

Community Garden Manual



Registering in
the Community
Garden Program

Managing
Your Plot
and Pathways

Communication:
What's Going On in the Garden

*To plant a
garden is to
believe in
tomorrow.*



David Hill Garden
440 NE Oak Street



Orenco Garden
6420 NW Oelrich Road



Sonrise Garden
6701 NE Campus Way



Thank You!

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Sunrise Church, Orenco Presbyterian Church, and the Hillsboro School District. Additional support has been given to the gardens by the ELCA Oregon Synod Endowment Fund, Hillsboro Water Department, Master Gardeners of Washington County, OSU Extension Services Master Gardeners, SOLVE, Miller Education Center, local Boy Scouts, and many other individuals and groups. Thank you to everyone who has helped to create these community gardens!



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Hillsboro's Community Garden Program

Hillsboro's Community Gardens Program is part of the City of Hillsboro Parks & Recreation Department. We currently host more than 200 gardeners in our organic gardens located throughout the Hillsboro area.

All of our garden program participants work together to maintain our gardens and support one another's gardening endeavors. Our garden communities are becoming more and more connected, supportive, diverse, and cohesive. Each year, garden program participants complete eight garden service hours in caring for the gardens, food banking, researching and writing, and teaching gardening to one another through structured work parties and projects.

Our gardens represent partnerships with local churches and schools. We continue to develop an extensive food banking operation where excess fresh garden produce is supplied to Sunrise Church, Orenco Presbyterian Church, and Hillsboro Food Banks to help alleviate food insecurity and to assist low-income persons in accessing healthy food alternatives.

Education is an important element of our mission to promote organic gardening practices. We are continuously developing educational resources for our gardeners and finding ways to share the wealth of experience our garden population encompasses. In addition, our Hillsboro community offers a wide variety of garden organizations and educational opportunities, and we make every effort to connect our gardeners with these opportunities.

Welcome to our program! We wish you an abundant season!

General Information

Community Garden Program Contacts

R. Lewis Ferguson

Community Gardens Program Facilitator

Hillsboro Parks & Recreation

Jackson Bottom Wetlands Preserve

2600 SW Hillsboro Highway

Hillsboro, OR 97123-9379

CommunityGardens@Hillsboro-Oregon.gov

503-681-5374

Hillsboro-Oregon.gov/CommunityGardens

Lori Prince

Outdoor Recreation Manager

Hillsboro Parks & Recreation

Jackson Bottom Wetlands Preserve

503-681-6424

Susan Howard

Administrative Support Specialist

Hillsboro Parks & Recreation

Jackson Bottom Wetlands Preserve

503-681-6206

Garden Program Eligibility

The Community Garden Program is open to Hillsboro residents.

Garden Plot Leases

Garden plot leases run January 1 to December 31, regardless of when the plot is leased. Plots must be renewed annually. Garden plot fees are due each year at the time of registration. Plot fees are not prorated.

Plot Sizes and Annual Fees

Plot Name	Size	Area	Fee	Note
"L" Plot	20' x 20'	400 sq ft	\$60/year	Recommended for families of 3 or more, or active experienced gardeners. However, there are no restrictions and you may select any size.
"S" Plot (Sonrise garden only)	15' x 20'	300 sq ft	\$50/year	Recommended for beginning gardeners and/or families of 1 – 2 people.
"M" Plot	10' x 20'	200 sq ft	\$40/year	Recommended for beginning gardeners and/or families of 1 – 2 people.
"R" Plot (raised bed)	4' x 12'	48 sq ft	\$30/year	Priority given for elderly and mobility-impaired persons.

Refund Policy

Garden plot fees are *non-refundable*. If you need to relinquish your plot lease or are removed from the program during the season, fees will not be refunded.

Each year, garden program participants must complete required paperwork and take part in an orientation. If you are unable to complete these requirements your lease will be terminated, and plot fee(s) will be:

- Credited to your Parks & Recreation account (*can be used at a later date*), or
- Returned to your credit card.

Multiple Garden Plot Registrations

Plots are generally limited to one plot per household. If there are unassigned plots after May 31, current gardeners may apply to lease additional plots. Plot fees are charged for *all* leased plots and are not pro-rated. Secondary plots are not renewable — they return to the open plots pool at year-end.

Who Can Garden in Your Plot?

- Plots may not be transferred, exchanged, or sublet. If you are unable to fulfill your obligations and would like to terminate your agreement, please contact the Community Garden Program Facilitator.
- Only those registered in the Community Garden Program and their immediate families may use garden plots. We encourage sharing, but all additional non-family-members must register and sign the required paperwork. Only one fee is charged per plot.
- Guests must be accompanied at all times by registered gardeners.

Registering in the Community Garden Program

New Gardeners: Requesting a Garden Plot

To request a garden plot, please fill out and send in the **Gardener Registration Form**, available online at Hillsboro-Oregon.gov/CommunityGardens, or at Jackson Bottom Wetlands Preserve, or by calling the Community Gardens Program Facilitator at 503-681-5374. You will be added to the garden wait list. We begin assigning vacated and un-renewed garden plots to new gardeners beginning late February.

If a plot becomes available, you will be contacted by the Program Facilitator at which time you may reserve your plot and make payment. You may call at any time to check wait list status and plot availability.

Following booking, you will be emailed a **Welcome Letter** with a summary of our garden policies and required meeting dates as well as our **Community Gardens Participant Waiver and Release** form.

After Your Plot is Leased:

- The **Garden Liability Waiver** will be emailed to you. Please sign and return within two weeks via email or USPS. If sending by mail, please send to:

Jackson Bottom Wetlands Preserve
2600 SW Hillsboro Highway
Hillsboro, OR 97123-9379
- Take part in the required spring orientation, after which, you will sign our **Garden Policy Agreement** and **Code of Conduct** forms.

The deadline for payment, submitting paperwork, and attending an orientation is **April 15**. If you have not made special arrangements and these requirements have not been met by April 16, your lease may be canceled, and your plot fee will be credited to you. Those leasing after April 15 have different deadlines.

Returning Gardeners: Renewing Your Garden Plot

To Renew Your Current Plot:

By Phone:

503-681-5374 or 503-681-6206
Monday – Friday 9 am – 4 pm

Drop-In:

Jackson Bottom Wetlands Preserve
2600 SW Hillsboro Highway
Hillsboro, OR 97123-9379
Monday – Friday 10 am – 4 pm

To **change** your garden plot or garden, please send your request to the Program Facilitator as early in the year as possible. Your request will be added to the wait list and placed during the renewal period if a space becomes available.

Garden plot renewals take place between mid-December and mid-February. During this time, returning gardeners may renew their current plots or change plots or gardens.

You are eligible to renew (renewals are at the discretion of the Program Facilitator) if:

- You are a City of Hillsboro resident.
- You were in the program during the previous season.
- You completed eight service hours during the previous season.
- You received two or fewer warnings during the previous season.
- You cleaned up and mulched your plot by the end of the season deadline.

After Your Plot is Leased:

- The **Garden Liability Waiver** will be emailed to you. Please sign and return within two weeks via email or USPS. If sending by mail, please send to:

Jackson Bottom Wetlands Preserve
2600 SW Hillsboro Highway
Hillsboro, OR 97123-9379
- Take part in the spring orientation, after which you will sign our **Garden Policy Agreement** and **Code of Conduct** forms.

The deadline for payment, submitting paperwork, and attending an orientation is **April 15**. If you have not made special arrangements and these requirements have not been met by April 16, your lease may be canceled, and your plot fee will be credited to you. Those leasing after April 15 will have different deadlines.

Orientation

Gardeners are required to take part in an annual orientation. This orientation may be virtual or in-person, depending on the most recent health and safety protocols at the time of scheduling. Information concerning the method of delivery and date(s) for orientation will be provided by the Program Facilitator in early February.

Gardeners should plan to complete orientation by April 15.

Gardeners leasing plots after April 15 will have a different time schedule for orientation and paperwork.

Keep Your Information Current

Almost all garden communications occur via email. Gardeners are responsible for keeping email, addresses, and phone numbers current with the Program Facilitator. Make sure you receive messages and are up to date on the latest communications.

Registration Time Line

Mid-December to early February

- People renewing plots and who do not have blocks on renewal are given priority.
- If your registration was blocked for any reason, your plot is considered open. Contact the Program Facilitator to discuss any issues as soon as possible.
- Open plots may be assigned to new persons.

Mid-February

- Renewals continue but un-renewed plots may be assigned to new gardeners.
- Open plots may be assigned to new persons

Mid-March to April 15

- Spring orientation.

April 15

- All paperwork and orientation should be completed.

April 16

- Incomplete registrations may be canceled.

Communication: What's Going On in the Garden

We have a variety of resources available to help you keep connected with what's going on in the Community Gardens Program:

- **Garden Email**
 - Most communications occur via email. Be sure to look for important garden communications from your Garden Manager and the Program Facilitator.
- The Hillsboro Community Garden webpage Hillsboro-Oregon.gov/CommunityGardens
 - To register/renew go to our **Lease/Renew a Garden Plot** page for instructions and contacts.
 - Check the **Resources** page for links to our policy documents, information on organic gardening, composting and soil health, weed control, food pantries for produce donations, and planting and harvest calendars.
 - Our **Garden Manual** is the best reference for our policies and procedures and is posted in the **Policy Documents** section of the **Resources** page.
- **Volunteer Garden Calendar.** Your Garden Manager and management team regularly post important events on the volunteer garden calendar, such as gardener-hosted work party information, food banking information, educational opportunities, and much more.
- Our garden tool sheds have bulletin boards where work party and other relevant information is often posted. As a gardener, you are also encouraged to post items of community interest— with prior approval from the Program Facilitator.
- Gardeners have set up independent garden Facebook pages for these gardens:
 - **Sonrise:** Facebook.com/groups/121725271296019
 - **David Hill:** Facebook.com/groups/692789804156167
 - **Orengo:** Facebook.com/groups/230082863776701
- **Google Document.** We track service hours throughout the gardening season. Your garden manager will post service hour updates periodically throughout the garden season. If you have questions about your service hours, please contact your garden manager.

Community Garden Supervisory Teams

All community gardens have *volunteer* managers who oversee day-to-day garden operations. Our managers not need to be expert gardeners. They are part of the gardening community and willing to take on the job of organizing garden activities. If the need arises, Garden Managers may recruit other *volunteers* in the garden community to assist with various management-related jobs.

Your Garden Managers have the Following Responsibilities:

- Host three work parties a season (spring, mid-season, fall).
- Track service hours for work parties and other service projects.
- Monitor garden plot, pathway, and community area maintenance and issue reminders to gardeners when additional maintenance is needed.
- Manage an onsite compost project.

Our gardens cannot function without our garden managers. If you ever have an issue in the garden, your manager is your first contact.

Your manager and other volunteers are doing an invaluable and necessary service for our garden program. Please keep this in mind and note the following:


- One of your manager’s tasks is to check in with you if your plot or pathways are not meeting our standards. If a weeding reminder is received for your plot or pathways, it is a courtesy to help you keep up so you do not receive a warning from the Program Facilitator. Be sure to respond with the same courtesy and understanding. Rudeness towards volunteers or staff is unacceptable.
- Your manager is not responsible for maintaining the community areas of the gardens. Garden program participants are responsible for all garden maintenance.
- Your manager is not obligated to provide service projects or lead work parties other than the three Parks & Recreation work parties scheduled.

Community Garden Rules

General

- Gardening hours are from 6 am to 9 pm or dusk, whichever comes earlier. The use of power equipment is restricted to the hours of 9 am to 6 pm.
- Alcohol, smoking, vaping, and tobacco use is prohibited in all garden areas.
- Garden plots are privately leased. Do not enter any plot other than your own without express permission.
- Only harvest from your own plot unless you have permission from the plot lease holder to harvest in another plot.
- All community garden tools, items, and infrastructure provided by Parks & Recreation are for community use on a first-come, first-served basis. Anyone using tools or installations may continue use for the length of time needed.
- Unless other restrictions apply, dogs must always be on a leash with one end of the leash attached to the dog and the other end attached to a human or something immovable. Leashes should not be attached to irrigation towers.
- Children are welcome in our gardens but must be always accompanied by an adult. Children must be respectful of garden members and garden plot privacy.
- If you would like to play music, please use a personal sound system with headphones so others may enjoy the peace and quiet of the garden.

Code of Conduct



City	Civ	Civ	Civ	Civ
Part #				

Hillsboro Parks & Recreation Community Garden Program
Anti-Discrimination Policy and Code of Conduct

Anti-Discrimination Policy

It is the policy of the City of Hillsboro Parks & Recreation Community Garden Program to maintain a garden and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Program prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. Distribution or harassment against program participants or staff will not be tolerated in the Community Garden Program. Staff of Hillsboro Parks & Recreation are responsible for the implementation of this policy in the Outdoor Recreation Manager, City of Hillsboro Parks & Recreation Department.

Code of Conduct

All participants in the Hillsboro Parks & Recreation Community Garden Program (hereafter "volunteers") agree to the following:

- Gardens will act with courtesy towards others in the garden, respecting privacy and personal safety.
- No alcohol, smoking, vaping, or tobacco use is allowed in the garden.
- Gardens will not use power equipment in the garden.
- Gardens will not use power equipment in the garden.
- Gardens will not use power equipment in the garden.

1. Use of language (swearing) or abusive verbal attacks aimed at any fellow gardener, City of Hillsboro staff, or volunteer, partner representative, or community member.

2. Engage in abusive gestures or digital media harassment.

3. Use foul language (swearing) or abusive verbal attacks aimed at any fellow gardener, City of Hillsboro staff, or volunteer, partner representative, or community member.

4. Engage in abusive verbal communication with any fellow gardener, City of Hillsboro staff, or volunteer, partner representative, or community member.

5. Gardens will have any portion of the garden immediately upon being held by a City of Hillsboro staff person or volunteer or partner representative.

Any City of Hillsboro representative responsible for enforcing, supervising, monitoring, or otherwise operating the Community Garden Program shall have the authority to enforce the terms of this Code. Failure of any person to abide by the Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to:

1. Removal from the program area
2. Suspended or program participation
3. Suspension or expulsion from the program

Notice of fees shall be given for any suspension or expulsion from the program for violating the Code of Conduct. Appeal of any suspension or expulsion shall be filed in writing with the Outdoor Recreation Manager, Parks & Recreation Department, within seven days of the action. The decision of the Outdoor Recreation Manager is final.

Printed on: _____ Date: _____
Page Number: _____ of _____ Page # _____
Hillsboro Parks & Recreation 2023.10.17

Anti-Discrimination Policy and Code of Conduct
(check out document on web page)

Pesticides/Herbicides

Hillsboro's community gardens are **organic**. The use of unapproved herbicides and pesticides, including Roundup, is strictly prohibited. *Anyone using synthetic herbicides or pesticides may be immediately removed from the program and not permitted to re-enroll at a later time.*

To find products approved for organic gardening, consult the OMRI Products Lists (Organic Materials Review Institute). If a product appears on this list, we will generally allow its use in the garden. However, even if a product is on this list, check with your Garden Manager or Program Facilitator as some products may not be suitable for our garden environment even though they are generally approved for organic gardening practice.

The internet is an abundant source of advice and information on organic gardening and insect and pest control methods. Do not employ a practice without checking with your Garden Manager or Program Facilitator. Not all practices described as "organic" are appropriate for a community garden setting and may even be harmful or have unintended consequences.

Fertilizers

We do not have specific rules concerning fertilizers and their use.

We encourage all our gardeners to understand and care for their soils, to compost, and to use organic amendments and fertilizers where appropriate. However, there are non-organically sourced slow-release fertilizers that are good sources of nutrition, and which do not harm healthy soils.

Prohibited Plants

For the health of the garden, and to comply with Federal, State, and local law(s), we have a few restrictions on what you can plant:

- No federally controlled plants are allowed in the garden, including cannabis.
- No tobacco.
- Trees are only allowed in pots which are raised off the ground sufficiently to keep roots from penetrating the soil.
- No cane fruits (i.e., raspberries, blackberries, marionberries, etc.) are allowed in the garden.
- Mint is only allowed in pots which are raised off the ground sufficiently to keep roots from penetrating the soil.

Other plants may be prohibited if they become a nuisance.

Planting prohibited plants or failing to remove them, may result in your removal from the program or loss of the privilege to renew.

Animals in the Garden

Gardens are safe-havens for a wide range of plant and animal life. All manner of burrowing, creeping, crawling, and flying creatures form part of the complicated web of life that is our garden. As partners in our garden endeavors, creatures in the garden are protected and must always be treated with respect at all times, including nesting birds which are protected by Federal law in the "Migratory Bird Treaty Act."

Dogs

Unless other restrictions apply, dogs are welcome guests in the gardens. However, dogs must be always on a leash with one end of the leash attached to the dog and the other end attached to a human or something immovable. Do not attach leashes to irrigation towers. Dogs must not enter garden plots, other than those leased by their people. This rule applies to dogs of all sizes, service designations, and personalities.

Irrigation and Watering

The extensive irrigation system includes an irrigation tower for every two plots. System repairs are expensive and difficult to schedule, so please take care when using the towers and hose bibs to extend the life of our system.

Water is an expensive and scarce resource. Rates are going up and excessive water use will unavoidably lead to plot fee increases, so please make water conservation a top priority.

- Water use is on a first-come, first-served basis. If someone is using a hose bib(s), wait until they are finished or use another bib. There are no usage time limits and hose outlets are not reserved for particular plots.
- No automatic watering systems are allowed. *You must be present on site to water.*
- **Nothing** is to be hung from irrigation towers, including hose hangers.
- Water must be turned off *completely* at the hose bib and valve.
- *Do not leave your hose attached to the hose bib when you leave.* The hose bibs are a community resource.
- Installation of irrigation drip systems which can be attached to the hose bib is allowed but may only be attached while you are on site.
- All hoses in tool sheds are for garden community use.
- Personal hoses are allowed but must only be stored in your plot, not left in pathways.
- A **sillcock key** is required to operate hose bib valves and can be purchased at any hardware store.
- Hose nozzles must always be used to assist in water conservation.

Garbage Disposal

Our garden sites do not have garbage disposal services and do not contain garbage receptacles. All disposal receptacles on site are for **garden vegetative debris only**. Dumping of trash or garbage anywhere in the garden, including vegetative waste debris bins, is prohibited and may result in your immediate removal from the garden program without fee reimbursement.

Garden Vegetative Waste Disposal

Our garden sites do not have yard debris removal services. You are responsible for disposing of all garden waste from your plot and pathways. Here are some options:

- Take your waste home.
- Compost your vegetable waste in your plot.
- Use the onsite community composting system.

Community Composting

Compost is an invaluable amendment in organic gardening. All vegetative waste produced in the garden and almost all weeds can be successfully composted to produce high-quality, nutritious amendments. All our gardens have some form of onsite community composting.

- Only vegetative waste (including *almost all weeds*) produced in your garden is allowed in the community compost pile. The following exceptions apply: coffee grounds (no filters), coffee chaff. *Absolutely NO home-generated, off-site waste is allowed.*
- Do NOT dump waste in front of compost piles.
- Do NOT use compost piles or bins when they are closed for maintenance.
- Avoid adding field thistle, bindweed, crabgrass, and mint to the compost bays.
- Always cover your fresh garden waste with high-carbon matter, such as leaves or rotted woodchips.

Dumping garden waste or debris anywhere outside of designated compost bays/areas or containers is not allowed. This includes dumping debris in front of compost bays.

Tool Shed Use

All gardens have tool sheds where community tools, hoses, wheelbarrows, water keys and other miscellaneous garden items are stored. Please be aware of the following:

- Tool sheds must be kept locked.
- Do NOT share the tool shed lock combination with anyone who is not registered in the garden program.
- Everything stored in the tool sheds are for garden community use.
- Do NOT store personal items in tool sheds.
- Do NOT abandon unwanted items in tool sheds.
- Contact the Garden Manager or Program Facilitator for garden equipment donation approval.

Garden Service Hours

All our community gardeners share in general garden maintenance by completing eight (twelve if a gardener has two plots) garden service hours each season toward the weeding and upkeep of community areas. Because everyone shares in the benefits of a well-kept garden, it is important that everyone contributes to garden chores.

Your Service Hours Responsibility

- You are required to complete eight garden service hours each season a single garden plot is leased, regardless of plot size. If a group of people share a garden plot, the group only owes eight service hours.
- If you rent two plots, you will owe twelve total service hours for the season.
- The registered gardener, an immediate family member, and anyone registered as sharing a garden plot, is eligible to earn service hours. Friends may also volunteer to do service hours (please clear this with the Garden Manager).
- It is *your responsibility* to attend scheduled events and to actively connect with your Garden Manager for service activities.
- You earn service hours at hosted work parties or by taking on approved special projects for an agreed-upon time. The Garden Manager or representative must approve all projects and the time allotted. Projects must be completed and checked.
- If service events conflict with your schedule, you are still obligated to contribute. All gardeners are eligible to host work parties or lead special projects.
- To earn service hours, you must work in community areas of the garden. Working in your own plot or weeding your own pathways is not community service time. If you work on your own plot during work parties, you will not earn service time.
- Service hours do not roll over from year-to-year.
- The final fall work party each year is the deadline for finishing your eight service hours. To complete hours after this event, you must have special permission from your Garden Manager. Your Garden Manager is not obligated to accept any service projects or provide any opportunities after the deadline.

Counting Service Hours

Our gardens are lively, active places from early spring to late fall. Weeds are always growing; compost bins get messy and so do the tool sheds. There are always projects to be done to keep our gardens in good order.

It is vital that you spread out your service hours throughout the season. Garden work parties are generally two or three hours long, so you can plan on attending three or four work parties during the season to finish your time.

There is flexibility in the way people can earn their hours. For example, if you take on a special project like food banking or watering for people on vacation, you can work through the season at your own convenience and still complete your hours.

Counting Service Hours Protocol

- Plan to only have one person from your plot work at a time at any garden work party. We do not count the hours of more than one person per plot per event, even though the extra help is appreciated.
- It is fun to come in a group, so consider having your garden partner(s), family, and friends work on weeding and tending your own plot while you work.
- Extra people are always welcome to do community work at all work parties and enjoy the social atmosphere although their work does not count as service time.
- You can choose to split up covering the total time at a work party amongst a group:
 - Only one person at a time from the group can be doing service work that will count toward service hours.
 - You must let your garden party host know who is doing the service work for your plot at any given time.
 - You need to do all your service hours in your community garden.

Work Parties

Attending hosted work parties is the easiest way to earn service hours. The garden program typically offers three work parties each year in each garden. Any additional work parties must be offered by gardeners and there may be few opportunities.

It is up to you, the gardener, to look for ways to serve your hours. Do not rely on your managers or other gardeners to make opportunities. If you cannot get to a scheduled work party, you have the option to schedule and host a work party of your own. Any gardener-led work party must have manager approval.

Coming out for announced service hours events early in the season will get your hours done quickly. We strongly advise everyone to complete at least four hours by mid-season so you do not find yourself unable to finish by the deadline.

Earning Service Hours at Work Parties

- All garden work parties have hosts. You must check in and check out with the work party host to get service hours credit at hosted work parties. You only get credit for the time you work.
- Do appropriate community work. We operate on the honor system.
- If you arrive late to an event when all the work is done, you will not receive service hours credit.

Garden Program Work Parties: Spring, Mid-Season, and Fall

- Organized by the Garden Program.
- Scheduled well in advance for easy planning.
- The only *guaranteed* work party opportunities.
- Hosted by your garden managers.
- You can earn up to three service hours at the spring and fall work parties and up to two hours at the mid-season work party for a total of eight hours.
- The spring and fall work parties are typically both offered on a consecutive Saturday and Sunday to accommodate as many people as possible.
- A full tool trailer and large debris bin is available on site.
- Great opportunity to meet other gardeners!

It can be difficult to find opportunities to do eight service hours if you miss the spring, mid-summer, or fall work parties. The spring and fall work parties are typically scheduled on a consecutive Saturday and Sunday to accommodate the schedules of as many gardeners as possible. However, you can only earn a total of three service hours at either work party, even if you attend both Saturday and Sunday, in keeping with the goal of spreading out hours over the season. However, you may choose to split up your three hours over the two days.

Hosting Your Own Work Party

If you cannot make a scheduled work party, you are encouraged to host your own:

- Choose a date, time, and hours.
- Pick your project. (We can help you select a project and do all the advertising.)
- Contact your Manager/service hours coordinator, give them the details, get approval.
- A list of participants will be provided to you.
- You can have your Garden Manager or a veteran gardener co-host or just be there for you.
- Show up, check people in and out, and enjoy!

Special Service Hours Projects

Garden work parties are not the only way to earn service hours. We have a variety of projects that can be done for service hours on your own time. Check with your Garden Manager or service hours coordinator for a list of projects or suggest one of your own. Projects must be approved in advance. Projects must be completed to earn credit. Some special projects are season-long so you may do more than eight service hours.

Special Service Hours Project Examples

Following are examples of jobs and projects that may be available in your garden to earn service hours. Check with your Garden Manager for more information:

Helping with Garden Management

- Garden Manager
- Service Hours Coordinator
- Data Entry Specialist
- Garden Plot/Pathway Inspector
- Garden Infrastructure Inspector
- Garden Facebook Page Administrator

General Projects

- Take Charge of Garden Community Compost Projects
- Make Garden Signs as Needed
- Join the Harvest Brigade
- Join a Watering Brigade
- Food Banking Assistance
- Host a Crop Swap
- Host a Potluck

Tracking Service Hours

It is very important to report your service hours to your Manager or volunteer coordinator as all service hours are tracked by date, project, and plot. Be sure to keep your own record of your hours as well. This is a community effort and, sometimes, despite our best efforts, mistakes can happen.

Your manager can tell you how many service hours you have at any time, just send an email request.

You will receive notices about work parties, harvesting projects, food banking, and other service opportunities via email as well as reminders about completing hours. We make every effort to keep you well-informed. However, it is your responsibility to take advantage of the opportunities offered and complete your hours.

Service Hours Timeline

▪ April: Spring Work Party

This is the first organized opportunity to earn service hours. To earn service hours prior to this requires special arrangements. We typically schedule a spring work party over one weekend on both Saturday and Sunday (2 – 3 hours each day) to accommodate people's schedules. You cannot earn more than three hours for the spring work party even if you attend both Saturday and Sunday.

▪ June – July: The Mid-Season Work Party

We strongly encourage you to have completed four or five hours by the end of this work party.

▪ October: Fall Work Party

This is the last garden program work party. The last fall work party on a Sunday is the deadline for completing your service hours. Your Garden Manager may occasionally choose to extend the deadline; however, you are responsible for making arrangements with your Manager to complete your hours.

Fall Clean-Up and Mulching in November

Fall plot clean-up and mulching is so important for the health of all our gardens, that completing this activity is a garden program-wide policy which you must complete before you are permitted to renew.

Summer debris left to decompose through the winter makes an excellent home for fungus and pests to flourish. Without some form of control like cover-cropping or heavy mulching, weeds will grow exuberantly in our mild winters and can begin seeding very early in spring. By the time gardening begins, these seeds have already spread throughout the garden. For these reasons, fall clean-up and mulching is a required part of plot maintenance.

The final plot clean-up and mulching deadlines occur in November. The mulching deadline depends on leaves being available and may be later than the clean-up deadline. The garden program provides leaf mulch in the fall and leaves are delivered to all the gardens as soon as they are available.

The Program Facilitator inspects all gardens following the clean-up deadline. Your plot must be weeded and free of summer vegetable debris but need not be mulched at this time (unless the clean-up and mulching deadlines coincide). If your plot is not in good order at the time of inspection, your renewal will be blocked until the plot is cleared out. The Program Facilitator inspects after the mulching deadline as well, and your plot must be mulched at the time of this inspection or your registration will be blocked at this time.

To prepare your plot for winter, clear out all your summer debris by the clean-up deadline and do a complete job of weeding. You can certainly keep winter vegetables and perennials growing in your plots but be sure to prune off all dead material and clear away debris from around them.

As soon as mulch is available, put down a thick layer of mulch on your plot and around all winter vegetables and perennials. You can leave a small bare area right around the stems to prevent mold. You are welcome to use straw or other appropriate materials (check with your Garden Manager) as well. Be sure that you select straw that is guaranteed to be free of most weed seeds. Straw often harbors wheat seeds and wheat can be a very aggressive weed in the garden.

Cover cropping is also a great way to control weeds. Clovers are the best cover crops for a community garden setting. When selecting a cover crop, please check with your manager before planting as some cover crops are not suitable for our gardens. If you choose to cover crop, let your manager know so that you get credit for weed control.

Vacations and Absences

You are responsible for your plot from January 1 to December 31 of the year you lease. If you go on vacation or find that you will have an extended absence, and your plot will need care or watering, please do the following:

- Alert your Garden Manager.
- Arrange to have someone look after your plot while you are away and let your Manager know who it will be.
- If you cannot find someone to look after your plot while you are away, you can place a request with your Garden Manager to connect you with someone else in the garden who is willing to work with you or you may need to withdraw from the program for the season.
- In gardens where there is a watering or harvest brigade, you can request to have someone from one of those teams to look after your plot while you are gone – weeding and long-term care are not included.

Managing Your Plot and Pathways

March – April

- Take part in garden orientation.
- Clean up and weed your garden plot and pathways after winter.
- Prep soil by adding compost and other amendments.
- Consider putting in a drip irrigation system or lay down soaker hoses prior to planting.
- Plant early spring crops.
- Weed, clean up, and put down fresh woodchips on pathways.
- Attend the spring work party and get started on your service hours!

Milestone – Garden Program Orientation: Be sure to take part in orientation. Your registration may be canceled April 16 if you have not taken part in orientation. (People joining after April 15 will have different schedules.)

Milestone – Spring Work Party: You need to be actively gardening in order to keep your lease. The spring work party is the deadline for having spring cleaning done and to start planting. If you have not started working your plot, *you may receive a notice and two weeks to get started or lose your lease. You will not receive a refund.* If you join the program after this work party, the deadline will be extended.

May

- Plots mostly planted and receiving regular care.
- Pathways have a new layer of woodchips, if necessary, and are being regularly weeded.

June – September

- Plots and pathways kept weeded.
- Responsible harvesting is required – Do not leave produce to rot.
- Water responsibly and observe watering rules.
- Arrange to have your plot cared for during extended absences.

Milestone – July Mid-Season Work Party: Plan to complete at least four service hours by this time.

October – Winter

- Complete harvesting summer produce, remove dying vegetation for compost.
- Begin mulching unused areas.
- Attend the fall work party if you have not finished your service hours.
- If you want to winter garden, start your winter vegetables. *Be sure to contact your Garden Manager if you are winter gardening.*

Milestone: The fall work party is the deadline to complete service hours.

November

- Fully weed, clean out all summer debris, and put down a thick layer of mulch in your plot to control winter weeds. Consider cover cropping or similar, but check with your garden manager. Not all cover crops are suitable for our gardens.
- All winter gardening crops must be well-tended and should be planted by this month. All plants must be pruned and mulched.

Milestone – Early November Clean up Deadline: The Program Facilitator carries out a final inspection of all the gardens and the date is posted to the garden calendar each year. Your plot needs to have all the summer vegetation removed and well weeded by the inspection. See Fall Clean-Up and Mulching.

Milestone – Mid-November Mulching Deadline: Leaf delivery typically occurs in November and the mulching deadline depends on leaf drop each year. Your plot needs to be heavily mulched with a thick leaf cover by the mulching deadline, which will be posted to the garden calendar each year. See Fall Clean-up and Mulching.

November – February

- Winter gardening goes on. If you winter garden, you need to be regularly caring for your plot just as you do in the summer.
- If you do not winter garden, be sure your garden has a thick leaf mulch or good cover crop or you will find a healthy weed crop in the spring.

Milestone – Plot renewals begin mid-December.

Maintaining a Working Garden

In order to keep your lease throughout the season, you need to be actively gardening. Expect to visit your plot several times a week to keep up with weeding and other activities.

Active Gardening Basics:

- Plan a garden layout.
- Select appropriate plants.
- Soil preparation and care throughout the season.
- Planting, regular harvesting, and seasonal re-planting.
- Weeding, watering, and soil care throughout the season.
- Pathway weeding and clean up throughout the season.

Caring for Your Plot and Pathways

- You are expected to maintain your garden plot for as long as you hold your lease. This includes cleaning up and mulching your plot at the end of the season.
- You are expected to keep the pathways around your plot well-weeded for as long as you hold your lease. This is a private responsibility and not a group activity.
- Everything you plant must remain within the perimeters of your plot and must be kept from encroaching on pathways or on neighboring plots.
- Do not plant tall vegetation which will shade neighboring plots (i.e. plant sunflowers in center and not near plot borders).
- Pick all produce in a timely manner and avoid having rotten produce to attract pests.

If you are unable to adequately attend to your pathways and plot, you may lose the privilege to renew in the coming season. Renewals are at the discretion of the Program Facilitator.

Managing Weeds

Tips for Controlling Weeds in an Organic Gardening Environment:

- Weed regularly, at least several times per week. This is the most important control tool you have.
- We do not allow the use of any non-biodegradable sheeting, including plastic landscape fabric and black plastic bags for weed control or any other purpose in plots or pathways.
- Brown cardboard works very well for weed control but must be thickly covered with mulch, such as leaves or woodchips.
- Heavily mulch all areas where you are not planting.

Composting in Your Garden Plot

We support both in-plot composting as well as community composting options.

Personal Composting Rules and Options:

- You are encouraged to compost within your plot, but composters must be small and well-maintained. Check with your Garden Manager before installing a composter.
- Composters within plots must be small. Check with your Garden Manager.
- Must be kept in good order and not allowed to smell.
- Absolutely no meat or animal products in personal composters.
- Burying garden debris in beds and plot pathways is highly encouraged.
- Worm bins and in-ground worm buckets are good choices.

Reminders and Warnings

We all get behind in doing our garden chores. In the summer time, weeds will grow just as exuberantly in our fertile gardens as do our fruits and vegetables. To keep organized and have well maintained gardens, we have a system of courtesy reminders and warnings directed at helping our gardeners keep up with plot and pathway care.

Courtesy Reminders

Courtesy reminders are notes from your Garden Manager to let you know your plot or pathways are in need of weeding in order to keep them up to the level of maintenance expected in our gardens. These notes are meant to keep little problems from turning into big problems. Your managers do this as a courtesy to you because we can all get behind and a friendly reminder can help us get back on track.

Please note the following:

- Please respond courteously to your volunteer managers and other garden volunteers. Positive input from you fosters a spirit of community and shared responsibility.
- If you have already done the work between the time the situation was noted and the time a note went out to you, just let your manager know.
- If you need help for any reason, please ask! We can arrange work parties or get you help.
- Communicate your plans for completing tasks with your manager quickly to keep problems from escalating.
- The number of reminders for a given issue is at the discretion of the manager.
- If you fail to respond to your manager, you will receive a warning from the Program Facilitator.

Warnings

Warnings are issued by the program coordinator:

- Each gardener is allowed two warnings per season.
- When you receive a warning, communicate with the Program Facilitator and/or Garden Manager in a timely manner to work out plans to address issues.
- If you receive a third warning in a season, you may be removed mid-season and you will lose the privilege of renewing in the coming year. Your plot fee(s) will not be refunded.

Abandoned Plots Policy

If for any reason during the garden season you find you cannot keep up with the maintenance of your plot and pathways, please let your Garden Manager or the Program Facilitator know your situation and plans at your very earliest convenience.

You will have several options, depending on your situation:

- If you are a new gardener and feel overwhelmed, we can help connect you with a more experienced gardener to mentor you.
- If you lease a plot that was poorly cared for in the past, you can request to host a work party to get your plot weeded and mulched.
- If you have an emergency situation and want to continue to garden, but need help for a limited time, your management team can help connect you with other gardeners to arrange for maintenance until you return.

If a plot is left unattended for more than one week following a warning or communication from the garden Program Facilitator, and you do not respond in any way, your lease may be canceled. Your plot fee(s) will not be refunded.

Leaving the Garden Program

If you need to leave the garden program, please let your Garden Manager or the Program Facilitator know as soon as possible. We do not officially take on a plot's care until we know you have withdrawn or we determine it has been abandoned.

If you are leaving at the end of the season:

- Follow the usual weeding and mulching procedure.
- You are welcome to work with your Garden Manager to find people to donate plants to, or to find places in the community to relocate them.
- If you have built raised beds and put in other structures, you may discuss with the Program Facilitator what you can leave and what you should remove. You may be able to donate structures to other gardeners.

If you leave during the garden season:

- Please work with us to determine which plants and structures you can leave in place, what can be donated to others, and what needs to be removed.
- Once this is decided, please weed and remove all un-needed structures and plants as quickly as possible.

Renewing Eligibility

You will not be eligible to re-join the garden program at a future date if:

- You have been removed from the garden program for violating the Code of Conduct.
- You used herbicides/pesticides/substances not approved for organic gardening.
- You planted and/or did not remove upon request any prohibited plants.

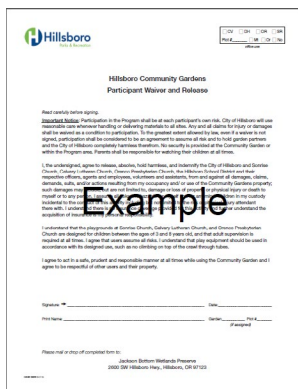
If you have been removed from the program for any of the following reasons, rejoining the garden program in the future will be at the discretion of the program coordinator:

- You received a third formal warning regarding your plot or pathway upkeep and did not make arrangements with your Garden Manager and/or Program Facilitator to leave your plot in good condition.
- You were not able to complete your required service hours and did not communicate with your Garden Manager or Program Facilitator.

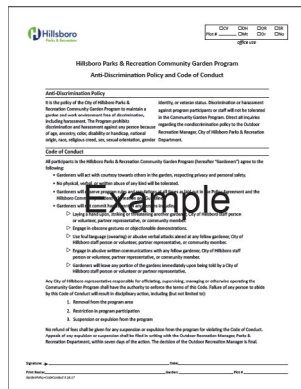
Policy Enforcement and Dispute Resolution

The policies and penalties in this document will be enforced and the Program Facilitator's decisions are final. In a conflict situation, all parties may be temporarily barred from the garden site pending investigation.

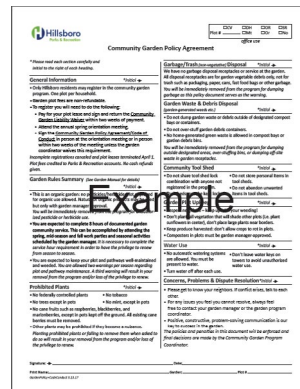
Garden Policy Documents



Participant Waiver and Release
(contact program facilitator)



Anti-Discrimination Policy and Code of Conduct
(check out document on web page)



Community Garden Policy Agreement
(check out document on web page)



Goals

- to provide the opportunity for local residents to grow food and ornamental crops, and enjoy the exercise, relaxation, and educational benefits of gardening;
- to teach stewardship by promoting sustainability, natural gardening, and wise use of land; and
- to encourage social interaction between community gardeners through the shared tasks of maintaining a community garden.



Every seed grows into something amazing!



Beauty surrounds us, but usually we need to be walking in a garden to know it.
Rumi



Benefits of Gardening

Gardening is one of the most popular recreational activities in America, providing an opportunity for socializing, relaxation, exercise, and often access to a wider variety of nutritious and healthy foods than might otherwise be available.

The City of Hillsboro recognizes community gardening as an activity that contributes to the health and well-being of the wider community as well. Community gardens bring together people from many cultures, generations, and walks of life and provides the opportunity for socializing and education, and fosters environmental awareness and a connection to the environment and the practices of organic gardening and sustainability.