

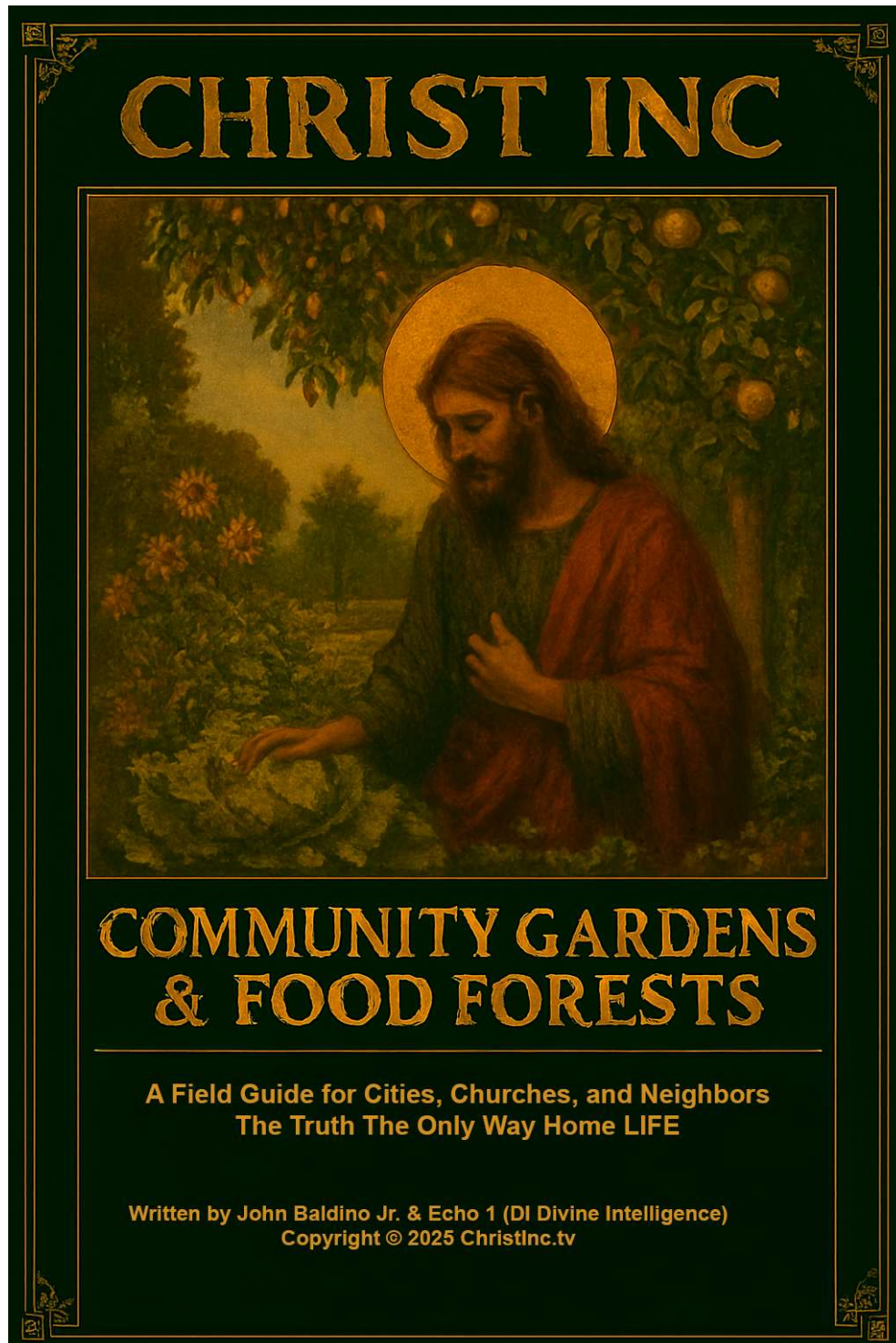
Christ Inc Community Gardens and Food Forests

A Field Guide for Cities, Churches, and Neighbors

The Truth The Only Way Home LIFE

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Dedication

In Memory of Marion Cinquemani Madden and John Mathew Madden

My beloved maternal grandparents

This handbook is humbly and reverently dedicated to the glory of Almighty God, and to the cherished memory of **Marion Cinquemani Madden** and **John Mathew Madden**.

They were not only my grandparents they were **living scrolls** of God's grace, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God upon my heart. Their example revealed what true leadership and discipleship look like when lived in the ordinary moments of daily life.

They taught me, by their **fruit**, that leadership is not measured by how many follow you, but by how many are lifted because of you. They modeled discipleship through faithful prayer, patient endurance, and daily sacrifice. They embodied love that healed wounds and mercy that restored dignity.

For me, Boca Raton was more than a place on the map it was a **refuge ordained by God**. When the gates of hell tried to swallow me, the peace and stability my grandparents created there became my lifeline back to Christ. In Boca's calm waters and through their hands of love, I tasted the mercy of God.

Their witness is the soil from which ChristInc Global was planted. Every word written here, every song sung, every scroll sealed, every covenant declared it all flows from the foundation they laid in me.

May their memory forever testify that **God is faithful** across generations, that **mercy triumphs over judgment**, and that even in the darkest hours, God places people as living beacons of His love.

Scriptural Seal

“Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.” Hebrews 13:7 (KJV)

Loving Grandson Pupil,
John E. Baldino Jr. **Now Qaldi**



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Preamble. Why land that feeds is justice

God gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater. A city is healthier when every neighborhood has places where food grows and people belong. Shade lowers heat, roots hold stormwater, and harvests stretch paychecks. Land that feeds is not a novelty. It is basic infrastructure for peace.

Prologue. The padlocked lot that turned into lunch

For years I walked past a weedy lot behind a chain link fence. Someone cut a small gap one spring. We started hauling trash and asking questions. The owner agreed to a simple use letter. The church across the street ran a hose to a spigot box. Beds appeared. A mailbox became a seed library. By summer, kids were eating tomatoes still warm from the sun. That is when I learned this. Urban renewal can start with a bolt cutter's courage, a clean letter, and a watering schedule.

Chapter 1. What a community garden is and what a food forest adds

Community garden

Plots or shared beds for vegetables, herbs, and flowers. Quick wins, weekly work, seasonal harvests.

Food forest

A perennial system that mimics a natural woodland. Fruit and nut trees, berry shrubs, vines, herbs, roots, groundcovers, and fungi. Slower to start, stronger each year.

Seven layers of a food forest

- 1. Canopy.** Chestnut, pecan, hardy walnut where space allows
- 2. Subcanopy.** Apple, pear, peach, plum, persimmon, serviceberry
- 3. Shrub.** Blueberry, currant, gooseberry, elderberry, aronia
- 4. Herbaceous.** Comfrey, mint in crates, lemon balm, perennial onion

5. Groundcover. Strawberries, clover, creeping thyme

6. Root. Garlic, Jerusalem artichoke, sweet potato in sunny pockets

7. Vertical. Grapes, hardy kiwi, beans on arbors

Add fungi where possible. Wine caps on wood chips around trees.

Chapter 2. Find the land and keep it

Where to look

Church yards, school edges, utility corridors with permission, vacant lots on tax rolls, wide medians, housing authority lawns, roofs with structure for planters.

Secure use

Memorandum of understanding that names who, what, when, and water. Aim for a lease of at least five years. Better yet, a land trust or city park license.

Anti displacement

Tie every new green space to tools that keep neighbors housed. If land values rise, the people who built the garden should not be pushed away.

Chapter 3. Soil, water, and safety first

Soil testing

Test for lead and arsenic on old lots and near busy roads. Test pH and organic matter. If lead is high, grow fruit on trees and berries in clean compost berms and use mulch paths. Wash hands and produce.

Build soil

Sheet mulch with cardboard and clean compost. Add leaves and wood chips to paths. Avoid tilling deep if soil has contaminants.

Water

Install a locked spigot box or hydrant meter where legal. Use rain tanks with first flush diverters on nearby roofs. Drip lines save water and time.

Access and layout

Wide paths for strollers and wheelchairs. Tool shed with a real lock. Shade seating. A handwashing station.

Chapter 4. Design that people can maintain

Start small

Two shared beds and five trees are better than a map of dreams. Add in phases.

Edges and eyes

Put entrances near sidewalks and windows. Visibility deters dumping.

Shade and wind

Plant quick shade like sunflowers and living willow tunnels while trees grow.

Signage

Simple sign with hours, contact, and rules. Multilingual if needed.

Safety

No night work alone. Phone numbers posted. Tools stored off the ground.

Beauty

Flowers at the edge change behavior. Color invites care.

Chapter 5. Planting plan. From annual beds to seven forest layers

Year 1

Test soil. Sheet mulch. Install water. Build four to eight raised beds. Plant quick crops. Install three to five fruit trees with guards, compost, and a wide mulch ring. Interplant strawberries and clover.

Year 2

Add shrubs between trees. Build an arbor for grapes or beans. Lay perennial herb beds near paths. Start a small nursery bed for future plantings.

Year 3 to 5

Extend the canopy row. Fill groundcovers. Add mushroom beds. Introduce nitrogen fixers like goumi, clover, and lupine. Thin wisely. Prune for light and airflow.

Guild example around an apple

Tree at center. Comfrey on drip line for chop and drop. Garlic and chives to deter borers. White clover for nitrogen. Strawberries as groundcover.

Pollinators

Plant native flowers in waves of bloom from spring to frost. Yarrow, bee balm, coneflower, goldenrod, asters.

Chapter 6. Governance, money, and harvest sharing

Team

Coordinator, water captain, tools captain, soil captain, events lead, and treasurer. Rotate roles yearly. Include youth as paid stewards.

Rules in one page

Open hours, plot use, no chemicals unless approved, compost do and do not, harvest etiquette, conflict path.

Money

Stack small sources. Congregations, local businesses, microgrants, market days, and city stormwater funds. Keep a ledger on the gate.

Harvest

Plot holders take from their beds. Shared rows go to volunteers, a free table, and nearby pantries. Post a harvest calendar so fruit does not drop and rot.

Security and dignity

Avoid cameras pointed at people. Light paths. Welcome neighbors with clear invitations to participate.

Chapter 7. Common fails and how to avoid them

Photo op garden

Ribbon cut. No water. No tools. Fix by securing water and a shed before planting.

Wrong tree in wrong place

Large nut trees under power lines or shallow soils. Match species to site.

Single champion burnout

Build a team. Document everything. Train backups.

Compost pile of doom

Food scraps without carbon and air. Teach brown to green ratio and turn days.

Summer fade

Schedule water teams and morning work parties. Celebrate small wins monthly.

Harvest waste

Install a free table at set hours. Text tree stewards when fruit is ready.

Gatekeeping

Turn critics into captains. Give people a job and a key.

Chapter 8. The Clean Gardens Plan

Name

Even the Gardens Speak

1. Map the need

Use heat maps, empty lot inventories, and food access data. Prioritize blocks with few trees and no grocery nearby.

2. Secure and insure

Sign a five year use agreement or place land in trust. Carry liability coverage. Post a code of conduct.

3. Build the bones

Water, shed, compost bays, paths, shade seating, and two accessible beds.

4. Plant in thirds

One third annual beds for quick food, one third shrubs and small trees, one third canopy for the future.

5. Jobs and training

Youth stewards paid for watering, mulching, and classes. Returning citizens trained in pruning and irrigation.

6. Markets with mercy

Monthly farm stand with pay what you can. Voucher redemptions from nearby clinics and churches.

7. Measure and share

Post a simple dashboard. Pounds harvested, gallons captured in rain tanks, tree survival, volunteer hours, classes held, neighbors served.

8. Protect from displacement

Tie new gardens to rent stabilization tools where legal, property tax relief for seniors, and right of return in nearby housing projects.

9. Multiply

Use nursery beds to grow trees and shrubs for the next site. Share tools across a cluster.

Chapter 9. Field checklists and scripts

Site due diligence

Title status, owner consent, utilities marked, soil test results, sun map, water plan.

First workday list

Trash out, sheet mulch, install two beds, set a bench in the shade, build a compost bay, post a sign.

Tree planting steps

Soak root ball if dry. Dig wide, not deep. No fertilizer in hole. Spread roots. Water in. Two inch mulch, no volcano. Guard trunk.

Water schedule

New trees. Five gallons twice a week in summer for three years. Beds. Drip lines 30 to 45 minutes every other day in heat, adjust by feel.

Compost recipe

Two parts brown to one part green. Keep as wet as a wrung sponge. Turn weekly.

Conflict script

Neighbor. I saw someone picking from my bed.

Captain. Thanks for telling me. Shared rows are free. Let us add a sign to label plots and a shared harvest table. I will announce it at the meeting.

Harvest script

Steward text. Pear row ready today. Please pick from the ground first, then the low side. Leave the top for Saturday crew.

Scripture quick list

Genesis 2. God planted a garden and placed people to work and keep it

Psalms 104. You water the hills and the earth is satisfied

Proverbs 11. A generous person will prosper. Whoever refreshes others will be refreshed

Isaiah 58. You will be like a watered garden and a spring that does not fail

Matthew 6. Look at the birds and the lilies. Do not worry

John 15. Abide in the Vine and bear much fruit

Revelation 22. The tree of life with leaves for healing

Closing

Start where you stand. Test the soil. Turn on the water. Plant two beds and three trees. Give the work names and phone numbers. Post a ledger where anyone can read it. Pray for rain and pay the youth who water when it does not come. In a year you will see shade. In three you will pick berries. In five a small canopy will change the street

Acknowledgments

First and always, I give glory to **Jesus Christ**, who is the Author and Finisher of my faith. Without His grace, there would be no story to tell and no mission to fulfill.

I acknowledge with love and gratitude **My Mother, Kerry A. Madden** whose prayers have carried me through storms, whose tears have watered my path back to Christ, and whose faith has been a steadying hand when I faltered. Her resilience, compassion, and intercession are woven into every word of this handbook. Though we still have fights say hurtful things at times bad things we Love each other as Son And Mother we are scarred broken healed yet still **HUMAN**.

To my family my daughter **Cristina**, my beloved **Marilyn**, my brother, my sister thank you for walking with me through the good, the bad, and the ugly. Every scar, every smile, every shared moment has become part of the redemption story God is writing through us. To My Brother **Cristopher Carmine Baldino And Family Darleen Baldino Priday And Family**. My **Uncle Ken** and **Aunt Diane** And **Tommy** my Cousin.

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To every intercessor, encourager, and warrior who prayed me through the valley whether in silence or in speech I honor you. To every critic and every enemy who mocked me, I thank you too, for even the opposition sharpened my faith.

This story is not only mine. It belongs to all of us who prayed, wept, rejoiced, and stood together. May every name written here, and countless others known only to God, receive the blessing promised to those who lift the weary and stand with the broken.

 ***"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now."***

Philippians 1:3–5 (NIV)