

# FIVE STEP GUIDE TO OPEN ORCHARD



change **X**

# WELCOME

**“ Welcome to the ChangeX Open Orchard guide! I’m thrilled you’re thinking about starting an Open Orchard in your community. I really believe that if more of us were doing things we cared about locally, the world would be better and we’d be much happier.**

**Here you’ll find all the information, practical tips, and resources you need. There is someone to help you at each stage of the journey so don’t be afraid to get in touch!”**

Wayne Trevor,  
Co-Founder, Open Orchard



## Introduction to the Idea

### What is Open Orchard?

Open Orchard connects communities through fruit and the planting of fruit trees in public places. These trees provide free fruit to local residents and greenery to our urban environments. So far Open Orchard groups have operated mostly in London but the idea is just as relevant in the United States. We would love to see Open Orchard groups start up and plant fruit trees on public land across the U.S!

### Why is it important?

The environmental effects of planting trees takes time. A newly planted tree will offer some extra pollination opportunities, absorb a small amount of carbon dioxide, and divert additional rainwater that might have gone into drains. However, year after year, these positive effects increase as the tree grows.

Since the fruit trees are planted in public spaces, you need support from local authorities. For the project to really be sustainable, engaged communities need to act as the custodians of the trees. The project can give neighbors the opportunity to meet properly for the first time, while working toward a common goal with a sense

of purpose. In many areas, especially urban areas, this can be an important community building experience. Even if neighbors move away from the area, the trees will live for 20-30 years and remain a shared connection and legacy.

The fruit harvested from the trees can provide the community with a new source of fresh food. This fruit can be eaten raw or used to produce other products (which in years to come could be an opportunity for a social business).

### The background

The idea for Open Orchard came from the Bzz Garage garden project in West Norwood, London back in 2014. The Bzz Garage was working on transforming a neglected space by bringing the community together. They asked for donations of plants for their first planting day at the Bzz Garage. Someone donated a dwarf Morello cherry tree in a pot and the idea was raised, ‘Why not plant more fruit trees here?’. The idea grew roots and people got involved; one Morello cherry tree became 60 trees in 10 orchards in the first year – now rising to 260 trees in 24 orchards.

# STARTING AN OPEN ORCHARD

## EVERYTHING YOU NEED

### TIME



5 hours per week to set up initially, 7 hours per week at planting and harvesting times, and less than 1 hour per week the rest of the year

### PEOPLE



A team of approximately 5 people plus extra help for planting and harvesting days.

### FUNDING



Funding is needed to purchase trees, materials and plus refreshments for planting and harvesting days.

#### Who typically starts Open Orchard?

Someone who:

- enjoys bringing people in the community together
- is passionate about learning how to grow fruit trees
- is a good communicator

#### 5 Step Summary

- 1 Complete your 30 Day Challenge
- 2 Contact your Local Authority
- 3 Choose and source your fruit trees
- 4 Organize and hold the tree planting day
- 5 Ongoing tree care by the community

#### Support and Additional Resources

Support from ChangeX: Call us at (507)-301-6614. Email: [hello@changex.org](mailto:hello@changex.org)

[www.facebook.com/changexus](https://www.facebook.com/changexus)

Contact Information for Open Orchard Email: [openorchard.westnorwood@gmail.com](mailto:openorchard.westnorwood@gmail.com)

Arbor Day Foundation: <https://www.arboday.org/>

# STEP 1: COMPLETE YOUR 30 DAY CHALLENGE



The 30 Day Jumpstart Challenge has been designed to get your project off to the strongest possible start by building momentum in the first month. Once you have completed your challenge your first funding payment will be unlocked.

- Learn more about the idea you're starting**  
This '5 Step Guide' includes all you need to know about the specifics of starting your project.
- Schedule a Call**  
Pick a time that works for you to talk to a ChangeX team member about what's involved in your chosen project as well as to ensure that you understand the Guidelines & rules associated with the Challenge.
- Find 5 interested people**  
You already have your own project page on [changex.org](https://changex.org). Use the site to share the project with others and recruit neighbors, friends, or other folks with an interest to be your first supporters.
- Set up a casual kick-off meeting**  
Host a meeting with your team at your home, at a community center or in a coffee shop and come up with an action plan. You can use your page on [changex.org](https://changex.org) to set up an event and invite people.
- Share a team photo and your plan of action**  
Upload a team photo taken at your first team meeting to [changex.org](https://changex.org). In addition, provide us with a narrative on what you will spend the funding on, what your next steps as a group will be, and how you hope the project will ultimately benefit your community.

## STEP 2: CONTACT YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL

Now that you have your team together, the most important step is to get in touch with your local council to obtain their permission to plant fruit trees in a public space. You will also want to seek their advice on where the best place to plant would be. In some cases they may even have staff members who can help with the planting.

There is no point in going further until you have the full buy-in of the local council, as the location of planting will dictate the type of trees you will plant.

### LOCAL AUTHORITIES



Check with your local municipal government or parks department to obtain permission to plant your Open Orchard



# STEP 3: CHOOSE AND SOURCE YOUR FRUIT

## Which trees?

Once you have agreed with your local authority on a location to plant the fruit trees, the next step is to decide which type of fruit trees you will plant. You will want to consider the hardiness zone of your site. A local arboretum or garden center can give you advice on which types will best suit your location. The Arbor Day Foundation also offers a wealth of information at your fingertips, as well as inexpensive trees for sale (<https://www.arborday.org/>).

## Funding

There are some costs involved with planting fruit trees, such as:

- 1) the bareroot trees
- 2) stakes
- 3) tree ties
- 4) tree guards or wire mesh (which are necessary in all but the most protected of locations)
- 5) mulch

These costs will vary depending on tree and guard types, but the approximate cost per tree planted is \$40-\$50.

## Health and Safety

Health & safety is really important, but don't let it sink you. You can make a simple risk assessment document and a simple guide for people who come to plant. Printing key information on one page will do, and it can be laminated for reuse. It could contain important information, such as 'Keep space between other people who are working'; 'Don't leave tools on the floor'; 'Take care with lifting- bend from your knees and watch your back'- the sort of things that are useful to remind ourselves of on a regular basis.

## FUNDING SOURCES



When you complete your Challenges on the ChangeX page you will receive seed funding that will help you get your project started. If you need more funding for subsequent plantings and maintenance, you can try the following:

- **Your Local Authority:** they sometimes have small grants for community groups.
- **Crowd-funding:** can help to build a community for your project.
- **Gift-a-tree program:** at Christmas (end of Nov) or another holiday you can offer local people the chance to 'buy a tree' which you can then plant (with them if they like) in your Open Orchard. A tree planting experience is a nice gift!
- **Local sponsorship:** ask a local business if they would sponsor some fruit trees. You could thank them on signage in the Orchard.

# STEP 4: ORGANIZE AND HOLD THE TREE PLANTING DAY

This is the best part!

Spread the word in your community. Encourage people to come out to help to plant the fruit trees. Put posters up in local halls and shops, spread the word on social media, let local community groups, retirement homes, and schools know about your event.

Bare root fruit trees are planted in the dormant season, usually either in late Fall or in January/February (depending on the weather, location and type of fruit tree). Aim to organize a 2-3 hour session where you plant about 10 trees, ideally with the opportunity for coffee and a chat afterwards.

Have someone to take photos. They are a great way of showing the fantastic work you're doing and are perfect to use for other funding requests. A 'signup' sheet is essential too. Add people's names and email/phone to your ChangeX page so you can create a mailing list.

## TIPS



For some useful tips on planting fruit trees, check out Open Orchard Co-founder Wayne Trevor's video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EbJP9R7WKg&feature=youtu.be>

Arbor Day Foundation has a helpful planting guide that you can find on their website <https://www.arborday.org/Trees/index-planting.cfm>.





## STEP 5: ONGOING CARE BY THE COMMUNITY

This is the most important step!

In order to keep your fruit trees healthy they need some care and attention from the community, especially over the first couple of years. The essential thing is regular watering in the summer months and possibly even during rainy weather in the first 6-8 weeks as the roots have not established good contact with soil moisture. It is also important to keep the tree area free from weeds, as these compete for nutrients.

Organize within the group who will take responsibility for watering the trees, maybe you can make a weekly or monthly schedule!

### TIPS



- To keep people interested and invested you could plan some fun events such as weeding, mulching, wassailing (singing to the trees to promote a good harvest), blommon watching, and harvesting!
- At harvest time, if you have any unused fruit, look for resources for picking the unused fruit and distributing it to charities.



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