

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 below 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 Saco Community Garden uses organic gardening practices.

- 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.** Gardeners should consider the effect of shading on neighboring plots when planting, and locate plants appropriately.
- g) Because of the difficulty of managing potato beetles, potatoes are prohibited.
- h) Children are encouraged to participate in the garden with their families, 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, near the shed, or in other areas as designated by the Steering Committee.
- b) Produce and plants not in garden plots are considered to be available to others.

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 volunteer activity (see Section 11).

9. SHED, TOOLS, & WATER:

- a) The shed is stocked with tools and supplies for renters. Anything in the shed is considered 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) When leaving the garden, clean and return all tools to the shed, turn off the water, depressurize and neatly hang hoses, and close and lock the gates. Renters will be given the lock combination when they complete their renter registration.

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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 investigate.
- c) If there is a violation the Chair will notify the renter by phone, email, or in person. The email notification, or a follow-up email if notification was oral, will include:
 - 1) A description of the relevant Guideline
 - 2) Necessary corrective actions
 - 3) A reasonable timeline for 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) 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 there is no violation the SCG Chair will send a courtesy email advising the renter of the investigation.

11. VOLUNTEERS:

- a) Gardeners are required to volunteer a minimum of **two hours** each gardening season at tasks assigned by the Steering Committee for the benefit of the SCG. The Steering Committee welcomes suggestions for volunteer tasks.
- b) Being an active officer of the SCG Steering Committee fulfills the volunteer requirements of a plot renter. Attendance at meetings does not otherwise qualify as volunteer time.

12. 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 volunteering, 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.

13. 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, or to attend a scheduled SCG Steering Committee meeting.

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14. 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

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