



## Westford Community Garden

### HANDBOOK

## Westford Community Gardens Rules and Regulations

These Rules and Regulations have been developed to govern Westford's Community Gardens and to provide a safe and enjoyable experience for all. Towards this end, Garden Rules inform the Gardener of the expectations for participating in the Community Garden.

### COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Gardeners understand and agree that all services performed will be on a strictly voluntary basis, and that they will receive no remuneration, pay or compensation of any kind. Performing this volunteer work does not constitute employment by the Town.
- Gardeners **must** attend Opening Meeting and participate in Opening Week and Closing Week. Those unable to attend these events must communicate with the Garden Coordinators to make other arrangements. Gardeners must also perform 6 hours of additional volunteer work. This additional work can be volunteering for additional events, committee work, or work days during the season.

### PLOT AGREEMENT

The assignment of a plot shall not be construed as creating or vesting in the Gardener any estate in the plot or any other portion of the Town's property. The Gardener acknowledges and agrees to accept the plot in "as is" condition, and that the Town has made no representation or warranty regarding the fitness of the intended plot for its intended purpose.

Plot allocation policies and the registration deadline may change from year to year. The current year's policy and registration deadline will be posted on our website ([westfordcommunitygardens.org](http://westfordcommunitygardens.org)) when applications are made available. A waiting list for plots will be created if needed, and fees returned if requested. Plots are not transferable.

Plot fees will enable the Community Gardens to cover the costs of (but not limited to) water, tilling (except perennial plots), winter cover crops, and general maintenance. The fees set forth below are based on estimates of what is needed to cover the costs of operating the Garden.

### Plot Fees

- \$25: Small annual plot (15' x 15')
- \$50: Medium annual plot (30' x 15')
- \$100: Large annual plot (30' x 30')
- \$50: Medium perennial plot (15' x 30')
- \$100: Large perennial plot (30' x 30')
- \$150: Extra Large perennial plot (45' x 30')
- \$15: Small financial hardship plot (15' x 15')

Checks or money orders should accompany application forms. No cash will be accepted in payment.

*All checks returned for insufficient funds will be subject to a \$25 non-sufficient funds fee payable to the "Town of Westford."*

If you wish to donate more, additional funds will be gratefully accepted and put to work in the Gardens. Additional funds may also be raised by Gardeners, with amount and use agreed to by a majority of Gardeners.



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#### *NON WESTFORD RESIDENTS:*

Out-of-town applicants are invited to apply, and will be incorporated into the plot assignments after the registration deadline.

#### *PLOT SHARING:*

The sharing of plots is accepted only if the registering Gardener is a Westford resident (from now referred to as the “group leader”) and the group leader agrees to accept full responsibility for their co-gardeners' actions at the site. If sharing a plot, please ensure that at least one person from your group attends the mandatory Opening Meeting.

#### *WAITING LIST AND MULTIPLE PLOT REQUESTS:*

After the registration deadline, empty/unclaimed plots will be offered to those Gardeners who have requested additional space on a first-come-first-served basis. Second plots will be offered until all requests are filled, and then third plots if any remain. Unplanted or forfeited plots will be assigned on a first-come-first-served basis to applicants on the waiting list and then to those wishing additional plots.

#### GARDEN CONDUCT

- Gardens are open dawn until dusk, seven days a week.
  - Drive and park in designated areas only. Per the Westford Town Code, Article IV, §199-12, parking along Graniteville, Cold Spring Road, and other roads in this area is **prohibited**. Please respect our neighbor, the tenant leasing the Day Field, and do not drive on, or walk through, the Day Field.
  - The garden gates must remain closed at all times! All paths must be kept clear for access and safety reasons.
  - Gardeners and their guests shall observe and obey all applicable federal, state and local laws, and abide by these rules at all times.
  - Children and other guests are welcome in the Garden when accompanied and supervised by an adult Gardener at all times.
  - The Gardener listed on the application on file with the Town shall be solely responsible for the conduct of all family members, guests, minor children, or any other person that they invite to participate in the Program. The Gardener agrees to be responsible for any accident, injury, death or property damage that may be caused by those who they invite to enter the Community Gardens property and/or participate in the Program.
  - Gardeners may harvest vegetables and flowers from their plot only, unless acting as a temporary substitute for another Gardener.
  - Dogs are not allowed in the Community Gardens for health and safety reasons. Service dogs are exempt from this regulation.
  - No smoking or tobacco products are allowed in the Garden. Tobacco can transmit a lethal virus to tomatoes, and cigarettes contain lethal toxins that can contaminate soil and plants. Smoking is a fire hazard.
  - Drugs, alcohol, radios, fire and weapons of any kind are not allowed in this Garden.
  - No glass is allowed in the Community Gardens at any time. Plastic bags should be secured while working on your plot (so they do not blow away), and should be removed upon departure.
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- The Westford Community Garden is a carry-in/carry-out facility. There will be no trash cans provided, and you are responsible for your own trash removal at all times.

#### START OF THE SEASON

- Gardens must be planted by **June 1**.
- Plots that are not planted by this date will be forfeited without refund. Extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Forfeited plots will be used to fill requests on the waiting list; additional plot requests will be filled after the waiting list requests.
- The planting of mint, oregano, hemp, marijuana, invasive or aggressive species (including sunchokes), trees (including fruit trees) and shrubs, and illegal plants, is not allowed in both the annual and perennial sections. Please contact the Garden Coordinator if unsure about any plants. Please be considerate when planting tall crops (such as beans, corn, and sunflowers), as to not shade neighboring garden plots or plantings. The planting of taller crops should follow a north-to-south positioning and should be done towards the center of your own plot to limit shading. Perennial vegetables, fruits, and berries may only be planted in designated perennial plots.

#### DURING THE GROWING SEASON

- This Community Garden will use **organic growing practices** imposed by the land-owner - the Westford Conservation Commission. For permissible soil amendments, insecticides, herbicides, fungicides and pesticides, please consult the Garden Coordinators or The Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) at <http://www.omri.org/omri-lists>
- No permanent structures are permitted in the garden or within a plot
- The Town reserves the right to enter upon the plot at any time for all lawful purposes, and remove any improvements, structures or plantings in violation of these rules at the Gardener's expense.

#### PLOT MAINTENANCE:

- Each Gardener (or group leader) is responsible for the weekly upkeep of their Garden plot. Watering, weeding, harvesting and any other garden-related maintenance are all the responsibility of the Gardener.
- It is each Gardener's responsibility to notify the Garden Coordinator if for any reason (health, vacation, emergencies), you are temporarily unable to maintain your plot. **If any plot remains unattended for more than two weeks, that plot is subject to forfeiture and reassignment.** Please contact the Garden Coordinator as soon as possible to let them know who will be tending your plot in your absence.
- Plants that spread (such as pumpkins, other squash or raspberries for those with perennial plots), must be contained within your plot space. Plants that vine onto the paths or other plots will be trimmed back or removed.
- Gardeners are responsible for the weeding and maintenance of their surrounding pathways and communal areas.
- When you find rocks in your plot, please remove them from the garden area and pile them in designated areas (not in common paths). Do not throw rocks into the field!
- Borders and edgings are not allowed around plots. Plot markers are the only exception to this and will be placed there by the Garden Coordinators. Pieces of wood (or other suitable material) may be laid down along the INTERIOR of your plot to facilitate walking within your plot (to avoid root compression)

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but must be removed by the end of the season.

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- No sand, gravel, perlite or vermiculite is allowed to be added to plots.
- No woodchips are allowed in the plots. Wood chips are to be used ONLY on the main paths.

#### COMPOSTING PLANT MATERIAL:

The compost bins are only to be used by the Community Garden for weeds, trimmings, and plant material pulled up during the growing season.

Do not place diseased plants into the compost, or any other plant, food, or substance from outside of the garden. Compost is managed and maintained by the Gardeners, Compost Group and volunteers.

#### WATERING:

Water will be provided via spigots at the center of each garden section. Water must then be carried via bucket or watering can to your garden plot.

You will be provided with information on recommended watering practices and water conservation for your garden plots. Gardeners are asked to follow these practices (which will make your plants happy, too!)

#### EQUIPMENT/TOOLS:

- **Gardeners are responsible for bringing their own tools to the garden.**
- Communal wheelbarrows, watering cans, wagons, and assorted tools will be available on a first-come-first-served basis. **Wheelbarrows are for transporting garden supplies and plants only.**
- Communal tools and supplies must remain on premises and be returned to the shed after use. Gardeners are asked to share during times of high demand.

#### END OF SEASON

- Annual plots must be completely cleared before the End of Season Cleanup in October. The date will be finalized by the Westford Community Garden Coordinators and the Town of Westford. Plot Clearance includes the removal of weeds, rocks, personal items, landscape fabric, stakes and posts, and plants.
- Perennial plots must be clear of all personal items, landscape fabric, stakes and posts before the End of Season Cleanup in October.
- Any personal property remaining on the plot upon termination of the gardener's rights or at the end of the season will become the property of the Town and may be disposed of or used at the Town's discretion.
- Gardeners who have not cleaned up their plot(s) by this date may not be invited back in the future.

#### GOVERNANCE

The Westford Community Gardens Coordinators and the Westford Agricultural Commission are responsible for ensuring the rules are followed at all times. Should conflicts or issues arise, please contact the Garden Coordinators by email at: [westford.community.gardens@gmail.com](mailto:westford.community.gardens@gmail.com) or by telephone at (978) 237-GROW.

The Garden Coordinators are your first line of communication in these matters.

Website: [westfordcommunitygardens.org](http://westfordcommunitygardens.org)

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