SUPPORTING COMMUNITY GARDENING IN ALASKA THROUGH DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNITY GARDEN PRACTICE GUIDE

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Abstract

Anchorage is home to an increasing number of community gardens. The body of literature on the health benefits and potential health risks related to gardening in an urban setting has been steadily expanding as the popularity of urban gardening flourishes in cities across the nation. With Alaska Community Action on Toxics’ (ACAT) interest in community health, the precautionary principle, and healthy gardening practices, a partnership was developed with ACAT for a project and practicum designed to support these values through environmental testing and analysis, key informant interviews, and a practicum experience culminating in the creation of a guide for Alaska gardeners. The final product of the project was a user-friendly guide entitled Understanding Urban Soils: A Guide for Better Understanding the Need and Practice of Testing for Garden Soil Contaminants, in which safe gardening practices and interpretation of soil test results are addressed.