

## COMMUNITY GARDEN GUIDE TABLE OF CONTENTS

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## WELCOME TO THE GROW FOOD NORTHAMPTON ORGANIC COMMUNITY GARDEN!

The Mission of Grow Food Northampton is to promote food security by advancing sustainable agriculture in the Northampton, Massachusetts area. We are dedicated to *healthy, local food for everyone in our community*.

### The purpose of the Gardeners' Guide is to provide

- **Need to know** information about community garden rules and policies that will enable you to be a successful community gardener;
- **Nice to know** information about the mission and history of the Grow Food Northampton Community Farm land and organization.

### GROW FOOD NORTHAMPTON CONTACT INFORMATION

#### The Grow Food Northampton Organic Community Garden is at:

140 Meadow St, Florence, MA. *This is not a mailing address.*

### GROW FOOD NORTHAMPTON ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES:

Address: 221 Pine Street, Suite 349, Florence, MA 01060

General email: [info@growfoodnorthampton.com](mailto:info@growfoodnorthampton.com)

Phone: (413) 320-4799

Website: [www.growfoodnorthampton.com](http://www.growfoodnorthampton.com)

Grow Food Northampton Facebook: <https://goo.gl/FgbijL>

Gardener Facebook Group: <https://goo.gl/TDwLuE>

Gardener Google Group (email list): [gardeners@growfoodnorthampton.com](mailto:gardeners@growfoodnorthampton.com) email reaches all community gardeners.

### PERMANENT STAFF

Clem Clay, Executive Director

413-320-4799 Ext. 101, [Clem@growfoodnorthampton.com](mailto:Clem@growfoodnorthampton.com)

Michael Skillicorn, Program Director

413-3204799 Ext. 109, [Michael@growfoodnorthampton.com](mailto:Michael@growfoodnorthampton.com)

Pat James, Community Garden and Food Access Manager

413-320-4799, Ext. 103, [Pat@growfoodnorthampton.com](mailto:Pat@growfoodnorthampton.com)

Niki Lankowski, Office Manager, Tuesday Market Manager

413-320-4799 Ext. 105, [Niki@growfoodnorthampton.com](mailto:Niki@growfoodnorthampton.com)

Watch for periodic introductions of Terracorns Members, Summer Interns and Work Study Students.

## OUR ORGANIC COMMUNITY GARDEN

As a Grow Food Northampton Community Gardener, you join a vibrant gardening and farming community with a powerful commitment to food access for all, and a rich history of care and stewardship for historic farmland. The Community Garden has approximately 300 plots available for lease to community members to grow food organically and sustainably. The Garden is organized into “neighborhood blocks.” Each block includes a communal space with picnic table and fruit tree. The Garden is laid out on an alphanumeric grid. A plot map is included in this Gardener’s Guide and is available in the Garden section of the [GrowFoodNorthampton.com](http://GrowFoodNorthampton.com) website.

### **GARDENER ELIGIBILITY, PLOT TYPES AND PLOT FEES**

There are two categories of Gardeners:

- *Primary Gardeners* accept financial responsibility for their plot(s) and agree to follow all rules and guidelines described in this Guide. Primary Gardeners must be age 18 or older.
- *Additional Gardeners* support primary gardeners to tend plots, to pass plot checks and meet Community Service requirements. They do not have financial responsibility for the plot(s). They agree to follow all rules and guidelines described in this Guide. Children may be listed as Additional Gardeners.
- Only the Primary will be notified of plot check failures, failure to complete community service requirements, outstanding invoices, and other issues concerning their plot(s).
- All Primary Gardeners must register anyone serving as an Additional Gardener.

Couples, married or unmarried, may choose who is Primary and who is Additional when registering for their plot(s). Individuals or couples may not register for more than one plot during their first year, or for more than two plots from then on. Other adults residing in a household (including adult children) are treated separately for eligibility purposes and may register for their own plots.

### **PLOTS AND FEES**

- Full plots are twenty by twenty feet.
- Half plots are ten by twenty feet.
- If no fee adjustments apply, either size costs \$33 per year if leased before July 15.
- Plots leased after July 15 are half price.

### **ADJUSTMENTS TO FEES:**

- Senior Citizens (turning 65 or older during this calendar year) pay \$25.
- Low-income gardeners with SNAP ID or similar documentation pay \$8 per plot.
- Seniors and Low-income gardeners receive coupons for 5 free buckets of compost.

- Non-residents of Northampton, Florence or Leeds pay a \$10 surcharge per registration (not per plot).

## GARDEN OVERVIEW

### GARDEN FEATURES

- *Gardeners' Shed* near the center of the Garden houses tools and equipment for use by all gardeners and a First Aid Kit right inside the door
- *Children's Play Area* near the main entrance
- *Composting Outhouse* (the first one in Northampton)
- *Edible Hedgerow* on the south edge of the Garden along Meadow Street
- *Gooseberry Patch* near the Giving Garden
- *Bramble Patch* along the north edge of the Garden, both of which produce berries and fruit that all gardeners are welcome to pick
- *A Nut Grove* planted along Meadow Street
- *The Giving Garden* which produces hundreds of pounds of food that is delivered to local soup kitchens and food pantries.

### COMMUNITY GARDENER BENEFITS

- A 20 x 20 foot full plot or a 10 x 20 foot half-plot
- Access to Northampton municipal water from May through October
- Free wood chips for mulching
- High quality compost for sale at \$3 per 5 gallon bucket (Please measure with the bucket if you fill a wheelbarrow.)
- Sheet mulch (cardboard) is available for free if there is a demand for it. If you need some, contact the Garden Manager
- Access to the Gardener Shed full of communal tools and equipment
- Support from the Garden Manager and Grow Food Northampton staff, and a community of knowledgeable gardeners
- Engaging community service opportunities
- Educational workshops and community events
- Opportunities to join in group purchases of other garden resources that may include plant starts, hay or straw, and organic pest controls.

### COMMUNICATION

Gardeners agree to keep up to date with garden communications that update rules and policies, highlight concerns, and announce plot checks, community service opportunities, events and workshops.

- ***News From The Garden Shed*** is the official newsletter for the Grow Food Northampton Organic Community Garden. It is published every 2 weeks in English and Spanish during the growing season, with *Need to Know* and *Nice to Know* sections. It comes by email to most, but you may request a paper copy if you do not use email. If you are not receiving

the Bulletin or need it in a different form, it is your responsibility to let the Garden Manager know. Gardeners are responsible for knowing all content labeled *Need to Know*.

- The [Gardeners Google Group \(gardeners@growfoodnorthampton.com\)](mailto:gardeners@growfoodnorthampton.com) is for gardeners to communicate with each other to get answers to questions about pests and practices, advertise extra plants useable garden items to give away, look for someone to water or harvest your plot while you are out of town, and more. It may be used *only* for issues specific to the community garden. All gardeners are automatically added to the list.
- **Suggestions, concerns or complaints** about the garden, how it is managed, or concerns about other gardeners or plots, should be communicated directly to the Garden Manager ([pat@growfoodnorthampton.com](mailto:pat@growfoodnorthampton.com) or 413-320-4799).
- Visit the [Grow Food Northampton website](#) to learn more about the organization, and check out the archive of Gardener Resources on pest management, water conservation, GMO's in the garden, soil testing, and more.
- LIKE the [Grow Food Northampton Facebook Page](#).
- JOIN THE GFN Organic Community Garden Facebook Group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/GrowFoodNorthamptonOrganicCommunityGarden/>) and share garden photos and stories.

## GARDENER REQUIREMENTS

### NEW GARDENERS MUST

- Read the Garden Guide
- Complete New Gardener Orientation before beginning to garden. Orientation includes a garden tour, introduction to your to your plot, review of garden rules, combinations to the shed and outhouse locks. New gardeners will receive an orientation schedule and may sign up for a time that is most convenient to them. All new Primary gardeners must attend, and additional gardeners are strongly encouraged to attend.

### ALL GARDENERS MUST

- Read the Garden Guide before beginning to garden;
- Agree to follow all rules;
- Recognize that rules may change over the course of the year, and agree to keep up-to-date with rule changes;
- Make all payments in a timely manner;
- Complete 3 hours of community service per plot before the end of the calendar year;
- Pass all plot checks.

## **PLOT CHECKS**

- Plot checks identify abandoned and untended plots, spot rule violations and problems.
- If a plot fails the primary gardener is notified within one week of the plot check.
- They must respond within one week of being notified with a plan to rectify the situation, or face forfeiture of the plot and all plants and items in that plot.
- To avoid forfeiture of a failed plot, gardener(s) must *both* pass a re-check of the plot and pay a \$30 re-check fee.
- Gardeners with persistent violations risk forfeiture of their plots.
- Gardeners who fail two consecutive plot checks in one season, or who fail a total of three plot checks over two seasons, may forfeit their plot(s) and their right to garden with us for at least a year.
- Gardeners impacted by persistent problems in nearby plots should contact the Garden Manager before plot checks, or any time during the season.
- Gardeners who have unexpected crises that impact their ability to pass plot checks should contact the Garden Manager as soon as possible, ideally at least two weeks before scheduled plot checks so arrangements can be made to support gardeners to keep their plots.

## **2018 Plot Check Schedule**

### **JUNE 10, 2018 - FIRST PLOT CHECK:**

- Show clear signs that plot is cleaned up, planted, and tended
- Plot numbers must be clearly visible
- No banned plants should be in evidence
- Weed cover is less than 50% of the plot

### **JULY 29, 2018 – MID-SUMMER PLOT CHECK:**

- Plots should look recently and routinely tended
- Plot numbers must be clearly visible
- Plots are at least 50% cultivated plants with few or no weeds going to seed
- No banned plants

### **SEPTEMBER 9, 2018 – LATE SUMMER PLOT CHECK:**

- Plots should look recently and routinely tended
- Plot numbers must be clearly visible
- Plots are at least 50% garden plants with few or no weeds going to seed
- No banned plants

### **OCTOBER 28, 2018, FINAL PLOT CHECK:**

- Plots should look tended and tidied up for winter
- Less than 50% weed cover
- All items (fences, stakes, benches) must be removed or tied down.
- *Plots must pass this plot check for gardeners to be eligible to pre-register for the same plot the following year.*

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Gardeners play a critical role in caring for the garden and its resources, infrastructure, tools, and communal areas. A few hours of community service each summer by every gardener enables us to keep our overall costs low, and fosters a sense of care for the larger community.

- The Primary Gardener is responsible for making sure that three hours of community service work is completed per plot *and reported* to the Garden Manager before the end of the calendar year.
- Community Service may be done by either Primary or Additional Gardeners or their family and friends.
- Service is recorded by plot number and attributed to the Primary Gardener *only*, regardless of who does the work.
- Report hours by completing a Community Service Report Card in the Gardeners' Shed and putting it in the mailbox near the door, or by emailing the Garden Manager with the pertinent information.
- Most service opportunities occur during the gardening season. Gardeners should not count on finding service opportunities later in the fall.
- If an unexpected disability, illness, injury or family crisis makes completing the hours challenging, contact the Garden Manager as soon as possible to request credit for service performed by other gardeners in excess of their required three hours. While there is no formal pool for donated hours, arrangements can sometimes be made with ample notice.

### **FAILURE TO COMPLETE COMMUNITY SERVICE**

- Gardeners who do not complete 3 community service hours per plot, but who have passed all plot checks, may pay a fee in lieu of completing hours in order to maintain eligibility as a Returning Gardener.
- The fee is \$24 per hour of missed service, billed in minimum increments of ¼ hour. Gardeners who are eligible for the 25% senior discount or the 75% low income discount will have this charge reduced accordingly.
- This fee will be attached to the registration fee for the following season.
- Gardeners who neither complete and report their community service hours nor pay the fee forfeit their plots.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE OPTIONS

There are many ways to contribute to the common good in the Garden while you complete your community service requirement. They include:

- Mow paths
- Weed and mow communal areas
- Tend community plantings including:
  - Edible Hedgerow
  - Bramble Patch
  - Medicine Garden
  - Play Area
  - Compost and wood chip piles
- Plant, tend and harvest the Giving Garden
- Hedgerow Team
- Composting Outhouse Team
- Join monthly work parties
- Become a Garden Buddy to support gardeners with unexpected difficulties
- Clean and organize tools in the shed
- Help with the Seed Swap and Garden and Grow Food Northampton events
- Lead a program in the Garden
- Create written and photo content for the Gardener's Facebook Group
- Keep the Garden Shed Bulletin Board up to date
- Clean and repair garden tools and equipment
- Lead orientations for new gardeners
- Skill-share - help maintain and repair garden infrastructure requiring carpentry, plumbing, GIS mapping, and more.
- Host a house party to raise funds for the Garden.

## GARDEN RULES

The three most important rules for being a good garden citizen are to

1. **Garden organically.**
2. **Pass plot checks**
3. **Complete community service.**

### IN YOUR PLOT

#### You MUST

- Pass plot checks.
- Clearly display your Plot Number in each plot.
- Maintain visibility of orange plot stakes in each corner. Report missing or broken stakes to the Garden Manager.

- Remove diseased plants and trash from your plot and the Garden site in a timely manner, and take them out of the community garden. DO NOT put diseased plants or trash in the weed pile.
- Remove banned plants from your plot (see list below). Check with the Garden Manager if you are uncertain about what plants are acceptable.
- Lay down and secure all structures and materials at the end of the season to prevent blowing around in the high winds that are typical in the winter, and remove structures and materials that cannot be secured (Garden Manager's determination of what needs to be removed is final).

**You MAY**

- Plant certain perennials, including blueberries, currants, gooseberries, and grapes. Grapes must be supported on trellises less than 6 feet high that don't shade other plots.
- Plant native perennial and annual flowers.
- Create small compost piles or in-ground composting systems. Do not use plastic composters. Composting in your plot may attract rodents.
- Plant flowers as long as they are not on the list of banned or discouraged plants.
- Use cold-frames if they have plastic or Plexiglas (not glass) covers.
- Use plastic sheeting for season extension, row covers or solarizing with written permission from the Garden Manager and provided the you have met all annual requirements.
- Use pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides *only* if they are clearly labeled "Organic" or bear the OMRI (Organic Material Review Institute) seal.

**You MAY NOT PLANT:**

- Genetically modified (GMO) plants and seeds
- Bramble fruits such as blackberries and raspberries
- Other trees or woody plants
- Mint, bugleweed, goutweed and related plants
- Toxic plants such as castor bean, Jimsonweed, foxglove
- Aggressive spreaders and self-seeders like bronze fennel, morning glory, honeysuckle, most ornamental grasses and hollyhock.
- Other problem plants including mallow, lamb's ear, yarrow, bee balm, and comfrey are currently allowed as long as they are carefully managed by the gardener.

**You MAY NOT USE:**

- Synthetic fertilizers, or inorganic (chemical) pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides that do not have a seal from OMRI (Organic Material Review Institute) or are not clearly labeled "organic"
- Pressure treated wood and railroad ties

- o Flame weeders
- o Glass, including bottles and ornaments, or cold frame covers
- o Plastic garden structures, ornaments and furniture
- o Permanent structures (trellises, fencing, hoop houses, etc.). For safety and to prevent winter damage, gardeners may be asked to remove structures, at the season's end
- o Plastic compost bins

**YOU MAY NOT:**

- Create trenches or paths more than 12 inches deep
- Water with soaker hoses, sprinklers, or broadcast spraying with hoses. Water only at the base of the plants.
- Leave tools and equipment owned by Grow Food Northampton in your plot or anywhere else in the Garden
- Put hardscape materials (rock, brick, logs, pavers, etc.) all the way to the edge of your plot. These are allowed as long as they are at least six inches inside plot boundaries that connect to common paths or neighboring plots.

**OUTSIDE YOUR PLOT**

**PATHS AND COMMON AREAS**

- Mow the full width of paths abutting your plot. This is required plot maintenance and does not count as community service.
- DO NOT leave anything (dirt, weeds, wood chips, soil, rocks, plants, fencing, tools, stakes) outside plot boundaries or in other common areas.
- DO NOT plant anything in the common areas. If you wish to donate plants, shrubs, brambles or trees that may be a good addition to the Garden, contact the Garden Manager.

**GARDEN SHED**

- Lock the shed every time you leave it. Never leave the shed unlocked while gardening, mowing, or involved in other garden activities away from the shed.
- Clean and return all tools to their proper place in the shed.
- Lock the shed if you notice that it is unlocked and not in use.
- Lock wheelbarrows to the shed and lock them up each time you return them.

**COMPOSTING OUTHOUSE**

- Review and follow all instructions in the outhouse.
- Note that solid and liquid waste is separated. Don't confuse the two.
- Toilet paper may go into the toilet with solid waste.
- Put wood shavings into the toilet after each deposit of solid material.
- Do not put wood shavings into the urine separator.
- Please accompany young children to ensure proper use.

- Clean up after yourself.
- The Composting Outhouse is for the exclusive use of Gardeners. Do not share the combination to the outhouse with anyone who is not a gardener or your guest in the garden.
- Report any issues to the Garden Manager.

#### **PLOTS THAT ARE NOT YOURS**

- Plots are the private property of each plot owner. Do not enter, leave or remove items, or harvest food from another person's plot without permission from the plot owner.

#### **BIKES**

- Use the bike rack near the Play Area; or
- Keep your bike in or next to your plot, or in the community area nearest your plot.
- DO NOT lean or lock bikes on the Shed, Outhouse, Play Area structures or Garden signs.

#### **YOUR WASTE AND EXTRA STUFF**

- DO NOT put diseased plants, kitchen scraps, trash, or any waste material in the weed piles or leave them in *any* common area.
- DO NOT assume that someone else will want what you do not want. If you can't find someone who agrees to take your leftover items, plants, tools and materials via the Gardener's Google Group, pack them out of the garden.
- Do not leave any items in common areas.
- DO NOT store or place personal items or any items that are not the property of Grow Food Northampton in the shed or in other common areas.
- If you have useful items to donate to other gardeners, keep them in your plot and offer them via the Google Group. Do not leave them in common areas.

#### **CARS IN THE GARDEN**

- Speed limit is 5 MPH at all times. Driving faster endangers people and generates dust that is harmful to plants and people.
- The traffic direction on the main garden loop is one way (clockwise) at all times.
- Park ONLY along the road parallel to Meadow Street.
- Cars must be turned off while parked.
- 10-minute drop-off or pick-up on the road near your plot is permitted, but cars must then be moved to a parking area.
- NEVER drive on the grassy areas between plots. Drive only on gravel roads.
- Overnight parking is never permitted.
- For accommodation to park closer to your plot for longer time periods because of illness, disability, or small children, contact the Garden Manager.

#### **CHILDREN AND GUESTS**

- Children are welcome in the garden, and must be supervised at all times.
- Guests must follow all garden rules and are the responsibility of their host.
- Children and guests may not enter plots of other gardeners without their permission.

#### **DOGS AND OTHER PETS**

- Dogs and other pets must be on leash at all times (per Northampton ordinance).
- People with unleashed dogs or other pets will be asked to leave the garden.
- Dogs and other pets may not enter plots of other gardeners.
- All pet waste must be picked up and removed off site.
- Never put pet waste in compost piles or in the outhouse.
- Report unattended unleashed dogs to Northampton Animal Control.

#### **WILDLIFE**

- Respect wildlife in and around the Garden. Do not harass or remove wildlife.
- Traps or poisons of any kind are not allowed.
- Use only organic and non-lethal methods to repel rodents and other pests.
- If ground-nesting birds nest in your plot, notify the Garden Manager. Federal law requires leaving the nests undisturbed until the birds have fledged.
- Gardeners may put birdhouses in their plots.

#### **NOISE**

- Amplified music is not permitted except during certain special events.
- Use headphones.
- Per Northampton's noise ordinance, loud machinery (like mowers) may not be used between 10PM and 7AM.
- Keep cell phones and conversations to a reasonable volume.

#### **TOBACCO**

- The Garden is a tobacco-free zone – do not smoke or use tobacco products in the garden.

#### **PROBLEMS IN THE GARDEN**

Most of us would like to think that since this is a *Community* Garden, everyone always acts in the best interests of the community. While this has been true of the Grow Food Northampton Community Garden most of the time, problems do crop up.

- **DISPUTES WITH GARDENERS IN NEIGHBORING PLOTS**

Common issues include plants or structures that cast shade on neighboring plots, plants that overgrow other plots, disputed plot boundaries, and untended plots with weeds that are spreading or going to seed. If a neighboring gardener is doing something that negatively impacts you, the best approach may be to have a conversation with your neighbor about your concern. If that isn't possible or doesn't work, contact the Garden Manager.

- **PROBLEMS WITH OTHER GARDENERS**

Our gardeners generally demonstrate a high level of respect for the garden and other gardeners, but sometimes people make mistakes. Issues that may come up include excessive weeds in nearby plots, dogs off leash, children running through other's plots, noise, littering, leaving tools out, leaving the shed unlocked, parking disputes, and so on. While it is your job as a gardener to respect the rules, it is *not* your job to enforce them. If you see a problem, you are welcome to contact the Garden Manager with your concerns.

- **PROBLEMS WITH NON-GARDENERS**

The Grow Food Northampton Community Garden is for the sole and exclusive use of Grow Food Northampton and the gardeners who lease plots. The garden is seen as a community asset that is a wonderful place to walk, look at interesting garden plants and designs, or take a break at a picnic table. For now Grow Food Northampton welcomes visitors who respect the garden and its rules. If you notice problem behavior that threatens the garden or any of its members, do not confront visitors. Instead, contact the police and the Garden Manager in that order.

- **THEFT**

On rare occasions items, plants or food have been taken from gardeners' plots by both 2-legged and 4-legged critters. There isn't much we can do to recover lost items, but it is important to report losses to the Garden Manager to establish if there is a pattern.