



Gardener Handbook



Plot #		Permit #		Authorization:	
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Welcome to the world of Community Gardening!

Welcome to Community Gardening. To ensure the smooth operation of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Community Garden, an agreement that outlines the expectations and rules for gardening is necessary. Please be sure to have a look over the following information. This will help to avoid conflicts and misunderstandings. For your benefit, some of the more common rules will be discussed.

Background and Overview:

In 2014, the idea of bringing together a community garden within the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville was brought forth by the Department of Leisure and Community Services, in response to inquiries from the community. The land used for the community garden program, is on land provided by the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is NOT responsible for the day to day management, operation or maintenance of these gardens.

The program for 2022 will be similar to the 2021 program, with a few minor changes. An allotment type garden, located at both Sunnyridge Neighborhood Park and Greenwood Neighborhood Park. There are 25 allotments available to book at each location. Each location offers 20 plots at 10ft x 20ft, and 5 raised beds at 4ft x 12ft. in size. These are traditional garden beds which require maintenance and care.

Each gardener has access to water. All day to day gardening tools are to be provided by each gardener. Pathways cleared for physical accessibility, allowing comfortable mobility for all participants is also the responsibility of each gardener. There will be a tool shed and room to store personal items.

Plots will be positioned for optimal growing conditions. Please be sure to take care of your garden and surrounding plotted area. Beds will not be prepped and ready for planting by town staff at the start of the growing season, unless a new registration has been completed or a previous gardener is not returning. An area for composting garden waste and weeds, as well as picnic tables and a shaded area are available. A bulletin board will be posted to keep gardeners informed and each gardener will get an access code for the entry gate and tool shed. Appropriate fencing to deter wildlife/theft has been installed at each garden location.

Communication

PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO CHECK THE BULLETIN BOARD EACH TIME YOU COME TO THE GARDEN AND RESPOND ACCORDINGLY.

Communication between the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and gardeners is extremely important. The Town representative will facilitate any communications related to the gardens, including workshop/seminar information, via message board and electronic news. This will ensure that information is transferred to everyone appropriately.

For convenience, a bulletin board will be posted at the tool shed for easy access to all information. Gardeners may also communicate with each other either directly or through one of the Town vehicles.

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For example, if you will be away, or have excess vegetables you won't be using, you can notify the other gardeners to help themselves. This avoids unnecessary waste.

Conflict Resolution

Whenever possible, problems, concerns and/ or questions should be resolved between gardeners. This will hopefully help all to avoid confrontations that may damage the friendly atmosphere within the garden and keep it a comfortable and enjoyable place. Should any questions or concerns remain, a Town contact list is available at the back of this document.

Parking

Designated parking is on the road allowance surrounding the Community Garden properties at each location. We encourage you to walk, cycle, or use public transit whenever you can, as a more sustainable alternative to single occupancy vehicles.

Dogs/Pets

The contract states that **no pets** are to be brought into the garden. This was decided based on best practices of other community gardens to reduce the risk of any possible damage or risk to the garden and gardeners, and to avoid a potential nuisance situation. Please report any incidents to the Town representative.

Guests/Activities

You are welcome to bring your guests to the garden. Guests are expected to abide by the rules of the garden and children must be supervised at all times. Visitors are welcome to tour the garden when gardeners are present, but should avoid getting in the way of other gardeners and their gardens. If you notice any suspicious activity, please alert the Town representative and note any relevant details.

This Community Garden is not a public park, its sole activity is for gardening and related activities by designated permit holders. Any other activities must first receive the consent of the Town Representative.

Tools and Hoses

Tools and equipment that are the property of the Town/Community Garden, will be marked appropriately. These are for shared use. Gardeners will need to bring their own tools and watering cans which can be stored in the shed provided. Everyone must be respectful of each other's' equipment. Gardeners are encouraged to share tools and ideas and treat all property with respect, return it to its place reasonably clean, and note any repairs needed (bulletin board/communicate to Town rep). The Town will not be responsible for any personal equipment left at the site.

It is not necessary that each gardener have their own hose. A source of water will be provided by the Town. Please coil or loop hoses at appropriate location when done with them.

Caution must be exercised when moving hoses.

Motorized equipment of any kind is not allowed within the community garden. All equipment must be manual, hand tools. Any discrepancies or queries must be brought to the attention of the Town representative.

A basic first aid kit will be kept within the shed provided. Gardeners are encouraged to provide their own desired supplies, but are welcome to use the contents of the kit provided. Please report any items running low to the Town representative.

Soil Amendments and Mulching

Enriching your soil with compost and other natural fertilizers like manure will improve your vegetable yields, prevent many pest infestations, and make for a more satisfying gardening experience. If you have a personal source, or have the means to purchase from a gardening centre, that may be an option. A bulk load could be cost-shared by those gardeners interested in receiving it this way. You may also bring composted, cured material from home to put on your own allotment. **CURED PRODUCTS ONLY.** No fresh manure is allowed. It is highly recommended that you mulch your crops. This reduces the need for more frequent watering, suppressed weed growth and amends the soil. Leaves make excellent mulch and they are free.

Composters

Please be certain to follow the posted instructions to ensure disposal in the appropriate places.

Please do not bring food waste from home.

Perennials and Flowers

Some gardeners may want to plant different perennial herbs, etc. You are welcome to do so, but do be aware that should you discontinue gardening or if the site is not renewed, it will be your responsibility to remove them, or they will be given away. Flowers are welcome additions to your allotments. Note that sunflowers, while very pleasing, are difficult to compost and remove. You may want to consider the smaller varieties.

Fencing

The Town has supplied proper fencing in order to keep out wildlife and possible theft. Gardeners will be able to access garden plots through a padlock system. An access code will be provided to each garden plot permit holder once permits have been signed, and payment has been processed.

Other Fixtures

Should you wish to add your own composters, trellises, and the like, please speak with the Town representative first. Approved items must stay within your allotted space and removed once you are done. They cannot block pathways. Please be aware that treated wood products are prohibited.

Pathways

Pathways are designed to be a comfortable width, to allow easy circulation by the gardeners. Please make an effort to stay within your allotted area. Pathways may tend to get weedy and we ask that you help to keep them under control around your allotments. We may use wood chips to top them up. **We don't recommend landscape cloth.** Cardboard or other compostable material could be considered, but must be topped up with enough sand or soil to keep them in place.

Watering

Watering is the responsibility of the gardener or group holding the contract. It is helpful to get to know your neighbours, as you may be able to help each other out if one of you is away. Applying layers of mulch, and watering deeply should reduce your watering frequency. Please try to water in the mornings or evenings as a conservation practice and as per Town of Whitchurch- Stouffville watering restrictions.

Weeds, Maintenance and Volunteering

As part of the gardener agreement, you have been asked to manage the weeds and area around your plot and prevent the spread of weeds to other allotments. It is recommended that you dig up the weeds when they are young before they go to seed. Then they can be composted. Once they take root, they are difficult to impossible to remove successfully. Please make an effort to remove weeds in your allotment and surrounding pathways before they go to seed. We also have a number of general use areas. These also need to be kept weed-free. Please take some time to help manage these areas. If you have physical limitations, it remains your responsibility to keep your plot in order and to contribute to the general labour of the garden maintenance. This may mean that you will have to get some help from family or friends or fellow gardeners from time to time.

Unattended Gardens

If gardens remain unattended or are in noncompliance, a notice will be given to the gardener to clean it up. If this is not done in a timely manner, the garden will be dug out and/or given to another gardener to tend. Permits holders responsible for unattended gardens and those in noncompliance, will not return for the next gardening season.

Smoking

As per the 2015 updated smoking by-law. Starting January 1, 2015 all smoking is prohibited within a 20 metre perimeter of all Playgrounds and Town Facilities.

Pesticides

The Community Garden is a pesticide-free zone, so we do not permit the use of chemical herbicides or insecticides. Please ensure that you have adequate information about any such products and use with care. We do expect you to deal with pest infestations mechanically and/or preventatively i.e. physically remove eggs and pests, avoid planting susceptible crops.

Access, Winterizing and Renewal

An access code will be provided to each garden plot permit holder, once permits have been signed and payment has been processed.

The gardening season ends October 31. Water access will not be available after the first weeks of October. At the end of each season, allotments must be cleared out, free of weeds ready for Town staff to prepare for the winter.

Gardens will be distributed on a first come, first served basis the following year. Registration dates will be provided in the Leisure Guide (out February). There are no guarantees.

Orientation Meeting in the Spring

Returning gardeners are expected to indicate their interest by March 2022. All questions and concerns will be dealt with at this meeting. With everyone helping and doing their part, we can expect each community garden will thrive and continue to provide this service well into the future.

TOWN CONTACT INFORMATION

To report vandalism in any of our parks, please call [905-640-1910 x 2292](tel:905-640-1910)
To check availability of garden plots at either community garden location, please call [905-640-1910 x 2929](tel:905-640-1910)

Department of Leisure and Community Services General Contact Information:

leisure.services@townofws.ca

For after-hours please call: Whitchurch-Stouffville Leisure Centre [905-642-PLAY](tel:905-642-PLAY)

Community Gardener Checklist

Sunnyridge Neighbourhood Park / Greenwood Neighbourhood Park

- I have thoroughly read the Handbook and Gardener agreement.
- I will begin planting on or after the Victoria Day long weekend.
(date to be confirmed by Town Staff)
- My pathways will be clear and free of weeds.
- I will not infringe on pathways and/or neighbours plots.
- I will not store items where they may infringe on shared pathways.

- My plot will be free of large/seedy weeds.

Initial:

Fall/Winter Checklist

- I will clear all debris from my allotment and put in the designated compost area, before October 31.
- I will trim, weed and clear up my pathways.
- I will indicate my plans for the next year to the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville designate, by October 31.

- I will participate in the fall general clean up or equivalent.

Initial:

Not returning?

- I will not leave perennials in my allotment
- I have taken out all structures and personal belongings and returned the allotment in good order – ready and available for the next gardener.

Initial:

Thank you for your cooperation.

Department of Leisure and Community Services

COMMUNITY GARDENS 2022

COMMUNITY GARDEN PERMIT CONDITIONS AND REGULATIONS

1. The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville will not be responsible for damages, loss or theft of equipment or clothing of any applicant or anyone attending at the invitation of the applicant.
2. The applicant shall be responsible for the conduct and supervision of all participants in the event for which this permit is issued, and/or of those persons who are invitees of the event participants. The applicant shall ensure that all regulations contained in this permit are strictly observed. Any vandalism, littering or abusive language occurring during use of the Town facilities pursuant to this permit shall result in immediate cancellation of this permit and/or rejection of future permit applications by the applicant.
3. The applicant shall pay for all damages to Town property arising from the use of the Town facilities where the applicant is deemed responsible. The Department of Leisure and Community Services reserves the right to impose a liability deposit.
4. Facility permits are valid for the location, date, time and intended use only, as specified on the permit and may not be changed or altered in any manner. This permit is not assignable or transferrable.
5. The applicant is responsible for the removal of all rented or privately owned property and personal effects by the end time specified on the permit unless prior arrangements have been made with the Department of Leisure and Community Services.
6. Authorization from the Department of Leisure and Community Services must be secured prior to placing any permanent structures. Once authorization has been granted, the applicant must ensure that all structures are removed by the specified time.
7. Gardeners are to work in their allocated plot area. All other permitted areas are off limits. All harvest within an allocated area are the sole belonging of the permit holder of that plot.
8. All gardeners are responsible for keeping the facilities clean and organized. All personal items are to be put away in the allocated space.
9. Space is limited. Permit holder and guests are to stay within their permitted area or common areas.
10. All gardeners are encouraged to network and share information with other permit holders.
11. The consumption of alcoholic beverages is strictly forbidden at all sport facilities and park locations in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.
12. Smoking is prohibited in all Town facilities which includes parks, in accordance with applicable Provincial and Municipal laws and regulations.
13. All pesticides and herbicides are not permitted
14. The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville reserves the right to cancel this permit should there be a breach of any conditions or regulations or on 24 hours' notice as required. Failure to comply with this regulation will result in the immediate cancellation of this permit and the request for attendance of the respective authorities if required.
15. The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville must be notified in writing of any cancellations at least 14 days in advance of the official community garden season opening. Refunds will not be made unless notification is given in writing only.
16. Rental Fees, where applicable, are to be paid upon signing of the permit unless other arrangements have been made with the Department of Leisure and Community Services. Where invoicing has been approved, the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville reserves the right to cancel the permit if the applicant defaults in payments
17. Security of the site will be maintained by fencing and appropriate lock access. Gardeners will be provided with an access key.

I understand that permission to work in a Community Garden will be granted subject only to compliance with the conditions and regulations outlined above and in the Gardeners Handbook.

Signature

Date