Oak Park Community Garden Operating Rules & Regulations

(Revised August, 2026)

Mailing Address: Oak Park Gardeners, PO Box 533, Agoura Hills, CA 91376
Physical Address: 401 Kanan Rd. Oak Park, CA 91377
Email: oakparkcommunitygarden@gmail.com **website:** oakparkcommunitygarden.org

Mission:
The mission of the Oak Park Community Garden (OPCG) is to maintain an organic garden that provides education and beautification to the surrounding community and supplies food for its members. Garden members maintain the grounds, working in a spirit of cooperation and fellowship. The Garden is committed to offering a safe and attractive environment to people desiring a place to grow edible produce and/or flowers. The Garden is for the use of its members and their households, but visitors are welcomed into the Garden during various events such as open houses, field trips, or by invitation from the OPCG Board of Directors or Garden members.

The OPCG is a 501c3 non-profit charitable organization operating as an Activity Committee of the Community Foundation for Oak Park.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING VERY CAREFULLY. MEMBERS ARE REQUIRED TO KNOW AND ADHERE TO THESE RULES AND REGULATIONS

Hours of Operation:
The Garden follows Rancho Simi Recreation & Park District (RSRPD) rules and is open to members from dawn to dusk, seven (7) days per week, 365 days per year.

Fees and Payments:
- Annual parcel rental fees are currently $140/year and are prorated for membership after February 1st.
- A $60 refundable deposit is required per parcel without an irrigation system.
- A $200 refundable deposit is required per parcel with an irrigation system. Any expenses incurred by the OPCG for irrigation system repairs, or exorbitant water bills due to the fault of the parcel holder, will be deducted from this deposit. If the deposit is insufficient to cover the costs of repair, the OPCG Board may bill the member for any remaining costs at their discretion. The original deposit must be replenished by the parcel holder.
- Deposits are returned when a member leaves the Garden and their parcel has been cleaned up sufficiently, as determined by the Board of Directors.
- Payments may be made by Zelle or Personal Check made out to “Oak Park Gardeners.”
- Any “returned check fee” imposed by the bank will be the responsibility of the member, plus a charge of $25 for handling.
- Fees for the ensuing year are invoiced on December 1st. Annual fees not paid by January 31st (after a grace period of 30 days) may result in termination of gardening privileges at the Board’s discretion.
- The annual fees and refundable deposit may be waived by the OPCG Board of Directors for schools or other community groups, or in cases of hardship, as determined by the Board.

- Garden members who do not complete their required community service without having made prior arrangements with the Garden Manager or Board of Directors will receive written notice of non-compliance and will be fined $20 per month of missing service. These fines are due to be paid within 30 days or no later than quarterly. Members may be subject to losing garden privileges if three (3) such letters are received in a 12-month period, at the Board's discretion. See "Community Service" section for more information.

Membership Eligibility:

- Proof of residency is required; members must be 18 years of age or older.
- Memberships run from January 1st through December 31st of each year, but members may join at any time during the year.
- Membership in the Garden may be terminated at the Board's discretion if false information is given on any liability waivers or Garden contracts.
- Members must sign a current Oak Park Community Garden contract and waiver, agreeing to abide by the current Rules and Regulations.
- All household members and guests of a parcel must sign any RSRPD waivers/liability releases provided to them in order to work in the Garden. Guests are the responsibility of the parcel member and are required to comply with all Garden rules. Children are the responsibility of the Garden member and must be supervised at all times.
- School classes or special interest groups located within RSRPD who obtain a parcel must sign all waivers/liability releases and a representative must be assigned to oversee and coordinate work on their parcel.
- New members are on probation at the Garden for a period of four (4) months, during which time their membership may be terminated upon majority vote of the Board of Directors if they are found in violation of any one of the Rules and Regulations.
- Members will begin work on parcels within three (3) weeks from the date of assignment.
- Residents of RSRPD will have priority on assignment of parcels. Non-residents may apply but will not be assigned until all requesting RSRPD applicants have been reviewed and evaluated for eligibility.
- Members wishing to transfer to a different parcel are required to submit written requests to the Board & are limited to two (2) transfers per membership lifetime.
- Parcels cannot be transferred to, sublet to, or exchanged with another person including those in the household without written submission and Board approval.
- Parcels can be shared between two residences with Board approval. A "head of parcel" must be designated and is responsible for coordinating all payments, fees, and community work hours for the parcel. If the "head of parcel" is no longer able to fulfill those duties another one from the participating households must be named or the Board may revoke privileges and take back use of the parcel.
- If a member is unable to maintain their parcel due to physical or other limitations, they must immediately notify the Board in writing. A plan must be made to continue maintenance until the member is able to return, or the Board may revoke membership at their discretion.
- Members must maintain a current mailing address, email address and telephone number on record and must notify the Board of Directors in writing of any changes. All correspondence sent to members at the email address or phone on file will be considered delivered/received including violations and fees/dues.

- A gardener whose membership has been terminated may re-apply *one* year after date of termination, except gardeners who have been terminated for vandalizing, stealing, or other offenses that result in a permanent removal from the Garden as determined by these Rules and the Board of Directors.
- The number of parcels per household will be limited to two (2) except for two members with three (3), who are grandfathered into these rules.
- Members who wish to relinquish their parcel(s) must notify the Board in writing and indicate a date by which they will vacate the parcel. Members are still responsible for remaining in good standing with the Garden until they vacate, both financially and with regard to the Rules and Regulations. Rent for unused months of the member's year are not refundable.

Parcel Maintenance and Rules:

GARDENING SHALL BE DONE IN ACCORDANCE WITH ORGANIC GARDENING PRINCIPLES AS DEFINED IN "THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ORGANIC GARDENING" BY RODALE PRESS.

- Parcels must be kept at least 75% planted in ground or containers between the months of May 15th and October 15th, whether construction is occurring within the parcel or not.
- Parcels must be kept free of weeds and dead plants/debris year-round, including the months during which the parcel may be considered as "fallow."
- Members are responsible for weeding the paths surrounding their parcels year-round.
- No trees of any variety are permitted to be grown in pots or in the ground, with 4 grandfathered trees as exceptions in parcels A5, F1, G1 and H3. At a point in time, when the members in these parcels leave the Garden, the Board may decide, at its discretion, to remove them.
- Parcels must be kept free of overripe, rotten and spoiled fruit and vegetables year-round.
- Only permitted plants may be planted within parcels, including in pots or grow bags. See Banned Plants List (Attachment #1, posted in shed, online on our website & available on request) for some of the specific plant types that are not allowed in the Garden. In addition, other species identified as invasive spreaders, oversized crops, or toxic & dangerous flora (use Google search for examples), will be identified & decreed for removal.
- Soil height must not exceed the height of the baseboards unless contained within garden beds or pots.
- No "token" plantings or cover crops are permitted, unless written approval is obtained by the Board.
- Crops in parcels must not shade other parcels. If a complaint is registered with the Board, the member whose crops are throwing shade on other parcels may be asked to trim back, or to remove the offending plants, at the Board's discretion.
- One grapevine may be grown near the center of the parcel, The grapevine must be properly maintained and pruned, and must not exceed six feet in height (6').
- No trellises above six feet (6') are permitted and they must be free-standing.
- The Board reserves the right to ask members to remove any decorations or statues from their parcels, at its discretion and upon receipt of any complaints from other members.
- Unused tomato cages, trellises, storage containers, or other materials must be neatly organized within the parcel year- round.
- Fabric shade cloth must be supported above the designated plantings and must not be attached to the roof of any parcel.

- No feeding of wildlife is permitted in the garden, including bird baths and bird feeders, with the exception of the “puddlers” located in the Pollinator and Monarch Waystation areas of the Garden.
- Members must obtain approval from the Board to bring a contractor into the Garden. The contractor must sign & submit to the Garden Manager or other board member the Liability Release Form (obtained from the “forms” section of website or from a board member) before work begins.
- Only untreated, unpainted and unstained wood is permitted for use in building any part of the parcel structure, or the boxes/raised beds within the parcel. See “Construction Guidelines” form on website for more information.
- Any alterations to irrigation systems or parcels including but not limited to fencing, rebuilding, redesigning, etc. must be submitted in writing to the Board via a Parcel Improvement Form, and work cannot commence until written approval has been obtained. See “Construction Guidelines” form on website for more information.
- Each member is responsible for keeping crops contained within the parcel. Warnings & violations will be issued to parcel holders to trim back overgrown plants in walkways. Anything growing into the pathway may be cut back at the discretion of the Board.
- A removable seat is permitted within the parcel. No permanent furniture is allowed to be constructed or placed inside parcels or anywhere at the Garden without Board approval, and may be subject to immediate removal.
- Up to eight (8) pots or grow bags of up to 15-gallon size each are permitted per parcel, and are subject to removal at the Board’s discretion due to inappropriate materials/sizing. Terra cotta or clay pots are discouraged, as they are not water-wise.

Pest Control:

- Only ORGANIC fertilizers, soil, compost, mulch, pesticides, herbicides, etc. may be used at the Garden. Use of any unapproved and nonorganic materials, especially broad-spectrum herbicides like “Roundup”, may result in a member’s immediate termination at the Board’s discretion.
- No standing water is permitted in the garden due to risk of mosquitoes.
- If a rattlesnake or other dangerous animal is discovered inside the garden, the Board must immediately be notified. Call 911 if a Board member cannot be reached.

Watering and Irrigation:

- Members will properly store and shut off hoses when not in use both inside their parcels and at the communal faucets.
- Members will notify the Garden Manager or any Board member of issues with hoses, faucets or hose reels.
- Members are not allowed to cut or damage any hose, or to issue repairs to Garden property without the approval of the Garden Manager.
- Any existing parcel irrigation systems connected to the community plumbing by PVC will be allowed to remain until the parcel member exits the Garden.
- OPCG does not vouch for the functionality of any individual parcel’s irrigation system and is not responsible for any repairs needed when changing over to new members.
- New parcel irrigation systems must be approved, as should any alterations to existing systems in parcels, by the Board before any work may begin. A detailed Parcel Improvement form must be

submitted. Permission must be obtained before making any on/off adjustments to the Garden's main water valves.

- Any new irrigation systems installed in parcels must be "drip style" and include both a pressure regulator and an above ground shut off valve.
- Members are expected to conserve water at all times and are responsible for any leaks/overuse of water.
- If a leak is identified in a parcel, the incoming water valve must be shut off. The board reserves the right to enter a member's parcel for this purpose & will notify the member promptly. The watering system will not be permitted to be turned back on until the issue is resolved and member has approval from the Garden Manager or Board. Member may be charged for excessive water use, if appropriate & documented on the Garden's water bill spreadsheet.
- Manage watering system to prevent excess spray outside of the parcel into pathways.
- All timers, pipes, tubing, and controls will be contained within the parcel, underneath the 48" height requirement.
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Trash:

- Read all signs and dispose of trash in correct containers. Do not put anything except green waste or metal-free wood in the green bins.
- Break down & consolidate any trash or debris from the garden so that it fits Garden containers.
- Do not put outside trash from home in the Garden containers.
- No soil, concrete or other heavy items are to be put in the Garden's trash containers.
- Remove from the garden & dispose of trash by other means if it does not fit in Garden containers.

Community Service:

- Up to two (2) hours of community service in designated months are required of every parcel.
- One (1) hour of community service will be recorded if a member attends the General Meeting that month.
- Work hours are for that month and cannot be accrued. Additional hours performed that month cannot be used as credit to past or future months without explicit Board approval.
- Working in personal parcels is not considered community service.
- If a member cannot perform their community service duties at the designated time (usually a Saturday morning in the months that the Board has determined it is necessary), they may contact the Garden Manager to complete tasks during their free time that month. Photos and proof of completion of tasks is required.
- Gardeners may not pay others to perform community service.
- Gardeners who do not perform their community service will be assessed a $20 fine (see Fees and Payments section in this document).
- Members may earn community service hours upon Board approval for volunteering at Garden events or by participating in one of the Garden's committees or service jobs.
- OPCG Board members are exempt from community service.

Building Requirements:

- Detailed Parcel Improvement forms (found on "forms" page on website) must be submitted and approved before work begins.

- Approved construction must be completed within four (4) months of start.
- Only raw wood is permitted to be used inside the garden - no pressure treated, painted, stained, or otherwise altered wood is allowed.
- Fences around parcels must be under 48” inch height from the ground/path level.
- Only approved material for fencing under 48” inch is: ¼ inch or ½ inch hardware cloth, or aviary wire.
- No plastic or fabric netting is permitted at the garden for building use.
- Boundary boards are supplied by RSRPD, but must be assembled by members.
- Boundary boards provided by RSRPD are only for the parcel perimeter, they may not be cut down into garden beds or raised boxes, or used by gardeners in any other building capacity.
- If completely covering the parcel, only ½” small gauge aviary wire above the 48” level is permitted.
- Covered parcels have a six foot, six inch (6’6”) maximum height limit, as measured from the bottom of parcel boundary board.

Conduct and Safety:

- Combinations for garden locks are never to be given out to non-members or approved hired workers.
- All gates are to be locked whenever a member leaves the garden, unless other gardeners are observed still present. If you opened the shed, lock it before you leave.
- All garden tools will be cleaned and properly stored in the shed at all times, after use.
- Threatening and/or harassing a Board member, garden member or any of their guests will not be tolerated and can result in termination at the Board’s discretion. This includes behavior exhibited during General Meetings and other events both at the Garden and offsite.
- Riding bicycles, ebikes or other transportative devices is not permitted within the Garden.
- The use of tobacco products, vape, marijuana or other drugs is not permitted in the Garden.
- Alcoholic products are only permitted at special events predetermined by the Board and with written approval from the Board and, as required, from RSRPD.
- Garden members, their household, guests, and any children accompanying them are always expected to observe good conduct and civil behavior. There is no tolerance for vulgar language, raised voices/arguing, or other unsafe behaviors in the Garden.
- Composting is relegated to approved bins, and members must get Board approval before installing one in their parcel. No human or animal waste is allowed, except cow/chicken manure and other approved organic substances.
- No selling of products made from parcel’s harvest for member’s personal profit, including flowers and herbs, is permitted. Sales where all proceeds directly benefit the Garden and have been granted Board approval in advance are exempt from this rule.
- Members may only harvest from their individual parcels. No harvesting of, damage to, or removal of materials from any communal areas or individual parcels is permitted. Members who do so may be subject to violation or immediate termination at the Board’s discretion.
- Members are not allowed to enter any other individual’s parcels without explicit permission, unless an emergency exists.
- No expenses will be reimbursed without prior Board approval. The Garden is not responsible for any cost spent on individual parcels.
- Complaints about members or other issues should be brought to the Board in person or in writing.
- All pets brought into the garden must be kept on a leash at all times and be kept near the owner. It is the owner’s duty & responsibility to clean up any waste left by the animal. Only pets that are

"socialized" are allowed in the garden and the privilege to bring a particular animal onto the premises may be revoked after consideration by the Board should a complaint be lodged.

- No discrimination will be allowed based on race, religion, ethnic or national origin, gender, disability or economic status. Such practices will result in violation issued and possible termination, as determined by the Board.

Violations/Termination of Membership

- When a member is found in violation of the Rules and Regulations, they will be issued a formal, written notice of non-compliance. They will have three (3) weeks to correct the issue. If the issue is not resolved, a second notice of non-compliance will be sent and the member will have one (1) week to remedy the issue. If the problem has still not been corrected according to the Board, a third notice of non-compliance and eviction notice will be issued. At that time, the member will have one (1) week to relinquish the parcel back to OPCG. Anything in the parcel that has not been removed at that time will be property of OPCG, and subject to disposition by the Board.
- Issuance of three (3) letters of non-compliance to any one member for any of their parcels in a 12month period will, at the Board's discretion, result in termination of membership. Correction of a problem identified in the violation notice will not cancel counting of it. Verbal notices are not counted in this rule, only formal written violation notices.

Appeals:

- Members may appeal the loss of membership to the Board of Directors within 30 days of the date of termination. The appeal can be in person or in writing. The Board will invite the terminated member to discuss the termination either at their next Board meeting or at a special meeting called by the President. The decision of the Board is final.

Governing*:*

- An unpaid, volunteer Board of Directors will govern the Garden and are responsible for enforcing all Bylaws and Rules and Regulations at their discretion.
- Board elections are held annually in the month of January at the General Meeting.
- Each member is entitled to one vote for each elected office.
- A member in good standing, who wishes to hold a Board position may submit a nomination form to the current Board of Directors. The nomination forms will be made available by email to all members in November. It must be submitted to the Board before December 31st.
- Required Board positions for the Garden to remain functional are President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Other Board positions are not mandatory and may be eliminated after a majority vote of the Board of Directors.
- The maximum number of Directors is seven (7). These positions are filled as deemed necessary by the Board.
- Vacancies in any Board seat shall be filled for the unexpired term by appointment of the Board within 30 days of vacancy.
- Each member is entitled to one vote in matters concerning revisions to the Rules and Regulations, or other issues put before the general membership by the Board of Directors.

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Meetings:

- General member meetings are held in designated months at a place and at a time determined by the Board.
- All members are required to attend at least one (1) general meeting per year.
- The Board of Directors typically meets monthly or within two weeks prior to any regularly scheduled general meeting, as needed. Members are invited to call or email any Board member to express concerns or comments. To bring any concerns before the Board in person, contact the President to be added to the agenda.
- Official decisions only require a simple majority of the Board members present, at any board meeting, as long as a quorum of at least three (3) Board members is present.
- At general meetings decisions may be made by a simple majority of the members present.

Information:

In case of an emergency within the garden, such as the presence of bee swarms, flooding uncontrolled watering, fire, unauthorized entry, or other such events, any member on site may take appropriate corrective action in consideration of the welfare of the garden and/or its members as a whole. The incident and any action taken should be reported immediately to a Board member.

Signature & Acknowledgement:

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read the Rules and Regulations (August 2026 Revision) of the Oak Park Community Garden and agree to abide by them for the duration of my membership.

Furthermore, I understand that failure to comply with the above Rules may result in violation notices leading to termination of membership.

X_____ _____ _____

Member's Signature Date Parcel Number(s)