

COMMUNITY GARDEN GUIDELINES

Welcome to the Franklin Park Community Garden. To help our gardeners grow fresh, healthy food in a safe, thriving community we are providing guidelines for growers. Please read these guidelines so you will know what to expect as a Franklin Park Community Gardener.

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Orientation:

All gardeners are encouraged to attend an orientation at the garden at the beginning of the growing season. During this orientation you will be introduced to the basic garden operations, and gardener responsibilities, and we will answer any questions.

General Information:

- The garden is open from April 1 until December 1.
- Gardeners may be in the garden from dawn until dusk. There is no light source for night gardening.
- The borough will provide each gardener with the combination for the lock on the garden gate. Please leave the lock on the gate when you work in the garden and lock the gate when you leave.
- Gardeners are welcome to use pots or planters in addition to their raised beds, as long as the pots do not block the garden paths.
- Please leave the paths open and tidy. When you are finished working pick up any weeds and place them in the compost bin provided, throw any trash in the can provided and remember to take tools and supplies with you. Watering cans can be left at your plot, but we do not have storage facilities for tools and supplies.
- Gardeners may only use the plots assigned to them and may not alter the dimensions of their plot. Gardeners may only work in their plots. Unless a neighboring gardener has asked for help, do not interfere with someone else's plants. This includes harvesting crops that may seem to be going to waste.
- Franklin Park Borough will provide a water source, compost, and a wheelbarrow. If any gardener would like straw to mulch their gardens with, you must let the Borough know and the bale will be placed in your plot. All other supplies and equipment are the responsibility of the individual gardeners.
- For safety reasons please park in the paved area by the house, not on the grass next to the garden.

Growing:

- The Franklin Park Community Garden is an organic garden. Please use organic fertilizers, pesticides, and repellants. If you aren't sure about using a product, please contact the Borough. Use of compost, organic mulch, and weeding is always acceptable to feed crops and control weeds.
- Gardeners are welcome to grow vegetables, flowers, and fruits that ripen in a single season. Because plots may not be assigned to the same gardener each year, please do not grow perennial plants like asparagus, lavender, or berry plants unless the plants are in a pot that can be removed at the end of the season.
- No invasive plants, please. Gardeners who are growing invasives like mint must plant it in a pot, not the raised bed. Exuberant plants like squash and gourds should not be allowed to block the paths.
- Gardeners should not use their plots to grow any illegal plants.
- Please do not smoke in the garden. Tobacco products can carry a virus that is deadly to tomato plants.
- Be aware that the Linbrook garden is susceptible to early and late frosts. Do not plant frost sensitive plants like tomatoes before May 15, our historic last frost date. If frost is predicted, plan to cover your plants to keep them warm.

Watering:

- The borough will provide a water source for gardeners to use. Water is provided in tanks outside the garden fence. The tanks are filled by volunteers from the Franklin Park Volunteer Fire Department, so gardeners are encouraged to be good stewards of the water.
- Do not use hoses to water. The tanks do not have enough water pressure to fill hoses effectively.
- Gardeners can use watering cans or buckets to water. A wheelbarrow is available to move watering containers if gardeners are unable to carry them. Watering containers may be left in garden plots.
- Mulching your garden with the straw will help conserve moisture so you won't need to water as often. If any gardener would like straw to mulch their gardens with, you must let the Borough know and the bale will be placed in your plot. Mulch will also deter weeds.
- Only water your own plot unless a neighbor has asked you to water their plants.

Harvesting:

- Please do not let your harvest go to waste. If you won't be able to harvest a crop let the Borough know so that someone can harvest for you and share the bounty.
- Extra vegetables that you want to share can be placed on the sharing table inside the garden gate.
- Do not harvest crops from a neighbor's plot without permission. You may assume that the crop is going to waste, but the gardener is just waiting for the perfect moment to come and harvest.

Maintenance:

- Plots should be planted by June 1. If they are not, the borough reserves the right to re-assign the plot to another gardener unless weather, illness, or travel has caused the delay. The fee for the plot will not be refunded.
- Please keep your plot and the adjacent paths tidy. Trash should be taken with you or disposed of in the trash can outside the garden fence.
- Try to weed on a regular basis. Weeds will take water and nutrients from your vegetables. Weed seeds can spread weeds to neighboring plots. A straw mulch between rows and around your plants will keep weeds from germinating and reduce your work.
- Weeds can be composted in the compost bin outside the garden. Do not put weeds in the paths.
- Please do not compost any plants that are diseased. Diseased plants should be removed from the garden and disposed of in the trash can provided.
- When your plants first begin growing, stop by and check on them daily or, at the very least, every other day. Seeds and young plants need regular watering if it hasn't rained. Seedling weeds are easier to remove when they haven't gotten too big. If pests show up, regular checks will allow you to deal with them before they destroy your plants.
- Gardeners may not abandon their plots. Abandonment means failing to maintain a plot for two (2) weeks. If you expect to be away for up to a month, please contact the Borough so we know that the plot has not been abandoned.
- The community gardening season will end on November 1. Please have all plants, equipment, and debris removed from your garden plot by December 1.

Garden Guests:

- Guests are welcome in the garden to help with work or just to enjoy the space and admire the gardeners' efforts. Please make sure that guests, including children, respect the garden space and everyone's plot.
- Pets are welcome but they must be under the gardener's control. Do not allow them to dig holes, annoy other gardeners, or jump into a neighbor's plot and eat their vegetables. Please clean up after visiting pets.
- Groups of visitors...a pre-school class, for example...are welcome. Please let the Borough know when a group will be visiting the garden.

Pests...Unwelcome Guests:

- The fence around the garden will deter deer, but smaller animals like rabbits can dig under the fence. Gardeners may add additional fencing around their raised beds or use organic repellants to deter rabbits.
- Do not assume that all insects visiting the garden are pests. Insects that eat other insects will visit the garden to hunt and pollinators like bees will visit for nectar. You can take a picture of an insect on your phone and search to see if you have a friend or foe.
- If the insect is a threat to your crops, you can use an organic pesticide like neem oil or insecticidal soap. Be aware that these pesticides will kill helpful insects like bees. You can also pick the insects off the plant and either squash them or drown them in a container of water. If you aren't sure if the insect is a threat or want to know what pesticide to use, please contact the Borough.
- Row covers can also be used to keep pests from eating your plants. Make sure that pests, cabbage worms for example, are not already present before you install a row cover. Row covers may keep out pollinators necessary for crops to develop so check to see that they are appropriate for the plant you want to protect.
- If you are using mulch in your plot, you may notice slug damage. Slugs chew holes in leaves and eat tiny seedlings. Organic slug baits, like Sluggo, are available that do not threaten dogs or wildlife. You may also try beer traps that attract and drown slugs.