

Saco Community Garden Guidelines

OUR MISSION: The Saco Community Garden's mission is to create a garden following organic practices, provide affordable rental plots for members to grow their own healthy food and flowers, support a cooperative community of gardeners, and promote a green and sustainable Saco.

The Saco Community Garden (SCG) program provides 10' x 10' garden plots, water, shared tools, and a unique opportunity to meet and learn from fellow gardeners. The foundation for many of these guidelines is simple – be a good neighbor. If people tend their plots well, they will make an invaluable contribution to the "community" that is the heart of the garden.

1. PLOT RENTAL FEE AND REGISTRATION

- a) The annual fee for a garden plot is \$25 for Saco residents and \$35 for non-residents. There is an additional \$10 annual fee for designated year-round plots (see plots listed in Section 2.d.). These fees are nonrefundable except as otherwise specified by Saco city policy.
- b) The garden is on city property. Registration is managed as a Saco Parks and Recreation activity, and is governed by rules and guidelines published on the city's web site (www.sacorec.com).

2. PLOT ASSIGNMENTS

- a) Each renter is allowed one plot.
- b) Plot registrations for returning gardeners in good standing (see Section 14) begin in January. New renters who are Saco residents may apply for a plot beginning in February. New non-residents may apply for a plot beginning in March. No new registrations will be taken after May 31st.
- c) When there are no more plots available for rental, prospective gardeners may choose to be placed on a waiting list. The waiting list will be prioritized by the order the person's name is placed on the waiting list, without consideration of residency.
- d) Fifteen plots are designated as year-round: #1, 2, 3, 13, 14, 15, 25, 26, 27, 37, 38, 39, 49, 50, and 51. These may have perennial plants, and fixtures such as plant supports and walkways that may remain in place over the winter. All other plots, including plot #7 with the raised beds, are seasonal.

3. TIMELINE

- a) Seasonal plot renters may begin using their plots in the spring on the opening date announced by the Steering Committee. Year-round renters may access their plots throughout the year.
- b) Gardens are to be started by June 15th and tended throughout the season (*i.e.*, planted, weeded, and harvested).
- c) Seasonal gardens must be "put to bed" by dusk on the first Sunday of November – plants and all other materials removed, and generally tidy. Year-round plots are expected to be left in a tidy condition at the end of the season.

4. ORGANIC GUIDELINES

- a) Allowed substances include products labeled as approved for organic use except as otherwise noted in subsection b), and the following:
 - 1) Compost
 - 2) Blood meal and bone meal
 - 3) Mineral based fertilizers and amendments such as lime, greensand, and phosphate rock
 - 4) Wood ash
 - 5) Insect barriers and non-PVC landscape fabric
 - 6) Non-glossy newspaper
 - 7) Diatomaceous earth
 - 8) Deterrent sprays from nontoxic materials such as garlic, organic soap, and hot pepper
- b) The following are not allowed:
 - 1) Broad spectrum insecticides, including organic ones such as rotenone and pyrethrum
 - 2) Wood products such as bark mulch and sawdust
 - 3) Pressure treated wood, and objects treated or painted with toxic substances

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5. USE OF PLOTS:

- a) As with all Saco parks, smoking and the use of tobacco products is not allowed. This includes the parking area.
- b) Garden security is essential. Gardeners are encouraged to get to know their neighbors. If you are the last gardener in the garden, you must lock the gates when you leave.
- c) There are no provisions for trash disposal. The SCG has a carry in / carry out policy for trash.
- d) Garden plots cannot be sublet or used for commercial purposes. Extra produce may be donated, but may not be sold or exchanged for items of value.
- e) Gardens must be tended, weeded, and harvested regularly.
- f) **Any vegetation or structure over 6' tall is prohibited.**
- g) Because of the difficulty of managing potato beetles, potatoes are prohibited.
- h) Children are encouraged to participate in the garden, but they must be supervised.
- i) Pets are not allowed in the garden
- j) Because it is extremely invasive, mint is prohibited except in containers.

6. SHARING:

- a) Seedlings and produce to be donated may be left on the picnic table or other designated location.
- b) Produce and plants not in garden plots are available to other gardeners.

7. COMPOST:

- a) Organic matter from the garden is composted in the bins provided. See the SCG web site or information posted in the shed for details.
- b) Remove sticks, string, plastic, and similar before placing matter into the bins.
- c) Chop material, particularly thick stalks, into 6" or smaller lengths.
- d) Place tomato plants and any diseased produce or plants into the lined trash bin provided.

8. PERIMETERS AND PATHS:

- a) Stakes mark the corners of individual garden plots (the raised beds mark the boundaries of plot #7). Do not remove or relocate these stakes.
- b) Each gardener is responsible for assuring plants in their garden do not impinge on paths and other adjoining areas. Sweeping paths is not considered service hours activity (see Section 11).

9. SHED, TOOLS, & WATER:

- a) The shed is stocked with tools and supplies for renters. Anything in the shed is available for any gardener. SCG is not responsible for personal property left in the shed.
- b) Books, tools and other SCG supplies may not leave the garden area.
- c) Clean all tools and return them to the shed, turn off the water, and depressurize hoses and hang them neatly on the spigot posts.

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10. GOOD HABITS:

- a) Gardens should be maintained according to the standards outlined in these Guidelines.
- b) If someone sees something that appears to be contrary to the Guidelines, they may email their observation to the address in the Communication section. The Chair will follow up.
- c) If there is a problem the Chair will remind the renter by phone, email, or in person of the relevant guideline and explain what needs to be done to correct the situation. A summarizing email will be sent to the plot renter with:
 - 1) A description of the Guideline violation
 - 2) A description of the necessary actions to correct the violation
 - 3) A reasonable timeline for completion of the correction
 - 4) An explanation of what could happen if the correction is not completed
- d) If the gardener fails to apply corrective measures the matter will be considered by the full Steering Committee, which may decide on one or more of the following, or other measures as agreed:
 - 1) If it is a problem with a garden plot, designate people to correct the problem.
 - 2) Revoke the renter's Gardener in Good Standing status
 - 3) Revoke the renter's garden privileges.
- e) If the SCG Chair determines that the renter is not in violation, an email will be sent to the renter stating so , on the assumption that the renter has been approached about the observation.

11. SERVICE HOURS :

- a) The Service Hours Coordinator or delegate will assign tasks for the benefit of the SCG. Gardeners are required to perform **at least two hours of service time** each gardening season on designated tasks. Suggestions for such tasks are welcome.
- b) Being an officer on the SCG Steering Committee fulfills the service hours requirement. Attendance at meetings does not otherwise qualify as service time.

12. ORIENTATION

- a) Gardeners who are new to SCG or have not participated in SCG in the past five years must attend an orientation session to become acquainted with current policies, practices, and other details. The orientation will be led by a Steering Committee officer or other designated person.

13. GARDENER IN GOOD STANDING:

- a) A gardener in good standing is one who respects and follows the guidelines of the SCG, supports and encourages the community aspect, and is a "good neighbor". At the least, a gardener in good standing starts their garden by June 15th, completes two hours of service time, and (for seasonal plots) clears their garden by the November closing date.
- b) A renter who is not a Gardener in Good Standing is not eligible to rent a plot for the next season.

14. GARDEN STEERING COMMITTEE:

- a) The Garden Steering Committee is described in the SCG Bylaws. All officers of the Steering Committee are volunteers. All renters are encouraged to serve as officers. See the Bylaws for details about office responsibilities.
- b) Any renter who has a suggestion, question, concern, or problem is encouraged to contact any Steering Committee officer, send an email to the general address, or attend a scheduled SCG Steering Committee meeting.

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15. COMMUNICATION:

- a) E-mail is the preferred communication method. Important notices and general information will also be posted in the garden shed and on the SCG web site.
- b) Renters are responsible for being familiar with the Bylaws and Guidelines, and for having access to other communications.
- c) To contact the Saco Community Garden:
 - Email: sacocommunitygarden@gmail.com
 - Phone: (207) 409-8410
 - Website: <https://sacocommunitygarden.org>
 - Mail: Saco Community Garden
c/o Bruce Martel
29 Winter St.
Saco, ME 04072

16. CHANGES TO GUIDELINES:

- a) Changes to the guidelines require a majority vote of the Steering Committee members present at a scheduled meeting, except changes to contact information can be made as needed.

Adopted:

May 14, 2009

Revised:

June 8, 2010	February 12, 2020
October 20, 2011	November 14, 2021
November 15, 2012	May 5, 2022
October 21, 2013	December 10, 2023
November 10, 2015	March 20, 2025
May 11, 2016	April 16, 2026
February 8, 2018	