

## Montgomery Parks Community Gardens Conditions of Use 2021

When you sign this document, you agree to follow the COVID-19 Guidelines and the 2021 Conditions of Use.

### COVID-19 GARDENING GUIDELINES – Spring 2021

#### Items to Bring and General Notes:

1. Hand sanitizer
  - If you do not have hand sanitizer, consider carrying a container with soapy water and a washcloth to make hand washing easier.
2. Sanitizing wipes
  - Wipe down everything you touch and items someone else might have touched.
  - If you do not have wipes, use the CDC's recommendation– a mix of bleach and water as a disinfectant.
3. Gloves
  - Gloves do not replace proper sanitation procedures and can transmit diseases onto surfaces.
  - Dispose of gloves in a trash bag – do not dispose of gloves in garden debris piles or in the garden.
4. Tools
  - Gardeners need to bring and use their own tools.
  - Gardeners need to take their tools home when they are done for the day.
  - If using a hose, use sanitizing wipes and thoroughly wipe down the hose nozzle and any other part of the hose you touch **BEFORE AND AFTER USE**.

#### Social Distancing Guidelines:

5. If you are exhibiting symptoms of any illness, you should stay at home and not use our Community Gardens.
6. No more than 10 people allowed in the garden at a time.
7. Stay six feet away from others while in the garden.
8. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve or a tissue, dispose of the tissue immediately, and wash your hands.

#### Garden Inspections

Gardens are subject to regular inspections. Failure to abide by rules set out in the Conditions of Use may result in the loss of your plot. If a garden plot is not in compliance with the Conditions of Use, notification will be sent by email. A follow-up inspection will be performed about 2 weeks after the first email notice. If the plot is still not in compliance, it will be revoked and returned to Parks for re-assignment. All fees will be forfeited.

#### Montgomery Parks Provisions

1. Date Guidelines, failure to follow these guidelines will result in a warning or violation:
  - A. **By April 1**, gardeners must begin working in plots including weeding, soil amendment, and cultivation.
  - B. **By June 1**, most of the plot space must be planted. During the gardening season, dead plants and those that have stopped producing should be removed in a timely manner.
  - C. **By November 1**, gardeners must remove weeds, dead plants and summer garden debris from plots. Fall/winter vegetables and cover crops should remain in the plot.
2. Wood chips will be delivered to community gardens for distribution in common areas. Garden volunteers may request supplies on behalf of the community gardens.

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3. Compost is provided by Parks when it is available but is not a regular service of the program.
4. Water is available from early April until October; any other times gardeners must provide water.
5. Montgomery Parks will provide 48-hours advance notice if chemical application is necessary in or around the garden. Chemicals will be applied in accordance with Maryland Department of Agriculture guidelines by certified and registered pesticide applicators. The entire garden may be temporarily closed during an application.
6. Montgomery Parks staff will empty water containers that are not sealed tightly. For information of mosquito problems, see <https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/controlling-mosquitoes>. Repeated violations of open water may result in losing your plot. Hoarding water is not allowed.
7. Plants attached to the deer fence will be removed.
8. Garden paths must be kept open and clear of all items—no tools, wheelbarrows, or garden debris may be stored or left on the garden paths. Items left in the paths are subject to removal. Plot maps will be used to enforce the standard 36 inches in most gardens.
9. To reduce food waste and increase sanitation/pest control, beginning August 1, Garden Volunteer Liaisons may initiate periodic garden-wide harvests of ripe produce. Gardeners will receive notice of these harvests at least one week in advance. Gardeners must OPT OUT of these harvests by email or by placing a physical sign in their plots requesting that food not be taken for the garden-wide harvest.

### General Information

1. M-NCPPC, Montgomery Parks plots are rented “as is” (current condition).
2. Montgomery Parks does not perform annual tilling.
3. All plots are the property of Montgomery Parks, and are not transferable. Fees will not be refunded or prorated. Plots that are given up or are revoked for cause will be returned to Parks for re-assignment.
4. Gardeners must maintain a current email address and phone number on file with Parks. Changes should be updated in ACTIVE Montgomery and sent to [communitygardens@montgomeryparks.org](mailto:communitygardens@montgomeryparks.org)
5. Gardeners are required to join the Groups.io electronic listserv for the garden where they rent a plot. If gardeners do not have an email address, they must submit a cell phone number or mailing address for communication.
6. Gardeners are required to attend mandatory Spring Orientation to prepare for the gardening season.
7. Montgomery Parks staff will send a Welcome Letter with plot rental confirmation, lock combination, and directions for joining the list once you have rented a plot

### Gardening Guidelines

1. Maintain garden plots, adjacent paths, and adjacent interior and exterior fence lines by weeding and spreading wood chips.
2. Work in the garden plot at least once every week to maintain weeding, cultivating, watering, and harvesting.
3. Notify your garden volunteers and Parks staff if you are away or not able to keep up with maintenance tasks due to travel, illness, or other circumstance.
4. Volunteer 8 hours of service to the garden each year. Community Garden Volunteers are authorized to identify tasks that meet the service-hour requirement. They will inform you which tasks meet the requirements for your garden. Examples of eligible tasks include participating in community workdays, filling the water tanks, weeding and chipping common areas, fence lines, and paths, picking up the garden trash, organizing garden events, helping with other’s plots when needed.

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5. Gardeners must provide their own water before April or after October.
6. Gardeners are responsible for keeping garden gates closed and locked.
7. Visitors are not permitted in the garden unless accompanied by a current garden plot holder. Combinations to the garden locks shall not be shared.
8. Organic practices with an emphasis on good sanitation are strongly encouraged in all parts of the community garden. Sanitation practices include handpicking pests, using row covers, pruning or digging out diseased plants, and physically removing weeds.
9. Insect, disease, and weed control products must be OMRI-listed; and herbicides labeled as OMRI-listed or organic can be used in the community garden. Information on organic weed control products can be found at <https://www.thespruce.com/what-you-need-to-know-about-organic-weed-killers-2153104>. For organic insect and disease control products see: <http://wci.colostate.edu/Assets/pdf/OrganicPesticides.pdf>
10. Gardeners should reference the Maryland Department of Agriculture guidelines when using fertilizers. Visit [https://mda.maryland.gov/resource\\_conservation/Documents/Tip2.pdf](https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Documents/Tip2.pdf) for more information.
11. To improve the soil, manage weeds and pests, and maintain the garden's appearance, applying mulch, newspaper, or cardboard is strongly recommended. Carpet, stone, and sod mulch are not allowed.
12. Invasive plants are not allowed in the garden. Information about invasive plants in Maryland can be found at <http://www.montgomeryparks.org/caring-for-our-parks/natural-spaces/weed-warriors/>. Aggressive plants like mint, lemon balm, plants that reproduce multiple seeds, and similar plants must be grown in above-ground containers.
13. Gardeners may not shade other plots. Tall plants should only be planted so they will not shade neighboring plots. Planting of trees and large shrubs is discouraged, but requests will be reviewed on an individual basis.
14. Practice water conservation always. Gardeners must be present when watering. Do NOT leave water running unattended.
15. Community Gardens are trash free, carry-in and carry-out facilities. All trash must be removed from the site and disposed of by gardeners.
16. Put plant waste in the garden debris areas. No burlap, plastic, or paper materials are allowed in the debris pile.

### Fencing, Stakes, and Structure Rules

1. Always keep plot markers upright and visible. Gardeners shall not relocate any plot markers. Plot markers are not to be used as fencing material, plant structures, or watering can holders.
2. All plot sizes are approximate and variation in size and shape from plot to plot within each garden is normal.
3. Ensure there is no encroachment into paths or other garden plots. Gardeners must store all tools, wheelbarrows, and other items inside the garden plot they are renting. Do not store items in the garden paths.
4. Plot maps will be used to enforce the standard 36 inches in most gardens.
5. No structures of any kind may be built without written approval by Montgomery Parks. All requests should be emailed to staff at [communitygardens@montgomeryparks.org](mailto:communitygardens@montgomeryparks.org)
6. The deer fence may not be used as a trellis or plant support and should be kept free of weeds. Plants attached to the deer fence are subject to immediate removal.
7. Fences up to 3 feet high may be installed in your garden inside the plot boundaries. The materials must be neutral in color (black, grey, green, silver are okay; red, yellow, orange are not), and must not create tripping or other safety hazards. Fences must always be kept weeded. Parks reserves the right to remove

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fences that are unsightly or negatively affect gardeners or other plots. Removal will be at the gardener's expense. Requests for higher fences should be sent to the Community Garden staff and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

8. Gardeners are not allowed to trap animals (ground hogs, raccoons, rabbits, etc.) in the Community Gardens at any time. Animal and pest problems should be reported to the Garden Volunteer Liaisons.

**Getting Along and Courtesy in the Gardens**

1. Respect your fellow gardeners and the Garden Volunteer Liaisons. Personal attacks or harassment are not allowed in person or on the listserv. If you are unable to solve the issue, please contact your Community Garden Volunteer Liaisons or the community garden program staff for help.
2. Pets are not allowed within the community garden fence.
3. Mark all personal items with your plot number. Gardeners are not permitted to use or borrow anything without permission of the owner. Gardeners should not enter others' plots without specific permission. Taking produce or personal items is a violation that can result in the immediate loss of your plot. All borrowed items must be returned in the same condition as borrowed or be replaced.
4. Children are welcome in the garden but must always be supervised by a responsible adult.
5. The community gardens are alcohol and smoke-free areas. Loud radios and/or music are not allowed.
6. All general parks rules apply to the Community Gardens, see [http://www.montgomeryparks.org/rules/rules\\_regs\\_ch5.shtm](http://www.montgomeryparks.org/rules/rules_regs_ch5.shtm)
7. Conditions of Use and Garden Rules are subject to annual review and revision.

**Applicants Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_