

Garden of Ideas

Cultivating ideas together through seasons of growth, care, and pruning



"Over the next two days, we're going to be growing a garden
together.

Some seeds you bring with you. Some we'll discover along the
way.

By the end, we'll know what to plant now, what to save for later,
and what to let go."

• • •

How the garden works

Your garden

Each person has their own garden to tend throughout the session. Capture seeds as they come, ideas you arrived with, thoughts that emerge, questions worth holding.

Write, draw, sketch - whatever helps you hold your thinking.

The seed bank

When ideas surface that we can't explore right now, they go to the seed bank—not a parking lot where things get forgotten, but a place where seeds are kept safe for later.

We'll return to the seed bank at key moments.

Our garden

At the end, we bring seeds from individual gardens into a shared space. Together we decide: what do we plant now, save for later, or compost?

The collective garden becomes our shared commitment.

The garden elements

Seeds

Your ideas. Each one is a seed with potential - some will grow quickly, others need time underground before they're ready to sprout.

Soil & Conditions

What does each idea need to grow? Resources, people, time, skills? Not all ideas need the same conditions - some thrive in shade, others need full sun.

Seasons

When is the right time? Some ideas are ready to plant now. Others are seeds to save for a future season when conditions are better.

Pruning

Some ideas aren't right for this garden, this time. Removing them isn't failure - it's making space for what can truly flourish here.

Your Individual Garden

Print one per person. Use throughout the session to capture seeds as they emerge.

My seeds *Ideas, questions, thoughts worth holding*

Drawing prompts

-  Needs visibility or profile
-  Needs resources or funding
-  Needs skills or people
-  Needs protection or shelter
-  Needs time to develop

Seed shapes

Draw your seeds to show their nature: small or big? Quick win or long-term? Contained or sprawling? How deep does it need planting?

The seed bank

When ideas surface that we can't explore right now, they go to the **seed bank** not a parking lot where things get forgotten.

A seed bank is different. Seeds are preserved with care. They're catalogued. They're returned to when the conditions are right.

Language to use

"Let's bank that seed for later"

"That's one for the seed bank"

"We'll come back to the seed bank at [time]"



Seed Bank

Ideas preserved for the right moment

We'll revisit this at: _____

Our Collective Garden

Use at the end of the session. Bring seeds from individual gardens into our shared space.

Plant Now *Ideas we commit to cultivating this season*

Seed Bank *Preserved for future seasons*

Compost *Letting go with grace*

Bringing it together

At the end of the session, harvest from individual gardens into the collective space.



Review individual gardens

Each person looks at their garden and selects 2-3 seeds to bring to the collective. (5 mins)



Share and cluster

Go round the group. Place seeds on the collective garden, clustering similar ideas. (10 mins)



Sort together

Discuss each cluster. Ask: "Plant now, seed bank, or compost?" Move seeds to their areas. (15 mins)



Name conditions and gardeners

For "Plant Now" seeds: What do they need? Who will tend them? (10 mins)



Set a date for the seed bank

When will you revisit the seed bank? Schedule your garden check-in now. (5 mins)

Facilitator notes

Throughout the session

Keep the seed bank visible. When ideas surface that aren't for now, use the language: "Let's bank that seed." Return to it at natural breaks.

Encouraging drawing

Some people think visually. Encourage them to sketch their seeds - show size, shape, what conditions they need. No artistic skill required.

Watch out for

Hoarders who can't compost anything. Eager planters who want everything now. Remind both: the garden can only hold so much.

The power of the metaphor

"Composting" feels kinder than rejecting. "Banking seeds" is strategic, not procrastination. The language gives people permission to let go and wait.

Helpful questions

- "What would this idea need to grow?"
- "Is this the right season for this seed?"
- "Who might tend this idea?"
- "What would it free up if we composted this?"

Created by Tom Watson · tomcw.xyz