



Community Garden Policies & Guidelines

Sustainable Gardening

- Read Garden City Harvest's Sustainable Gardening Guidelines for recommendations and restrictions, posted online at www.gardencityharvest.org/community-gardens
- Synthetic pesticides, herbicides, or chemical fertilizers are NOT allowed.
- Garden City Harvest brings in manure or compost for each garden plot every spring. Gardeners are expected to incorporate allotted amounts into soil before planting.

Communications and Renewing Your Plot

- All official notifications, deadlines, and garden-related discussions are sent via email, and all gardeners with email access and written English proficiency are expected to subscribe to GCH email list-serv. If a gardener does not have regular access to email, it is their responsibility to notify GCH staff and request phone or text communications.
- Plots are assigned by a spring plot lottery, with priority given to returning gardeners in good standing first. Plots are generally limited to one plot per household across all community garden sites. Secondary plots may be assigned if there is no waiting list.
- Returning gardeners must fill out a current year's garden contract and pay by March 15th each year. The \$25 deposit is required to reserve your plot. Failure to meet this deadline will forfeit your hold on the plot.

Plot Maintenance

- A garden plot is a commitment of many hours per week from April - October. Due to our short growing season and long waitlist, gardeners are expected to begin working in their plots by May 1 or within 2 weeks of receiving a plot and are expected to plant, water, weed, and harvest throughout the season until Closing Day.
- **Closing Day is the fourth weekend in October**, unless otherwise noted. All plots must be winterized by this date. Gardeners who do not meet this deadline will automatically forfeit their deposit and could lose gardening privileges next year.
- If gardeners are going to be out of town, they must make arrangements for its care.
- If for any reason gardeners need to discontinue gardening mid-season, they must notify staff immediately, so the plot and crops do not go to waste.
- Community garden sites and garden plots cannot be used for commercial purposes. Gardeners are not allowed to sell anything grown in their garden plot commercially.
- Plots are intended to grow annual vegetables. No more than than 25% of plots can consist of non-edible or perennial plants.
- Gardeners must harvest ripe produce regularly to avoid vandalism, pests and food waste.
- Do not walk through, harvest, or take anything from other rented plots that is not

rightfully yours unless given permission.

Plot Abandonment Policy

Notifications will be given to gardeners whose plots have either one or more of the following. Gardeners are required to address these issues within two weeks or may lose gardening privileges.

- Mat of weeds or weeds spreading to pathways or neighboring plots
- Weeds going to flower or seed
- Ripe unharvested or rotting vegetables (e.g. giant zucchinis)
- Stunted, wilted, or drought-stressed plants
- More than 50% bare or unplanted areas June 1 - September 1

Community Participation

- In addition to tending personal plots, gardeners are expected to contribute at least 3 hours per season to tending common areas or participate in volunteer projects that benefit the garden as a whole.
- In order to keep garden sites accessible and safe to all abilities, all pathways must be kept clear and wide enough for a person and wheelbarrow to get through.
- Gardeners must weed pathways adjacent to their plot and help with weeding communal areas around sheds, picnic tables, compost piles, and ADA-accessible raised beds.
- Pets on leash are allowed at most garden sites, except River Road and Orchard Gardens where there is a working farm. Pet waste, unleashed, or unsupervised pets walking through or marking plots will not be tolerated.

Weeds and Pests

- Gardeners are expected to keep weeds in their plot and surrounding pathways under control. Removed weeds must be placed in designated weed piles.
- Woody or stalky plant material (e.g. corn stalks, sunflowers, broccoli stems) should also be placed in designated weed or stalk piles (Note signage at each garden site).
- Do not add straw, soil, potted plants, plastic, leaves or any other yard waste to the weed pile. The majority of weed piles are manually removed by Garden City Harvest staff throughout the season and taken to the City compost facility, and these items make it extremely difficult to move. The facility may also reject the entire pile.
- Gardeners must remove any plants with heavy pest infestations and throw them away in a trash can off site.

Compost

- The compost bins and finished compost are for all gardeners' use. Likewise, it is also every gardener's responsibility to maintain them. Please talk with GCH staff or a Leadership Committee Member if you have any questions about how to use and maintain them properly.
- Do not add paper products or commercially compostable items (i.e. bags, cups, or silverware). These will not break down in this system.

Watering

- Gardeners are responsible for watering their own plots and ensuring that the water is turned off when done.
- All gardeners should know where the emergency water shut-off is at their site and are encouraged to know basic irrigation repairs. Please notify GCH staff about any irrigation leaks or needed repairs.
- Practice water conservation and courtesy: coil up hoses when finished, wait patiently for available hoses and look out for neighbor's plants when dragging hoses.
- If you leave a timer, make sure to check it and adjust the time and frequency regularly to match the seasonal changes. Overwatering not only wastes water, but increases disease, mold, and fungal issues in plants, along with slippery gardening surfaces.

Rocks, Debris, and Trash

- Place rocks in the designated rock pile. Rocks tossed into the field are tripping hazards and hazards to mowers, weed whackers and those who operate them.
- Pack in and pack out any trash, twine, plant tags, pots or other gardening materials brought from home. There is no trash service at community garden sites.

Tool Shed and Tools

- Gardeners must respect and maintain all shared tools and other community property at the garden.
- **Tools are for use at the community garden only.** Pick up and return all tools to the shed when done.
- Please notify GCH staff or a leadership committee member if a tool or hose is broken or missing.
- The garden shed and/or gate needs to be locked whenever leaving the garden. Please double check and communicate with fellow gardeners to make sure it's done.

Trellising and Garden Structures

- Gardeners can bring in temporary trellising, tomato cages, and garden structures. These must be removed or taken down by Closing Day.
- Communal trellising and tomato cages should be stacked neatly in designated areas.
- Check with GCH staff for approval before building semi-permanent structures (i.e. raised beds, walls, lasting trellising etc).
- Gardeners are required to remove any built structures when they leave their plot.

Non-Discrimination and Harassment

- Discrimination, harassment, and threatening behavior is not tolerated at any Garden City Harvest site.
- Report any discrimination or harassing behavior to Garden City Harvest by filling out an Incident Report, found online at www.gardencityharvest.org/contact
- Continued behavior will be grounds for immediate eviction from the site and loss of gardening privileges and fees.

Vandalism, Theft, and Incident Reporting

- Theft, vandalism, and unpleasant incidents are common challenges in public spaces like community gardens. Please read **Mitigating Theft and Vandalism** found at www.gardencityharvest.org/community-gardens for more recommendations.
- The best defense is gardener presence, so visit the garden often and engage a watchful eye.
- When you feel safe to do so, approach people taking produce and inform them of garden rules and ask them to leave the produce. Let neighboring or unattended kids know what is and is not appropriate.
- Report any vandalism, theft, or other incidents at by filling out an Incident Report, found online at www.gardencityharvest.org/contact