



City of Columbia Parks and Recreation Community Garden Rules and Regulations

1. Administration

Only one garden plot per residence is allowed.

Garden plots are leased annually to members of the community on a first come first served basis for a fee of \$20. Fees must be included with the application.

All Gardeners must sign an annual contract and agree to follow the Community Garden Rules and Regulations.

Garden plots may not be transferred, leased to another party, given away, traded or sublet and fees will not be prorated or refunded.

Gardeners must reapply each year for a garden plot.

Existing gardeners desiring to continue gardening are required to re-sign an annual Community Garden Registration/Agreement Form and pay their annual registration fee by the deadline.

New Gardeners, regardless of date, must have their gardens planted within six weeks or their plot will be released back to the Park and Recreation Department for reassignment.

Plots are assigned to new applicants after the renewal deadline for current gardeners has passed.

If a plot is unavailable, the applicant will be placed on a waiting list and will be contacted only when a plot becomes available.

If your name is place on a waiting list, you do not have to reapply each year. However, should your contact information change, please inform the Garden Coordinator.

Except for service dogs, no pets of any kind are allowed in the garden.

2. Getting Started

The gardening term runs from April 1st to February 28th.

Gardeners are to keep their gardens planted and maintained year-round.

The spring growing season is March through May, the summer growing season is June through August, the fall growing season is September through October and the winter growing season is October to March.

Plots must be planted by **May 15th** (Spring Season) and **October 15th** (Fall Season) and kept planted, free of weeds, and harvested all year long. Plots that are not planted by the planting deadline are assumed abandoned and will be forfeited without refund.

Gardens in an uncared for condition 30 days after the planting deadline (**June 15th** and **November 15th**) will be cleared and released back to the City without refund.

The minimum requirements of "getting started" by May 15th (Spring Season) and **October 15th** (Fall Season) includes:

- Tilling the soil in preparation for planting
- Weeding, planting
- Harvesting of crops, if appropriate
- Pathway clean-up/maintenance

Thirty (30) days after "getting started", **June 15th** (Spring Season) and **November 15th** (Fall Season) there should be marked progress towards a productive garden, which includes:

- At least ½ the plot(s) worked
- Removal of remaining weeds
- Establishing and caring for plants
- Continued pathway maintenance

Sixty (60) days after "getting started", there should be continual gardening activity, the plot should be fully planted and weed free and pathways should be free of weeds as well.

If the Garden Coordinator observes that there is not continual gardening activity, the lessee will be notified. Once lessee has been notified, he/she has seven (7) days to respond to Garden Coordinator as to how he/she intends to become compliant.

If no response, the lessee will receive a Notice of Forfeiture and the plot will be released back to the City without refund, plantings

will be removed and any remaining edible produce will be donated to charity.

After loss of plot, the Gardener cannot reapply for another plot for one (1) year.

3. What to Grow/Plant

Gardeners may plant vegetables, fruits, herbs and flowers.

Gardeners may not maintain plantings or plant-supporting structures that impede the security of the garden or impede adjacent gardeners' access to sunlight by the nature of their height, material or density. Do not plant trees or shrubs.

Gardeners may not grow any plants or add any structures above 4 feet in height. No large structures, trees, or large collections of non-plant items are allowed.

Growing or using illegal substances within the garden is strictly prohibited. Violators will be expelled from the program immediately with no refund of fees and local authorities will be notified.

All summer annual crops should be pulled and properly disposed of at the end of their production. Perennial crops and some annual winter hardy crops may be over-wintered (kept alive through the winter), but should be maintained.

It is not acceptable to allow quantities of produce to become over ripe and rot. Gardeners are asked to donate their over abundant produce to charities of their choice.

If it is determined that a plot is neglected with over ripe vegetables present, produce will be picked from these plots and donated to charity.

4. Communication

Contact your Garden Coordinator for guideline clarifications or plot delineations. The Garden Coordinator will check plots regularly to encourage productive use by gardeners.

There will be an annual spring meeting to notify Gardeners of any changes made in how the garden operates and to discuss any issues or concerns.

Gardeners must maintain a current email address because e-mail is the primary method of communication for the Community Garden Program.

Gardeners are required to inform the Garden Coordinator of any changes to their contact information as soon as possible.

Gardeners are responsible for plot maintenance and should make the Garden Coordinator aware if he/she does not intend to continue gardening or of anything else that will hinder his/her ability to maintain his/her garden plot (i.e. health issues, family emergencies, relocation, etc.)

Gardeners are required to notify the Garden Coordinator of the following: irrigation problems such as water leaks, graffiti, theft, vandalism, rule violations, and pest or disease problems.

5. Security, Gate & Gate Code

The garden hours are from sunrise to sunset. Gardeners may not be within the gates of the community garden after dark.

A Gate access code is provided to registered lessees of the garden.

For security purposes, gate access code is changed annually. Members will be notified of combination changes by e-mail. It is extremely important to keep the access code confidential and safe.

Gardeners should contact the Garden Coordinator if assistance is required with the gate code.

Please close the gate(s) behind you once you enter the garden and make sure the gate is securely locked when you exit the garden.

Call 911 if you get injured, experience chest and arm pain, dizziness, lightheadedness, or heat-related illness.

Gardeners should not pick produce from another gardener's plot without permission from the garden plot owner. Notify the Garden Coordinator about any missing produce issues, vandalism or unauthorized activities.

6. Safety

Gardeners will not make any permanent or aesthetic changes to the garden.

The community gardens are alcohol and smoke-free areas. Gardeners may not come into the Garden while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

Gardeners may not carry, use, or store firearms in the Garden.

Loud radios, music, bringing a weapon on the premises and/or gambling are not allowed.

7. Garden Compliance

Gardeners will maintain their plants within their plot boundaries and will trim any plants that extend into pathways.

Plots should not be consistently weedy, unattended or filled with debris. Gardeners are expected to spend at least 1 hour per week/at least once a week, on average, tending the plot during the growing seasons. *Weedy plots are subject to warning and cancellation of gardening privileges.*

Gardeners are responsible for weeding, cultivating and watering their own garden plot(s).

Gardeners are responsible for their own seeds, plants, fertilizer, and any tools.

Compost is provided by the City when available and is not a regular service of the program.

8. Solid Waste & Recycling

Roll carts are located at all community garden sites. Gardeners are responsible for properly removing their own trash (such as weeds, boxes, trays, bags, packets, and similar items) before exiting the garden. ***Yard trimmings should not be placed in the green roll carts.***

The Solid Waste and Recycling Division provides collection and disposal of garbage, recyclables and yard waste on the following days: Monday (Yard Waste) and Tuesday: Garbage and recyclables.

Place the roll cart at curb by 7:30 am on the day of collection and remove it from the curb no later than 7:30 p.m. on the day of collection.

Wheelbarrows are located at all community garden sites. Please be considerate and dump your garden debris at the curb immediately after cleaning out your garden plot and replace the empty roll wheelbarrow back inside the garden gate after each use.

COMPOST - The City of Columbia composting operation receives nearly 25 percent of the City's total trash tonnage. The compost is available to citizens and can be picked up at our facility located in Columbia across from the Animal Shelter on 127 Humane Lane off Shop Road.

9. Water Availability

During winter months, water will be turned off when temperatures reach below 32° to prevent pipes from freezing. Once freezing temperatures are no longer a factor, the water will be turned back on. Please report any leaks to the Parks and Recreation Department.

If there is a major break in the garden's irrigation line, turn off the water at the control box and notify the Garden Coordinator.

To prevent damage and tripping hazards, water hoses used by gardeners MUST be recoiled and stored against the garden plot in a neat manner when not in use.

After planting, gardeners are strongly encouraged to cover their plot(s) with straw or mulch as an excellent method of weed control and water conservation.

10. Signature Page (Registration/Agreement)

Commitment and Liability Waiver

I have read the Community Garden Rules and Regulations and Pledge and understand that failure to follow these Community Garden Rules and Regulations will result in the loss of gardening privileges.

I also understand the City of Columbia and its agents accept no liability for incidents, which occur while engaged in program activities.

A Community Garden Land Use Release must be on file with the City's Parks and Recreation Department prior to any land use.

Rules and regulations are subject to annual review and revision.

Gardener Name (**Print**)

Gardener Name (**Signature**)

Plot #

Date