



## Green Thumbs at Work Garden Grants for Small Businesses



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BURLINGTON – The Vermont Department of Health and Vermont Community Garden Network are offering grants for small businesses to establish workplace food gardens.

The Green Thumbs at Work grants are open to any Vermont business or organization with fewer than 50 employees. The gardens can be in-ground or raised beds. The total grant award is \$1,750, which includes \$500 for materials, a \$250 Gardener's Supply gift certificate, and \$1,000 of garden planning support and technical assistance from horticulturalist Charlie Nardozi and the Vermont Community Garden Network. Eight grants are available in 2015.

The application deadline is Friday, Jan. 30, 2015.

The Green Thumbs at Work program provides a means of physical activity and stress reduction, increases access to fresh produce, and promotes opportunities for other wellness activities. The employees must be the primary users of the garden and beneficiaries of the food.

Workplace gardens can also increase employee engagement, camaraderie, and healthy behavior.

The technical assistance provided through the grant program helps each business determine the type and size of garden that best meets its needs, and develop strategies to ensure the garden will be successful throughout the 2015 season and for years to come.

In the words of the 2014 Green Thumbs grantees:

"Having a garden at our worksite has increased employee's sense of community."  
– *Karina Dailey, Trudell Consulting Engineers, Williston*

"The garden has changed the work day by providing a break and getting outside more."  
– *Bob Kottkamp, Black River Good Neighbor Services, Ludlow*

The biggest success of the summer was "having fresh veggies that the employees could use at lunch during the day or take some home."  
– *Joe Peters, TJ Mold and Tool, St. Johnsbury*

Grant winners will be selected based on readiness to develop a workplace garden, including the existence of a wellness coordinator or wellness committee, the ability to provide matching funds and in-kind services for garden development, employee participation, and clear articulation of how the garden will help meet employee wellness goals.

Green Thumbs at Work grant winners will be announced Feb. 23.

For more program details and a link to the online application, go to <http://vcgn.org/green-thumbs-at-work/>, or call (802) 861-4769 for more information.

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