

Saco Community Garden Guidelines

Adopted May 14, 2009, Revised 6/8/10, 10/20/11, 11/15/12, 10/21/13, 11/10/15, 5/11/16, 2/8/18

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 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” which is the heart of the garden.

RULES & REGULATIONS

1. **TIMELINE:** 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. Gardens are to be started by June 15th and tended throughout the season (I.e., planted, weeded and produce picked). Gardens must be “put to bed” by dusk on the 2nd Sunday of November (i.e., fencing and stakes taken down, removal of all plants and landscape fabric, and generally tidy). Renters of year round plots must abide by these conditions with the exception of perennial plants, which may remain.

2. **ORGANIC GUIDELINES:** Saco Community Garden uses organic practices. Synthetic fertilizers and pesticides are prohibited. Allowed substances include compost, compost tea, composted manure, blood meal, bone meal, ground rock (phosphate rock, agricultural lime, greensand, gypsum, etc.), wood ash, seaweed, insect barriers, non-PVC landscape fabric, straw, non-colored newspaper containing soy-based inks, Bt, diatomaceous earth and deterrent sprays from nontoxic materials such as garlic, soap, hot pepper or seaweed. Botanical insecticides like rotenone, pyrethrum and neem are not permitted as they harm earthworms, fish and beneficial insects. Bark mulches are not allowed. No smoking or tobacco products in the garden or parking area. Tobacco mosaic virus, which can be carried on people's hands, is a serious threat to tomatoes and other plants. No pets are allowed in the garden.

3. **USE OF PLOTS:** Garden plots cannot be sublet or used for any commercial purposes. No produce may be grown for sale. Extra produce may be grown for donation to the Saco Food Pantry. Acceptable plants in the community garden include fruits, vegetables, herbs, and flowers. Because of the difficulty of managing potato beetles, potatoes are prohibited. **Any vegetation or structure over 6 feet is discouraged.** Gardeners should consider the effect of shading on neighboring plots when planting and locate plants appropriately. Further, gardeners may be asked to trim any structures or plants that impede his/her neighbors' plots. No treated lumber or other objects that are treated or painted with toxic materials may be used in the garden. Garden signs must be painted with non-lead paint. Children are encouraged to participate in the garden with their families, but they must be monitored.

4. **GARDEN MAINTENANCE:** Gardens must be tended, weeded, and harvested regularly. Trash may not be left in the garden. The SCG supports a carry in/ carry out policy for trash.

5. **SHARING:** Donated or extra seedlings and plants may be left next to the shed for fellow gardeners.

6. **COMPOST:** Organic refuse from the garden is composted. Sticks, plastic, string, tomato plants and diseased or infested plants should be excluded from these bins and removed from the garden – no exceptions. The compost bins are for non-diseased plants only. All compost material must be chopped into small pieces (less than 6” in length & no thick stalks) before placing in bins. Follow the instructions on the bins and in the Volunteer Book carefully to ensure healthy compost.

7. **PATHS:** Paths and perimeters (around all sides of plots) are the responsibility of each individual renter. They must be kept clear. Adjacent renters share mutual responsibility for shared paths.

8. **PERIMETER STAKES:** Stakes mark the border of the individual garden plots and also major pathways, which are wide enough to allow easy wheelbarrow and water hose access. Please do not remove these stakes or expand your garden into pathways or beyond the outside perimeter.

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9. SHED, TOOLS & WATER: The shed is stocked with tools and supplies for renters. Renters may store their own tools in the shed, but should be aware that they may be borrowed, or discarded. SCG is not responsible for private property left in the shed. The books, tools and equipment of the Community Garden may not leave the garden area. When leaving the garden, clean and return all tools to the shed, turn off the water, depressurize and neatly hang hoses, close and lock the gates. Renters will be given the lock combination when they complete their renter registration.

10. GOOD HABITS: Gardens should be maintained according to the standards outlined in these guidelines. Failure to comply may result in action taken by the SCG Steering Committee. Failure to correct the problem may result in forfeiture of the garden plot. If the renter has any questions, it is his or her responsibility to contact the SCG Steering Committee.

11. GARDENER IN GOOD STANDING: A gardener in good standing is one who respects and follows the guidelines of the SCG, embraces the “community” nature and good habits of the garden and is a “good neighbor” not only within the SGG but outside it’s boundaries as well. At the very least, a gardener in good standing completes 3 hours of volunteering, starts their garden by June 15th and clears their garden by the November closing date. A renter who is not considered to be a “Gardener in Good Standing” by the SCG Steering Committee will not be eligible to rent a plot in the next season.

12. GARDEN STEERING COMMITTEE: The Garden Steering Committee is described in the SCG Bylaws. All officers of the Steering Committee are volunteers. Any renter who has a suggestion, question or problem is encouraged to contact any Steering Committee officer to voice their concerns. Renters are welcomed and encouraged to serve as officers on the Steering Committee. Consult the SCG Bylaws for details about serving as an officer.

13. PLOT ASSIGNMENTS: Plot assignments are managed online through the Saco Parks & Recreation website (www.sacorec.com). Plot registrations for returning gardeners in good standing begins December 1st. New renters who are Saco residents may apply for a plot beginning the first week of January. New non-residents may apply for a plot beginning the first week of February. The waiting list will be prioritized not by residency, but on a first come, first listed basis. Each renter is allowed only one plot. Plots #1, 2, 13, 14, 25, 26, 37 and 38 are designated “Year Round” plots. A year round plot is defined as a plot that can be over-wintered and may be planted with perennial plants.

14. PLOT RENTAL FEE AND REGISTRATION: The annual fee for a 10’ x10’ 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 above in 13.). The nonrefundable fee must be paid at the time of registration. Proof of residency is needed at the time of registration. Registrations can be completed online at www.sacorec.com using a credit card or in person at the Saco Community Center at 75 Franklin Street. If paying by check please make payable to the City of Saco.

15. VOLUNTEERS: Plot renters are required to volunteer a minimum of **three hours** each year. A qualifying task is one that is assigned by the Steering Committee and benefits the SCG. The SCG Steering Committee will notify renters of volunteer opportunities. Attendance at a meeting does not constitute a volunteer hour. Being an active officer of the SCG Steering Committee fulfills the volunteer requirements of a plot renter.

16. COMMUNICATION: E-mail is the preferred method of communication for the SCG program. Important notices and general information are also posted in the garden shed, the SCG website and the SCG Facebook page. It is the responsibility of renters to read the Bylaws, Guidelines, compliance dates and notices posted by the Steering Committee in the shed and via email. If this contact information changes during the gardening year renters will be all be notified.

To contact the Saco Community Garden:
Email: sacocommunitygarden@gmail.com
Phone: (207) 283-1025
Website: sacorec.com

Mail: Saco Community Garden
c/o Margaret Mills
168 Simpson Rd., Saco, ME 04072

17. CHANGES TO GUIDELINES: No changes to the guidelines can be made except by a majority vote of the Steering Committee.

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