

Vegetable Garden or Forest?

Purpose

To debate whether people in a town should remove forest trees to plant a community vegetable garden

Background

Community gardening is popular. In these public gardens, many people from a neighborhood or town work together. They plant and care for the crops. Then at harvest time, they all share the vegetables and fruit. Community gardens can make open fields and vacant lots useful again.

However, some gardens use chemical fertilizers and insect sprays that can be harmful to soil and water. Organic gardens use natural fertilizers and pest control methods that do not involve chemicals or harm the environment. A garden requires sunlight, so in some cases, trees might have to be cleared to make room for a garden. Those trees provide important habitats to many animal species. Also, trees that grow along riverbanks provide root structures that keep the soil from eroding when it rains.

Whether a garden is truly beneficial depends on where it is placed and how it is grown.



Proposal

The people of Greenville should clear some forest trees to make room for a vegetable garden.

Situation

The people of Greenville love fresh vegetables and fruit. They want to plant a community garden. Greenville has a problem though. The town does not have a lot of open space for a large garden. Mayor Woods has an idea. Why not remove some trees in the forest area of the town park along the river? That would make room for the garden. It would even be near a source of water for the plants.

The people of Greenville are determined to start a community garden. However, they also appreciate the beautiful forest along the river. They understand that the riverside trees serve as a habitat to many living things. The trees also help prevent soil erosion. Mayor Woods and the Greenville citizens must consider the best garden location, or whether to have a garden at all.

Proposal: The people of Greenville should clear some forest trees to make room for a vegetable garden.

Pro Card

Who I am:

What's important to me:

Why I like this idea:

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Con Card

Who I am:

What's important to me:

Why I do not like this idea:

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Pro Card

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Pro Card

Who you are: Mayor Woods

What's important to you: Building community pride and involvement

Why you like this idea:

1. This is a project that all members of the community can work on together. Families who work in the garden can get involved while they also learn about soil and plants.
2. Few people use that part of the forest. The garden will be a use of the land that involves more people.

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Con Card

Who you are: Clara Cleanfish, a local park ranger

What's important to you: Keeping the river clean

Why you do not like this idea:

1. Forest tree roots prevent soil erosion along the riverbank. Cutting the trees will cause more erosion. Sediment from soil erosion along the riverbank will get into the river and harm fish.
2. If gardeners use fertilizers, harmful chemicals will enter the river and damage its ecosystems.

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Pro Card

Who you are: Harold Wholesome, a local gardener

What's important to you: Making healthful foods available

Why you like this idea:

1. The garden will produce healthful food for the community. People in the community will save money. They will get fruits and vegetables from the garden instead of buying them from faraway farms.
2. If the town makes this an *organic* garden, harmful chemicals will not pour into the river.

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Con Card

Who you are: Bheru Birdfeather, a man who likes to hike in the forest

What's important to you: Having a nice place for outdoor recreation

Why you do not like this idea:

1. The forest is the only place in the area where you can hike to observe nature. Also, cutting down trees will destroy habitats of the wild animals you enjoy spotting.
2. The city can encourage people to garden using containers on school grounds or other town property.

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