options are not included in our \$150,000 budget and would help sustainable impact our water needs for this project

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**8 Forms of Capital:** For large and impactful projects, \$5,000 may not be enough to achieve the full results. However, permaculture urges us to utilize ALL forms of capital by design. \*

*How does your design leverage the 8 Forms of Capital? How can your design utilize the cash award to bolster the other forms of capital abundance surrounding your project?*



The concept of capital for the Community Garden at John Marble Recreation Center extends beyond financial wealth, recognizing multiple forms of value that sustain healthy individuals, ecosystems, and communities. These various forms of capital work together holistically, much like the domains of the Permaculture Flower, to create a thriving, sustainable, and resilient garden that benefits the environment, the people involved, and future generations.

Financial Capital is represented by the \$150,000 allocated by the Manatee County Commissioners for the construction of the community garden at John Marble Recreation Center. This funding supports the development of the built environment, providing essential resources like tools, benches, garden beds, and infrastructure that will help create an eco-friendly and functional space. Yields from utilizing this space efficiently will include water harvesting, a community space to host classes and promoting healthy activities, while promoting aesthetics and enjoyment. The financial backing also aligns with the Permaculture Flower's emphasis on Sustainable Finance and Economics, ensuring that the garden has a solid foundation to start strong while aiming for long-term resilience.

Material Capital includes the land and resources necessary for the garden's establishment, tying into the Land and Nature Stewardship petal of the Permaculture Flower. The land allocated next to the John Marble Recreation Center will become a living, regenerative space that services the community while promoting

biodiversity and sustainability. Additionally, the existing well and irrigation system, alongside new tools and structures funded by the \$150,000, form part of the Built Environment. Prize money, if awarded, will be used to install a sustainable water system and bio-swale to manage runoff, protecting the Tampa Bay Estuary and improving local conservation efforts. This approach reflects the Tools and Technology petal, utilizing appropriate technologies to reduce environmental strain and create more efficient systems.

Living (Natural) Capital refers to the existing ecosystems at the garden site, including large oak and pine trees that will be preserved. The community garden will enhance biodiversity through careful plant selection and soil-building strategies. This contributes directly to Land and Nature Stewardship by regenerating the landscape and fostering a thriving ecosystem. The garden team's experience in transforming vacant lots into food forests, as seen with the Manatee Health Department garden, demonstrates a commitment to increasing the regenerative capacity of nature, which is a key component of the permaculture approach and key to keeping the growing fruit trees and plants thriving. Soil testing and restoration efforts also align with the Health and Spiritual Well-being petal, recognizing that a healthy ecosystem directly contributes to the physical and emotional health of the community.

Social Capital is fundamental to the success of the garden and is closely linked to the Culture and Education petal of the Permaculture Flower. The Manatee County Community Gardens program has cultivated strong relationships with local officials, departments, and educational institutions, all working together to foster a sense of community and shared responsibility. The University of Florida Manatee County Extension Office plays a key role in providing ongoing education, mentorship, and maintenance for the gardens. This network of relationships and collaboration has enabled the garden program to address food scarcity and build resilience in the community, much like the Community Governance petal, which emphasizes collective decision-making and equitable resource management. The gardeners also have a lot of autonomy amongst themselves within each garden. The program also utilizes Manatee County's Neighborhood Services to accurately assess the surrounding community that would benefit from the implementation of the installation of the project.

Cultural Capital reflects the shared values and traditions that the community garden nurtures. In alignment with the Culture and Education petal, the garden allows participants to reconnect with agricultural traditions, sustainability, and community care. By growing food together and teaching others about ecological stewardship, the garden helps transmit these cultural values to future generations. It becomes a space where community members can gather, share knowledge, and engage in practices that sustain both the land and social bonds.

Intellectual Capital is provided through the expertise of the Community Gardens Program Specialist and their team. This aligns with the Culture and Education petal of the Permaculture Flower, as they offer educational programs in areas like soil management, pest control, and sustainable gardening practices. These classes and workshops empower participants with the knowledge needed to problem-solve and innovate in their own gardens, promoting sustainable systems that address food insecurity. The intellectual resources available through the program also contribute to the Health and Spiritual Well-being of participants by equipping them with the skills to grow their own nutritious food and contribute to a healthier environment.

Experiential Capital is gained as participants engage in hands-on learning, directly aligning with the Health and Spiritual Well-being petal. As participants gain experience with gardening in Florida's unique climate, they develop practical skills such as managing soil health, selecting appropriate plant species, and addressing challenges like pests or weather extremes. This experience fosters resilience and confidence, helping individuals adapt to and thrive in local conditions. Over time, this direct experience fosters a deeper

connection to sustainable gardening practices and the local environment, enhancing participants' physical and mental well-being.

Lastly, Spiritual Capital emerges as participants find meaning and purpose in working together to nurture the garden and care for the land. This aligns with the Health and Spiritual Well-being petal of the Permaculture Flower, where the garden provides not only physical sustenance but also a sense of fulfillment, belonging, and connection to the natural world. As individuals contribute to the garden's success, they deepen their relationship with the land, each other, and the broader community. The garden becomes a space for reflection, growth, and collective responsibility, symbolizing the shared purpose of building a sustainable and resilient future.

By recognizing and integrating all these forms of capital, the Community Garden at John Marble Recreation Center serves as a holistic, permaculture-inspired system that reflects the interconnected domains of the Permaculture Flower. Each form of capital supports and strengthens the others, working together to create a thriving community garden that benefits both people and the environment.

**Site Analysis and Assessment:** Tell us about the current conditions of the land. Please include \* something about the Climate, Soil, Water, Sectors, Zones of Use/Access and Circulation, Existing Plants, and Social Conditions involved in your project.

Currently, there is a cleared sandy patch of about half an acre in the middle of a construction zone. This designated space for the community garden is divided by sunlight into two distinct sections. The northern half receives full sun, while the southern section is shaded with dappled light due to the presence of old native oak and pine trees. This arrangement is ideal for creating a diverse ecosystem, providing refuge for both people and plants that thrive in less direct sunlight.

The property is bordered by a highly traveled road to the south, a large retention pond to the west, a new recreation building to the east, and future recreation courts and an existing tree line to the north. Additionally, sidewalks to the east and north offer easy access to the garden area, and restrooms and facilities are conveniently located nearby.

Situated in growing zone 10a, the garden will experience three main growing seasons, along with a rainy and a dry season. Given Bradenton, FL's susceptibility to tropical storms and hurricanes, the garden design will need to accommodate these climatic challenges.

The community garden at John Marble Recreation Center enjoys strong support from Commissioner Ballard and the local community. Manatee County has allocated \$19 million to renovate the community center, with our garden being the first of its kind to be integrated into such a project. Commissioner Ballard is a prominent advocate for the community garden program, underscoring its significance to the county.