

An aerial photograph of a community garden. The garden is divided into numerous rectangular raised beds, some of which are covered with black plastic mulch. A central dirt path runs through the middle of the garden. In the background, there is a dense forest of green trees. To the left, a grassy field and a parking lot with a few cars are visible. The sky is blue with some light clouds.

Opening Meeting

April 11th, 2023

Tonight's Agenda



- Rules
- Garden Info
- Event Calendar
- **Getting Involved**



Garden Info

April 11th, 2023

Photo: Joe Bosia

Before We Start With Rules...



- Meet your nemesis for the next 6 months
 - It is smart.
 - It is relentless.
 - It is hungry.
- Do NOT let it in!!
- Meet your other nemesis for the next 6 months:
 - They have burrows and highways throughout the garden
 - They travel under cover
 - They LOVE root crops
- Baited mouse traps may help (no rodenticides)



Photo: Ohio Department of Natural Resources



Photo: Wikipedia

Rule #1: Close The Gate!



- We'll install a deer fence.
- We'll surround it with a bunny fence.
- We'll mulch above and below both fences.
- None of that helps if someone leaves the gate open.
- Caveat: the smart squirrels can climb and love corn. Consider yourself warned.
- Turkeys can fly in and peck at your crops



Photo: Svetlana Kasharina

Rules: The List Of Don't. *Please...*



- Do not start your planting until all Opening Week work has been completed and the coordinators have informed you that the garden is open.
- Do not plant invasive species, trees, or shrubs in the garden.
 - Mint is impossible to get rid of; it will strangle everything else.
 - Marijuana doesn't belong on town land.
 - Be conscientious of the placement of tall plants in your plot; you will be asked to remove them if necessary.
 - Hemp is too tall and will overtake your neighbor's light.
- Do not use pesticides, non-organic fertilizer, or non-organic compost.
- The woodchips are for communal areas only; don't use them for your plot.

Rules: Place Rocks in the Rock Pile!!



- Do not throw rocks over the fence or into the field. (They are mower-destroyers.)



Rules: The List Of Don't. *Please...*



- Watering cans and carts are for sharing; don't take all of them at once.
- Do not add permanent structures to your garden; annual plots must be cleared of everything (plants, semi-permanent structures, cardboard, etc.) at the end of the season.
- If the parking lot is full, the garden is full. You must come back later. Do not park along the road.
- Do not bring soap or cleaning agents to use with the water in the garden.
- Water is not potable.

Rules: The List of Do. *Please*...

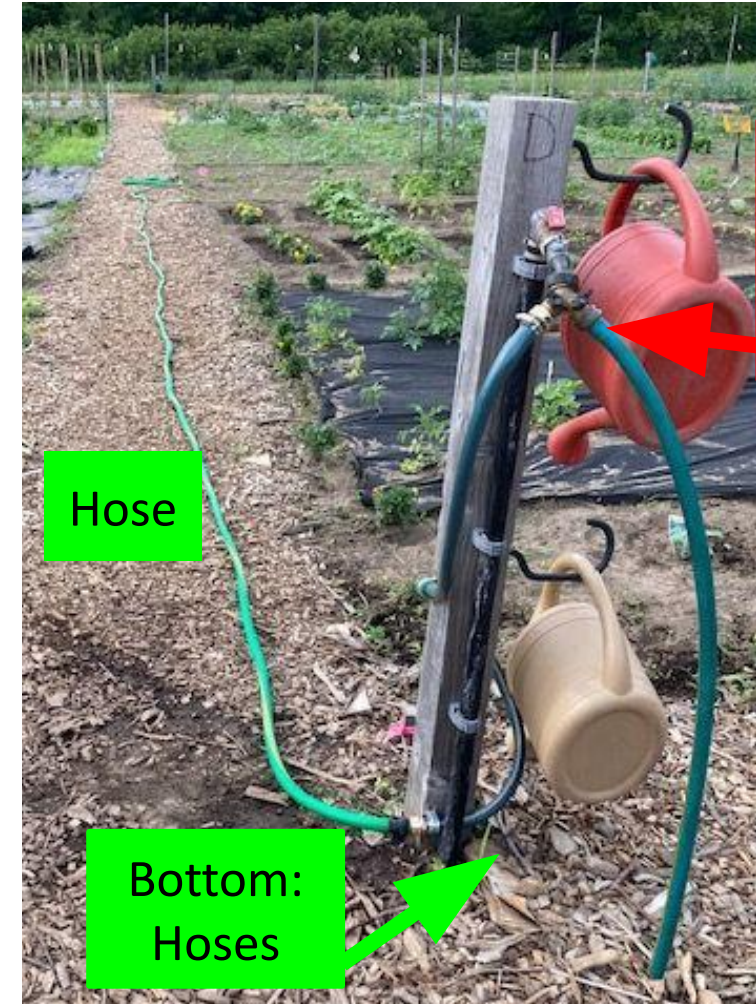


- Have your garden planted by June 1st or you will forfeit your plot without refund.
- Use organic growing practices.
- Place rocks in the rock pile.
- Pack in, pack out: Please bring all trash and recyclables home with you even if the wind blew it away.
- Return all communal items (such as watering cans, wheelbarrows, carts, and tools) to their proper home.
- If you use black landscape fabric, make sure it's UV light tolerant! Otherwise it disintegrates into a total mess.
- Close the gate after yourself.
- Be nice to your neighbors!

Personal Hose Usage



- You can use a **personal** hose! The garden does not provide any hoses.
- Updated Y splitters at all spigots
 - TOP: for filling watering cans
 - NOT FOR HOSES
 - BOTTOM: for hoses
- Be mindful of other gardeners and their use of the shared spigots. **Don't be a hose hog!**
- Taller stakes have been installed to protect plots from dragging hoses.
- You must remove your hose and turn off the water when you finish.
- Hoses cannot be left in common areas.



Top: For
Watering
Cans

Hose

Bottom:
Hoses

Rules: Organic Gardening



- Our garden is owned by the town; the Westford Conservation Commission makes the rules.
- Rule: This is an organic garden!
- Pay attention to any fertilizers, composts, and soils that you bring into the garden. They must be organic!
 - Hint: If it's a day-glow-blue fertilizer, it's probably not organic!
 - Organic Materials Research Institute (OMRI – www.omri.org) is a great resource for finding organic materials.
 - Read your labels! Many organic materials are available locally.

Compost - Sharon Chew

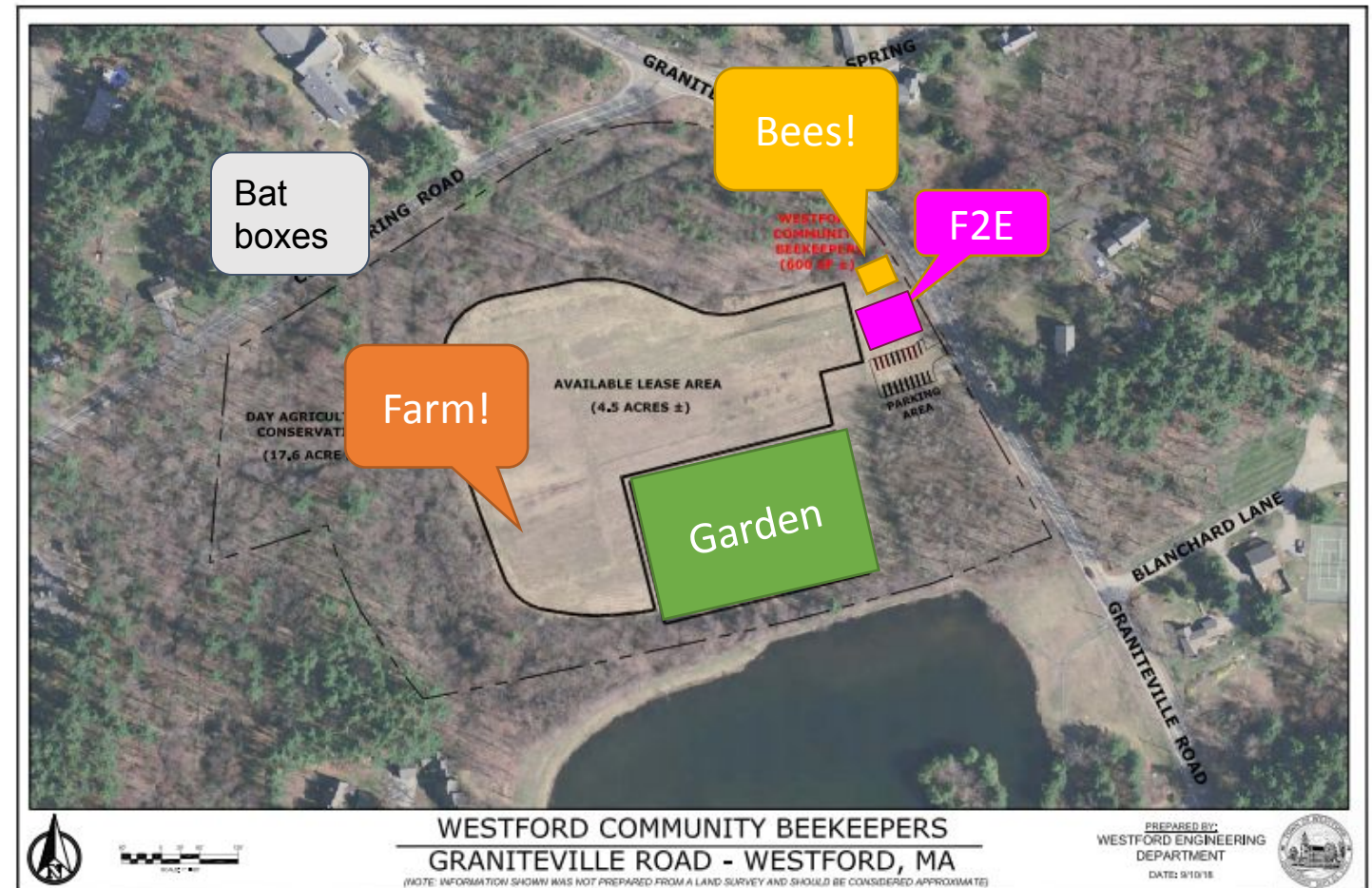


- We have 3 large compost areas.
- There is an empty area for 2023 compost.
 - There will be a sign for which area to use.
 - Please leave the other areas alone; they are busy making compost for future seasons!
- Please add **ONLY** organic material to the compost pile.
 - No landscaping fabric – it doesn't decompose!
 - No plastic – it really doesn't decompose!
- Please add garden material only
 - No food from home, please!
- Compost Committee Leader is AgComm member, **Sharon Chew**

Garden Info: The 10,000 ft View



- A farmer has rented the Day Field.
- The Westford Apiary is over by the parking lot.
 - Parents, heads up! There is an electric fence!!!
- F2E = Flowers 2 Empower, a nonprofit flower business run by girls grades 5-12





Garden Info: The 100 ft View

- The main path of the garden runs approximately east-west.
- We have shared carts and wheelbarrows for your use.
 - Please store carts in the area shown.
- Shed 1 has additional garden supplies and tools for your use.
- Shed 2 is locked.
- Rocks from the rock pile can be used to weigh down cardboard or landscape fabric in your plots.
 - Please return rocks to the rock pile when you are done.
 - If you find any stray rocks in your plot or in the path, please add them to the rock pile.
- Sun shelter improvements are in the works!



Main Gate

**Compost
Bins**



Rock
Pile

**Sun
Shelter**

Cart &
Wheelbarrow
Storage

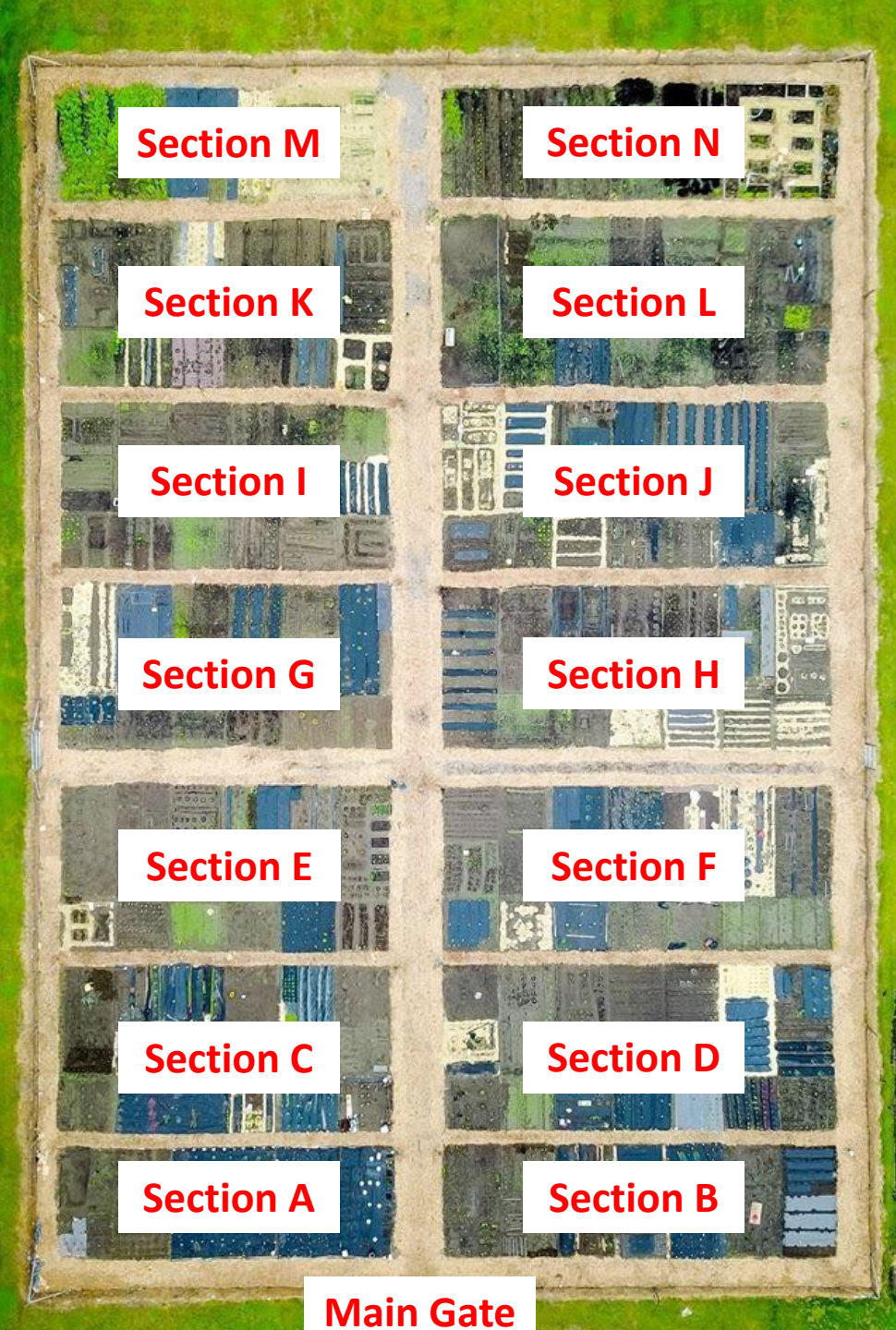
Shed 1

**Shed 2
(locked)**



Garden Info: Where's My Plot?

- The garden has 14 sections, lettered A-N
- Plots within each section are given a number
- Sections L, M and N are perennial.
- Your plot has 4 stakes marking the boundary with a flag in the center
 - The flag has both your section and plot number
 - DO NOT REMOVE THE STAKES
 - MAKE SURE YOUR FLAG IS VISIBLE THROUGHOUT THE SEASON
- Plot assignments will be given out after the presentation!



Kids' Zone - Gemma Kirkwood



- The Kids' Zone is a shared **play space** for children of community garden members
- DO NOT PLANT ANYTHING IN THE KIDS ZONE
- The Kids' Zone has a permanent home in plot L1 in the new perennial area along the main path
- It will be fenced
- Signs will be visible within the plot
- There is a toy bin. We are accepting donations for kids toys!
- Volunteers will be needed to help maintain this area
- Kids are allowed some freedom in the Kids' Zone, but parents please be mindful of their activities.

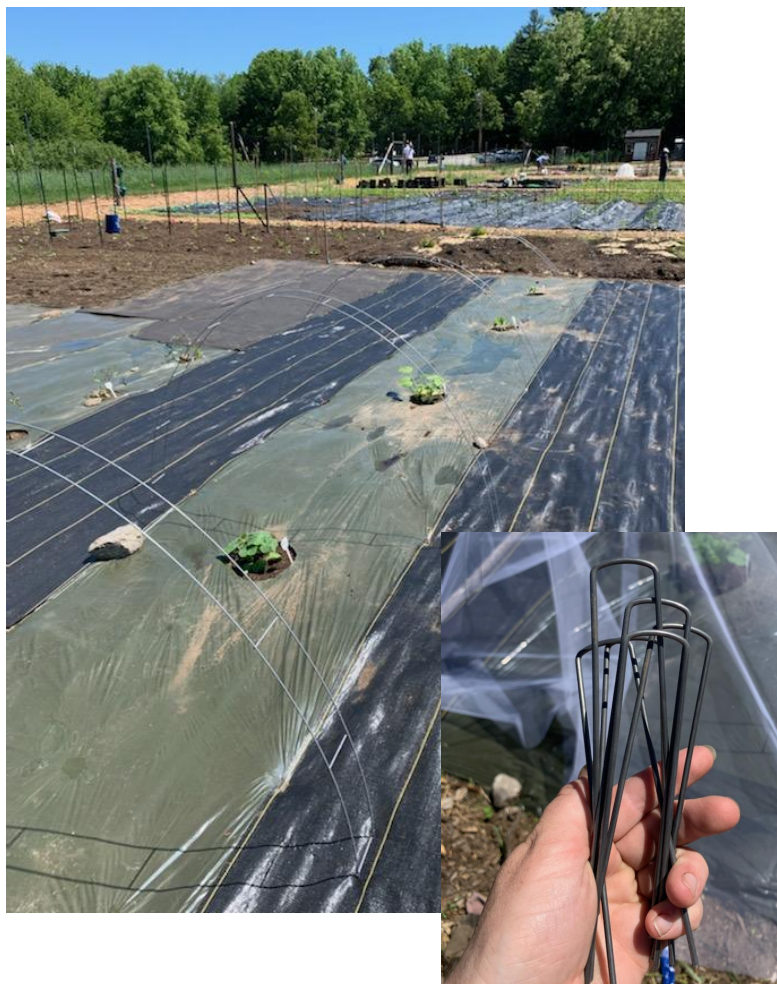
Garden Info: Bug Battle



- We have four very prominent bugs in the garden: the Cucumber Beetle, the Squash Beetle, the Colorado Potato Beetle, and the Squash Vine Borer.
- A few strategies to defeat these:
 - Consider planting your zucchini au natural: they love hiding under hay and fabric!
 - If possible, delay planting your squash, cucumbers, and eggplants.
 - Keep them home until they get larger. Larger plants can better survive a bug attack.
 - We may disrupt their breeding cycle if they can't find good egg laying spots.
 - Potato beetles feast on volunteer ground cherries first, then they kill your eggplants!
 - Speaking of eggs, if you see them, crush them!
 - Row covers



Row Cover for Cucurbits



Photos:
Stephanie
Cate

Events Schedule: Volunteers Needed!!



- **April 4th - 22nd**: Rolling work: Shed opening, field tilling, woodchip delivery, plot marking and fence preparation
- **Sun, April 23rd - Sun, April 30th**: Opening Week
- **June 1st** - Gardens must be planted
- Weekly Food donations typically start late June/early July, date TBD
- **October 8th - 14th**: Closing Work Week
- **Thurs, October 12th**: Plots must be clear by sundown
- **Sat, October 14th**: Final Closing Day

Opening Work Week (April 22-30)



- **The Garden requires about 300 hours of volunteer effort to open.**

- We're asking for a minimum of 2 hours of volunteer time from each gardener during Opening Week to make this happen.
- Sign-ups for tasks will be emailed out April 12

- **Tasks on our plate:**

- Shed opening
- Plot staking/marking
- Removal of mulch/weeds from fence exteriors
- Deer fence raising
- Rodent fence raising
- Section path cardboard and wood chips
- Permanent path weeding/wood chips
- Wood chip covering of fenceline
- Kids' Zone setup
- Compost area setup
- Assorted tasks from coordinators throughout the week (hoses, watering cans, equipment tune-ups, cleanup, etc.)



Photo: Leela Obilichetti

Communication



- How you reach us: westford.community.gardens@gmail.com
- How we reach you:
 - Newsletter (email)
 - Direct email
 - westford.community.gardens@gmail.com
 - coordinators@westfordcommunitygardens.org (through the website, used for registration, sign-ups, newsletter)
 - Please make sure that both of these email addresses are not marked as spam
- Volunteer Sign-ups: westfordcommunitygardens.org/volunteer (log-in)
- How you can reach other gardeners:
 - WCG Forum (forum@westfordcommunitygardens.org)
 - Facebook group: Westford Community Gardens - Members Only
- Phone number: 978-237-4769

Getting Involved: Volunteering



- Our garden is a 100% volunteer organization.
- It takes over 1,000 hours of effort for the garden to run each season.
- We look for each gardener to contribute 10 hours. We will be tracking this year!
 - We look for 2 hours of effort for garden opening; 2 hours for garden closing plus 6 additional hours throughout the season.
 - Opportunities:
 - Path maintenance
 - Shed and equipment maintenance
 - Care of the kids' zone and memorial garden
 - Food donation preparation and ice delivery
 - Clearing area behind sheds, sitting area, and compost bins
 - Committees
 - Documentation and other behind the scenes projects

Getting Involved: Volunteering



- Sign-ups will be posted throughout at the season at westfordcommunitygardens.org/volunteer
- You will need an account on our website to view and sign up for volunteer opportunities.
 - You can register for an account at westfordcommunitygardens.org/register
 - You will receive an email from coordinators@westfordcommunitygardens.org requesting that you confirm your registration. *Check your spam folder if you do not see an email in your inbox!*
 - Once you login, you can sign up for volunteer events! You will receive confirmation and reminder emails for your sign-ups. You can also view, change, or cancel your sign-ups if needed by logging in.

Food Donation - St Mark's Church (Melissa Dewing)



- This program provides locally grown, fresh produce to those in need in Westford.
- St Mark's Church organizes this project
- Food donations start in mid-late June. Details to be determined.
- Coolers will be used for storing produce. Do not place heavy produce on top of light produce.



Photo: WCG Gardener

Sign Up for Committees!!



- **Compost** - Sharon Chew
 - compost@westfordcommunitygardens.org
- **Memorial Garden** - Mary Lyman and Karen Wiczynski
 - memorialgarden@westfordcommunitygardens.org
- **Social** - Deb Banerjee and Allison Frankfort
 - social@westfordcommunitygardens.org
- **Food Donations** - Melissa Dewing and St. Marks Church
 - donations@westfordcommunitygardens.org
- **Shed and Equipment Maintenance** - Joana Donaher and Mary Lou Longo
 - equipment@westfordcommunitygardens.org
- **Gardener Plot Check-Ins** - Raj Kollipara and Rob Michael
 - plotcheckins@westfordcommunitygardens.org

Thank you!



- Website and Registration - Eric Shiue
- Sunshelter Improvements - Adey Daniel
- Social Media - Kathleen (Kate) Crosby
- Long-term Fencing - Clint Grady
- Deer Fence - Ian Kersley
- Rodent Fence - Dave Blumenstock and Christine Berthold
- Kids' Zone - Gemma Kirkwood
- Grass Mowing and Other Maintenance - Stephen Young
- Education - Patti Mason
- Coordinators - Shannon Taylor, Darren Teyssedou, Stephanie Cate

An aerial photograph of a community garden. The garden is divided into numerous rectangular raised beds, many of which are filled with green plants. A central dirt path runs through the middle of the garden. In the background, there is a dense forest of green trees. To the left of the garden, there is a grassy field and a small parking area with a few cars. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

Questions?