

# COMMUNITY GARDEN RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The City of Fairfax Parks and Recreation Department recognizes community gardens as a valuable recreation activity that can contribute to community development, environmental awareness, positive socialization, health and well-being. The City of Fairfax supports community gardening by collaborating with existing gardening groups and encourages residents to participate.

## Goals:

- To encourage gardening as a sustainable way of local food production.
- To provide opportunities for gardening to all citizens
- To promote a greener more environmentally sustainable and friendly City.

## Eligibility and Rental requirements:

1. Only City of Fairfax residents are allowed to apply for gardening plots.
2. Plots are limited to one full or half plot per household.
3. Plots sizes are: Full (10 feet by 10 feet) or Half (5 feet by 10 feet).
4. Plots are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.
5. Once all plots have been assigned, a wait list will be established.
6. The rental period for the inaugural year is May 21 to December 31. The normal rental period is from January 1 to December 31.
7. Plots will only be rented for one year at a time.
  - Inaugural Year: May 21 to December 31, 2011.
  - Subsequent Years: January 1 to December 31.
8. The rate for Full Plots is \$60 (with water).
9. The rate for Half Plots is \$30 (with water).
10. A refundable deposit of \$50 is due with your plot fee at the time of application.
11. Annual fees and deposits will not be pro-rated.
12. The money collected from the rental fees offset city costs for the garden fence, site preparations, general maintenance, and water system repairs.
13. The rental fee is due by December 31.
14. Plots are assigned to **new applicants after all renewals** have been received from current gardeners in good standing. After the inaugural year, **you must renew by paying dues no later than December 31** so that gardens may be assigned in a timely fashion.
15. The Parks and Recreation Department will contact applicants prior to the gardening season by phone or email to notify the renter of the plot assignment.

## Community Garden Rules

1. Gardeners must pay the City of Fairfax Plot rental fee and deposit for the inaugural year at the time the application is submitted. In subsequent years all fees, deposits and/or renewal fees are due no later than December 31.
2. Gardening can only be done during the hours of dawn (sunrise) and dusk (sunset) Monday through Sunday. Operation of powered gardening equipment is prohibited prior to 8:00am on weekdays and 9:00am on weekends. No gardening is allowed after hours.
3. The person assigned to the plot must maintain the plot based on the policies established for the garden.

4. Additional gardeners for a plot must be authorized by the renter and listed on the application at the time of submission to the Parks and Recreation office. The additional gardeners must also sign the application as an authorized gardener.
5. Plots that have not been cleaned and prepared for gardening by May 15<sup>th</sup>, in the opinion of the Director of Parks and Recreation or designee, may be assigned to another applicant.
6. Gardens must be kept free of weeds and vines; this includes the walk adjacent to your plot as well as fences.
7. The gardens must be cleaned for winter no later than November 30. This involves removing dead plants, stakes, temporary fences, jugs, trash, etc.
8. Only organic methods of insect, disease and weed control are allowed. The application of pesticides, herbicides, insecticides and fungicides to any portion of the garden plot(s) is prohibited.
9. Children are welcome in the garden but must be accompanied by an adult and supervised all the time.
10. No dogs are allowed in the fenced area of the garden.
11. Garden plots cannot be sublet to any other individual, group or agency.
12. Plots cannot be used for commercial purposes.
13. If a plot appears untended (overgrown weeds, un-harvested), renters will be notified by the Parks and Recreation Department. If a plot is not cleaned within two weeks after receiving notification from the Parks and Recreation Department, it will be reassigned, and the gardening fee and deposit will be forfeited.
14. Gardeners may dig, plant, weed and harvest within the confines of their own garden plot.
15. In the event of non-renewal, your deposit will be mailed to you in the form of a check within 6-8 weeks provided the vacated plot has been cleaned and all trash/debris has been disposed of properly.
16. Renters must comply with the City of Fairfax Community Garden and Park Rules.

**Failing to comply with the City Community Garden Rules and/or penalties may result in cancellation of the privilege to garden. A two-week written warning will be mailed to the renter prior to cancellation.**

**CITY OF FAIRFAX**  
**PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT**  
**10455 ARMSTRONG STREET**  
**FAIFAX, VA 22030**  
**703.385.7858**  
**[www.fairfaxva.gov](http://www.fairfaxva.gov)**

# GARDENER RESPONSIBILITIES

## Common courtesy

- Allow adequate space within your designated plot.
- Plant tall plants on the north side of your plot to minimize its shading effect on other plots.
- Do not walk in others' gardens; use the paths.
- Do not harvest other gardener's crops unless given permission.
- Radios are not allowed since people have different tastes in music, and some gardeners may prefer peace and quiet. If music makes gardening more enjoyable for you, use headphones.
- Please help to pick up and dispose of trash by placing it in the designated area.

## Parking

Parking is only allowed in designated parking lots. Please do not block paths with vehicles, equipment or debris.

## Plots Maintenance

- Annually, all gardeners are required to plant their first planting seedlings by May 15th, unless there has been extremely wet and cool weather. If nothing has been planted by that date (weather permitted), you will be contacted and may be asked to forfeit your gardening fee and plot.
- Keep weeds removed from your plot, the perimeter of your plot and the surrounding paths.
- If you will not be able to tend your garden due to illness or travel:
  - Contact and notify the Parks and Recreation Department (703.385.7858) of your absence. The Parks and Recreation Department will not be responsible for maintaining or harvesting your plot.
  - Find someone to water, weed, and harvest your plot as needed.
  - Ask a neighbor gardener to assist you.
- If a plot appears untended (overgrown weeds, un-harvested), you will be notified by the Parks and Recreation Department. If your plot is not cleaned up within two weeks of notification by the Parks and Recreation Department, it may be reassigned and you may forfeit the gardening fee and deposit.

## Plot Preparation & Maintenance

The garden plots are to be tilled by the plot renter once in the fall and will be tilled again in the spring when the moisture content allows good soil preparation. Gardeners may use walking type roto-tillers in their plots. However, be careful not to overwork the soil since it often results in over-compaction of the soil and poor vegetable growth. Adding organic material (composted materials such as lawn clipping, leaves, decomposed plants and composted manure) is the best way to improve soil quality.

Highly invasive plants are not allowed. Trees or raspberries that run are also not allowed. When in doubt, please consult the City Parks and Recreation staff before planting. At no time shall you build a structure or plant anything that will shade or interfere with another plot. Building berms or channeling water from your plot is not allowed if it adversely affects neighboring plots or run off from the garden site.

Invasive plant list can be found at the following web sites:

- [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural\\_heritage/invspdflist.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/invspdflist.shtml)
- <http://plants.usda.gov/java/noxiousDriver>

## **Mulch**

Using mulch in your garden plot has many benefits. As organic mulch breaks down, it adds valuable nutrients to your soil. You will need less fertilizer and will conserve water.

- Organic mulches, such as compost, leaves, straw, and shredded bark are highly recommended to conserve water and add nutrients to the soil.
- Non-biodegradable mulches, such as stone, carpet and artificial turf are prohibited. Plastic and porous weed blocker covers are permitted, but need to be secured to the ground to prevent the covers from blowing away.
- Composting plant materials within the plot is an excellent way to reduce trash and conserve nutrients. Do not compost food scraps (such as meat, oils, or fat), as this attracts animals.
- Avoid fresh manure which may contain weed seeds, smells bad, and may have sanitary issues that can affect neighboring plots. Composted manure is permitted.
- Mulch may be provided by the Parks and Recreation Department if funds and availability allow.

## **Water for Gardens**

Water for garden plots will be available from the city water supply. You must supply your own water hoses. Please use "Y" connectors and a "leader hose" to allow easy access for other gardeners.

Water conservation is important, please be sure faucets are shut off completely and any locking device for the water supply is reattached. Please limit use of water for washing feet so water is available for other gardeners.

When watering, be careful not to drag hoses through others' plots. Try not to over-spray onto others' plots, since they may be planning to plant or work their soil (if others are waiting to water, limit your time to 15 minutes). Remember that water is a precious and limited resource.

## **Use of tools**

Please be careful with the use of your garden tools. Tools are not to be stored at the garden site.

## **Items of security**

If you suspect that an unauthorized person is harvesting a garden, contact the Parks and Recreation Department at 703-385-7858.

## **Fencing**

Fencing may be used around your plot but it must be made of chicken wire or other open mesh materials that allow light transmission. Fencing may not exceed six feet in height and may not be attached to the numbered garden plot stakes. Under no circumstances shall numbered garden plot stakes be removed or relocated. The City of Fairfax reserves the right to prohibit any fencing or other structures which may be detrimental to the site.

## **CITY RESPONSIBILITIES**

The City of Fairfax Parks and Recreation Department will be responsible for taking rental requests, assigning plots and enforcing rules of the community garden. The City of Fairfax Parks and Recreation Department will maintain the garden border fence and garden plot stakes. Trash barrels will be emptied during routine park trash pick-ups.