

Request for Improved Signage at Community Gardens - FOR DISCUSSION

In response to the large number reports of theft and vandalism from community gardeners in Richmond, Richmond Food Security Society (RFSS) conducted the “Don’t Pocket the Potatoes: Addressing Community Garden Theft in Richmond” community engagement project in 2016. 60 theft reports were received in 2015, and 56 reports in 2016 with many more not reported. After two public meetings, and an online survey to determine their views on how the issue of theft and vandalism could be addressed, signage was a top choice. Of 310 Community Gardeners, 149 responded to a survey, and:

- 56 recommended education
- 44 indicated signage as their top choices for addressing the issue

Based on community input at two public meetings, it was determined that signage would be an effective way to both inform the public about the community gardens, while deterring theft and vandalism. Specifically, gardeners request signage be implemented using the following considerations:

Placement: Signage should be placed at or near each entrance to each garden site in a highly visible location.

Information: Signage should explain what the site is, how it works, and how to get involved, including contact information.

Language: Signage should be multilingual and reflective of Richmond’s demographics. Specifically, signage in Chinese would be valuable. The language should be clearly worded and strongly indicate who may take food from the gardens.

Title: Signage should indicate sites as ‘Allotment Gardens’ as opposed to ‘Community Gardens’ to avoid confusion about user rights.

Enforcement: Signage should indicate that theft is a crime, with potential criminal repercussions. Add specific details¹.

These recommendations reflect the ideas of Richmond Community Gardeners. We hope to discuss them further with City staff to assess the implications.

¹ Determining the exact precise legal implications of theft from public garden plots was beyond the scope of this project. We have some information, but request assistance from the City of Richmond to verify.



Sample sign text:

_____ Allotment Garden

The plots in this garden are paid for and maintained by individual Richmond residents who work hard to maintain their gardens and grow food for their families.

Please do not remove anything from the gardens.

Theft and vandalism from an allotment garden is incredibly frustrating for the people who work and pay to maintain these spaces, and is a criminal offense. (add details)

Richmond Food Security Society, a non-profit organization, manages these gardens in partnership on behalf of the City of Richmond.

For more information and to join the waitlist for a garden plot, please call 604-244-7377 or visit www.richmondfoodsecurity.org