



Community Gardens Handbook

Updated 2019



Urban Agriculture
Program
Coordinator

Table of Contents

1. What is a community garden?
2. Welcome to the community gardens
 - a. New gardeners
 - b. Returning gardeners
 - c. Garden Locations
3. Important contact numbers
4. Garden agreement
5. General info for all garden
6. Community garden guidelines
 - a) Garden borders
 - b) Greenhouse structures
 - c) Trellis options
7. Plant restrictions
 - a) Invasive species
 - b) Rhizome growing berries
 - c) Trees
 - d) Other plants
8. Common plant diseases in the community gardens
 - a) Light blight
 - b) Garlic rust
 - c) Carrot rust fly
9. Garden garbage/waste management
 - a) Space surrounding plot
 - b) No dumping allowed
 - c) Composting
 - d) Green cart disposal
10. Tool Management
 - a) Tools available
 - b) Tool maintenance
11. Theft advice
 - a. Tips
 - b. Encounters
12. Conflict resolution
13. Water conservation tips
14. Volunteer Information
15. Community garden calendar of events of Contents
16. Ecological Gardening
17. Starting your garden
18. Gardening Resources

1.) What is a Community Garden?

The community gardens in Richmond are shared green spaces where plots are rented yearly and maintained by community members. Gardeners grow food and flowers, share knowledge with the community, celebrate through social gatherings, and enhance green space.

Community gardens:

- Improve the quality of life for people in and around the garden
- Stimulate social interaction
- Encourage self-reliance
- Beautify neighbourhoods
- Produce nutritious food
- Reduces family food budgets
- Conserve resources
- Create opportunities for recreation, exercise and education
- Preserves green space
- Provide opportunities for intergenerational and cross-cultural connections
- Improve individual and community food security

The Richmond Food Security Society manages all the City of Richmond's community gardens, providing the community with garden space for a yearly rental fee. The gardens, employed with organic growing methods, enhance community parks, grow healthy food. They also provide opportunities for gardeners to build relationships, all while minimizing impacts on local ecosystems. Many gardeners donate excess produce to food banks and community meals and are more engaged with their greater community.

The gardens rely on the collective work of all the garden plot holders to maintain the site. Although not enforced, each gardener is expected to contribute to the general maintenance of the gardens and the shed. We want everyone to have a sense of ownership and as they are *community* gardens, and the common spaces should be maintained by the community and not by a select few gardeners.

2.) Welcome to the Community Gardens Program

Please read the next section carefully as it will allow you to follow the rules and expectations and to engage with the program.

As a community garden member you are responsible for tasks around the garden site as well as in your own community garden. We ask that every gardener participate to the best of their ability in the upkeep and management of the garden.

2a. New Gardeners

Welcome to the gardens, we are so glad that you are joining us. Please read the rules and regulations before planting or building structures within your plot. Your plot must be ready by May for planting and cleaned up by November 1st for winter. This means that the plot is tidy and weeds have been cleaned around your plot.

Get acquainted with your neighbours. Soil, compost, seeds and wood borders are provided by you, the gardener. We will be getting a deliveries of mulch from the City throughout the season.

2b. Returning Gardeners

Welcome back to another garden season. Please welcome any new faces you see in the garden, many plots are reallocated during renewals, and you might have a new neighbour.

2c.) Garden Locations

<p>Terra Nova: 2631 Westminster Highway in the Terra Nova Rural Park. 99 - 200 sq ft plots Plot fee: \$90 per year. Year round access</p>	<p>Gilbert Road 13871 Gilbert near Dike rd. 37 - 200 sq ft plots Plot Fee: \$90 per year Limited access in the winter</p>	<p>Garratt Centre 7504 Chelsea Place 20 - 200 sq ft plots Plot Fee: \$90 per year Year round access 5 plots are used by various community groups</p>
<p>Paulik Park 7620 Heather Street 20 - 200 sq ft plots, 3-100 sq ft plots Plot Fee: \$40-\$90 for plots per year Year round access</p>	<p>Railway Located at the south end of Railway at Brunswick 58 - 200 sq ft plots plus 5-50 sq foot Educational plots Plot fee: \$40-\$90 per year Year round access</p>	<p>Richmond High Seniors Only 7171 Moffat Road 13 - 36 sq ft plots Plot fees: \$40 per year Year round access Shared with school</p>
<p>King George Cambie Road 26 - 80 sq ft plots, 6 - 40 sq foot plots and 6 raised beds Plot fee: \$40-\$90 per year Year round access</p>	<p>Brighthouse School 6800 Azure Road Various plot sizes ranging from 30 sq ft - 150 sq ft Plot fees: \$40-\$90 per year Year round access</p>	<p>General Currie 8191 Jones Road 10 -100sq ft plots Plot fees: \$40 per year Year round access Shared with school 5 owned by the school</p>

Community garden sites are all provided with gardening tools and water access.

Tools include: Wheelbarrows, shovels, rakes, etc. These tools are for all community gardeners, and it is important that we maintain them so all can enjoy them. Water access is provided from April to October.

3.) Important Contact Numbers:

General Community Garden questions and concerns:

RFSS office at 604-244-7377 or email coordinator@richmondfoodsecurity.org

*Please keep in contact with me if anything changes with your time availability. If you are away, injured or can't get to your garden, please contact me.

In accordance with Bylaw #7310, removal of anything from the gardens that is not in your plot is considered theft. Please contact the bylaw office if you witness illegal dumping, including information like licence plates is helpful.

Bylaws office: 604-276-4284

For water leaks:

City Dispatch: 604-270-8721

Non-emergency RCMP: 604 278-1212

4.) Garden Agreement

The plot holder is responsible for the plant material within the plot and pathways throughout the year.

I will:

- ✓ Treat my fellow gardeners and community members with respect
- ✓ Prepare my garden for planting by **May 1st** and clean up and plant a cover crop or mulch by **October 31st**, or prep for winter gardening.
- ✓ Conserve water by hand watering, mulching with leaves, grass clippings, or hay to reduce water evaporation and follow water restrictions guidelines when in effect.
- ✓ Take responsibility for my garden waste by composting at my garden plot or remove my compost off site
- ✓ Use the green bins **only** for weeds, or diseased plant material
- ✓ Clean and return the tools to the storage area after each use and help to keep the shed tidy and organized
- ✓ Share garden tasks and contribute to the maintenance of the common areas
- ✓ Remove temporary fencing at the end of the season
- ✓ Remove or repair fencing that is falling down
- ✓ Have a compost in my plot, or in a designated common area if my plot is too small to accommodate one

I will not:

- ✓ Use abusive or obscene language
- ✓ Plant trees and non-edible shrubs, raspberries, blackberries or invasive species according to provincial regulations (outlined later in the handbook)
- ✓ Use any Pesticides, Herbicides (weed killers), insecticides, chemical fertilizers, animal poisons and non-organic materials including treated wood. In compliance with the Pesticide Use Control Bylaw #8514 and Public Health protection Bylaw # 8969
- ✓ Place any objects like chairs, containers/pots, planters, and pieces of wood or anything to obstruct the common area pathways.
- ✓ Leave garbage or useless gardening materials at the community garden site or in the garden shed
- ✓ Remove communal garden tools from the Community Garden site
- ✓ Grow plants or erect any structures that will shade my neighbouring plots
- ✓ Have structures over 6ft in my plot

5.) General Info for all gardens & gardeners

The gardens are for growing food for the gardeners household and not for any commercial purposes. Gardens are limited to one garden per household. The gardens are open from dawn to dusk, seven days a week.

Vehicles are not permitted on the pathways, plaza or within the community garden area.

Family members and friends are welcome, although please supervise young children and remember that dogs are not allowed on any garden sites

Garden plots are rented for year, starting in January. Renewing your plot will be open for all of January. The due date for completing your renewal will be in early February and emails will be sent out before the renewal period and reminders throughout.

Many sunflowers and Jerusalem artichokes grow over six feet in height and can block other garden plots - please check the height on the seed package before planting.

Community garden sites are all provided with gardening tools and water access.

Tools include: Wheelbarrows, shovels, rakes, etc. These tools are for all community gardeners, and it is important that we maintain them so all can enjoy them. Water access is provided from April to October.

In accordance with Bylaw #7310, taking things from garden plots is considered theft. If you have concerns regarding theft from garden sites please call the bylaw office at 604-276-4284. If you witness any other illegal activity please report it to the Richmond Food Security Society at 604-244-7377.

Please contact the police if you feel unsafe in the gardens due to the public or another gardener. RFSS controls the gardens, not the gardeners. Like an encounter in any other public space, the police should be your first contact.

6.) Community Gardens Guidelines

If you have any questions about the guidelines or are planning on any changes to your garden plot please contact the Urban Agriculture Program Coordinator before starting your project at coordinator@richmondfoodsecurity.org or 604-244-7377

6a. Garden Borders

Garden borders are not required for your garden plot, but are encouraged. It will help retain the soil and give structure for your plants. Garden borders must be built with **untreated wood**. Suggested materials are untreated spruce, fir or cedar. Products are available through Rona, Home Depot or Kerrisdale Lumber. Please ask when buying the wood and save the receipt incase of any confusion.

Measure Garden the plot carefully and stay within plot perimeters, you will be asked to build the border again if it looks like the plot is being expanded.

If you are unsure about the measurement, please contact the Urban Agriculture Program Coordinator.

Rough Measurements Include:

- Terra Nova - approximately 200 sq ft (various measurements, depending on location in garden)
- Gilbert - approximately 200 sq ft (various measurements, depending on location in garden)
- Railway - plots are 10ft*20ft except for many A and B plots
- Garratt Wellness Centre - plots are 10ft*20ft
- Paulik gardens - plots are 10ft*20ft
- King George Park - plots are 4ft*20ft
- Brighthouse - varying
- Richmond High - plots are 6ft*6ft

6b. Greenhouse Structures

The height limit is 6 feet, you are welcome to build a greenhouse structure to extend your growing season, but please follow the guidelines and models for your structure

- Greenhouses cannot be over six feet high
- Must be **within** the garden plot
- Can cover whole plot or portion
- Must be built securely and structurally sound to be safe for public during winter months

- With untreated wood materials



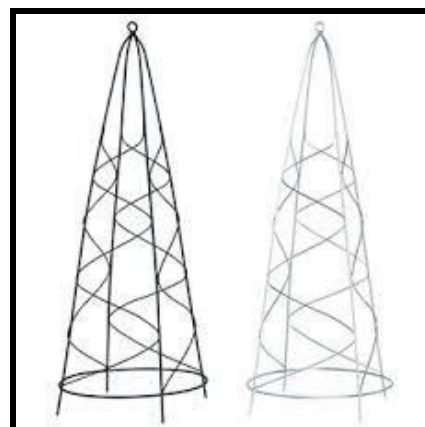
6c. Trellis Options

Height limit, like all structures is limited to 6 feet. Respect your neighbors; do not erect any structures that will shade neighboring plots or limit their ability to use their plot.

Permanent trellis structures are not permitted as they pose the risk of falling or deteriorating during the winter. Removal will also allow for the material to last longer and for the proper mulching of soil.

Suggested materials:

- Structure - bamboo, stakes, plastic rods, rusted or sharp edged metal is not permitted as it poses a safety risk and does not comply with organic gardening
- Garden Netting Options - Nylon trellis netting, mesh garden netting, or pea netting



7.) Plant Restrictions

7a. Invasive plants

You can find a complete list of invasive species at <http://www.bcinvases.ca>.

7b. Rhizome growing berries

Plants like Blackberries, Raspberries, Salmonberries, Tayberries, Boysenberries, Marionberries, and Loganberries spread by underground stems called rhizomes easily invading surrounding garden plots.

7c. Trees

Trees are not allowed in garden plots due to their size, and time needed for maturity. Also roots can extend far beyond plot boundaries. Small herb bushes are acceptable but need to be pruned and maintained.

7e. Other plants

Climbing vines such as grapes or honeysuckle need to be pruned and well cared for to prevent them growing outside the perimeter of the garden plot. They also need to be supported requiring a well built trellis.

8.) Common Plant Diseases in the Community Gardens

8a. Late Blight:

Blight is a common fungus that affects tomatoes and potatoes. It spreads by forming spores that are then carried by the wind and will grow on plants that have been wet for more than 2 days. This wetness can come from dew, condensation in a greenhouse or rain.

To help prevent blight, water using soaker hoses and drip irrigation. This waters only the soil and not the plant, preventing spores from spreading. Early identification is key, removing affected plants will help halt the spread.

Tomatoes affected by Late Blight:



Potatoes affected by late Blight:



What you can do:

Blight can overwinter in tomato and potato debris and some weeds. Ensure affected plants are properly cleaned out. Practicing a 4 year rotations will help, tomatoes following brassica crops (cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli etc). Do not plant tomatoes in an area that had potatoes as they are closely related and blight will spread.

Trimming the low leaves will improve plant health and mulching around the plants improves soil health and prevents the spread of blight.

8b. Garlic Rust

Garlic Rust is a fungal disease that affects garlic and other plants of the Allium family including onions, leeks, and chives. Recognized by the yellow to brown spots on the plant leaves. It is caused by high humidity, too much moisture in the soil, or poor air circulation.

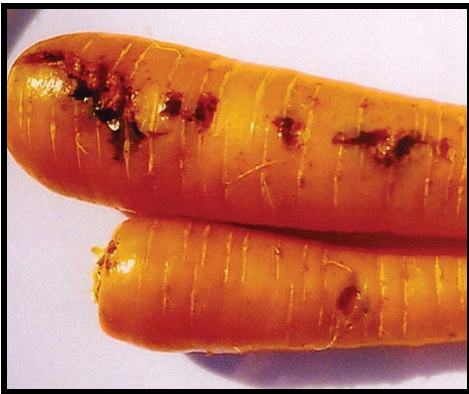


What you can do:

- Water in the morning and water the ground
- Grow in a sunny spot with enough space between plants
- Rotate your crops

8c. Carrot Rust Fly

Carrot Rust Fly (CRF) is a pest that affects many different plants of the carrot fly including carrots, celery, parsnips, parsley, and dill. The female CRF lays her eggs near the soil at the base of the carrot, the larva hatch and then feed on the carrot root. Three generations of CRF can occur within a single growing season.



What you can do:

- Rotate crops - CRF are weak flyers
- Use a row cover
- Time your planting to avoid timing of adults laying eggs
-

9.) Garden Garbage/Waste Management

9a. Space surrounding your plot:

Your community garden is defined by the border around your plot. Please keep area around garden plot neat and tidy and free of weeds, as well halfway into the path between you and your neighbour's plot. Also ensure that you store all your garden materials, such as pots/container, tools, stakes/trellis, chair, etc. within your plot. All gardeners are responsible for managing the weeds in the common areas.

9b. No Dumping allowed:

The City and RFSS have a strict no dumping policy. Gardeners must put waste into their compost, and for unsuitable material, into the provided green bins. If the green bins are full, please store waste in your plot until the bins are emptied, or take the water directly to Lynas lane. Dumping will be not be tolerated, and may result in a gardener's removal.

9c. Composting:

Every gardener should have a compost bin on their garden plot or contacted the program coordinator indicating that they prefer to take the compost off site.

9d. Green cart disposal:

Green Carts are provided to the Community Gardens for excess materials that cannot be composted in your own compost bin. These items include:

- Weeds with seeds
- Diseased Plants
- Invasive plants (such as horsetail, buttercups, knotweed etc)
- Large plants or stalks that will not break down quickly

10.) Tool Management:

10a. Tools Available:

Gardening tools are available in the sheds of each community garden. Available tools include wheel barrows, hoes, rakes, shovels, spading forks and pitchforks. Tools may vary between different garden locations.

10b. Tool Maintenance:

It is important to keep the tools in good condition. Below are some general maintenance tips for different tools.

1. Remove the rust that has already formed on tools using steel wool. Some suggested natural methods include using white vinegar, or water and baking soda
2. Protect metal from rust by applying vegetable oil with a cloth
3. Rinse off digging tools after each use, using a scrub brush for caked on dirt
4. Make sure tools are completely dry when storing them, using an old towel
5. Keep the edges of shovels, spades, and hoes sharp by using a mill file (available at most hardware stores). Make sure tool is secured while filing back and forth.
6. Sand the wood-handled tools to smooth out the handle and prevent splinters
7. Apply a light coating of boiled linseed oil to help prevent wood-handles from drying out and cracking
8. Repairing wheelbarrow tires:
 - a. With inner tube: remove the inner tube and seal the hole using a patch kit; put tube back in tire and fill with air
 - b. No inner tube: Purchase a plug kit. You can locate the hole by putting the tire in water and looking for bubbles. Make sure the tire is dry and insert a reamer into the hole to create a better hole for the plug to go in. Put rubber cement on the plug and insert it into the hole with the applicator included in the plug kit. Cut the plug off level with the tire using side-cutting pliers and refill tire with air.
9. Try to keep the tools off the ground when storing in the sheds

11.) Theft Advice:

Our community gardens are all on public land, and to comply with City regulations, they must be accessible to the public. **Fences with locks are not allowed**, or any other barrier that prevents the public from freely accessing the gardens. This does allow for theft to possibly occur, a global issue in all gardens.

11a. Tips

1. Hide your prizes: Most thieves are opportunists and some items prove more tempting than others. Thieves aren't likely to go digging through straw. Yellow tomatoes are as tasty but less tempting than red ones. Plant desirable and easily picked food behind less popular crops. Look for plants with a lot of green foliage that can act as borders/hedges around plots.

2. Keep the plots in good condition: Fallen fruit, overripe vegetables and general disarray send the message that no one cares or that no one is gardening.

3. Harvest fast: Once vegetables and fruits are ripened, don't delay harvesting them. A thief will notice them quickly and leaving it even a day later could mean its loss.

4. Grow more than you need: Consider adding a variety of crops so a thief won't clean you out of an entire season's bounty.

5. More gardeners/fewer thieves: Think of ways to minimize times when you have no "eyes in the garden," particularly during harvest season.

6. Change your perspective: Expect some thefts will happen. If it feeds someone who really needs it, then it's serving a purpose in a way. Of course, if it's happening regularly, then be proactive about the steps above and consider other methods as you would with any garden pest. Also think about more than the harvest. Why do you garden? For the physical and mental health benefits? To get outdoors? To meet new people and be part of the community?

11b. Encounters

If you meet someone who may not belong to the garden or you catch someone stealing (If you feel comfortable confronting them):

- Approach them if you feel comfortable, greet them, and ask how their garden is doing or if they need help finding their garden plot. If they act uncomfortable or don't give much of an answer, keep the conversation going by asking them more questions about what they like to grow in their gardens
- Many people who steal don't really understand what a community garden is, they maybe think it's "the city" growing food and doesn't really belong to individual people

We understand that theft from gardens can be frustrating, as we at RFSS have personally had theft we understand that it can be disheartening.

We are always looking for new ways to deter theft, but at the moment, we are doing all that we can within the City guidelines.

If you experience theft, we always encourage reporting the theft to the bylaws office. Please do not take it upon yourself to confront them unless you feel comfortable. Thieves can feel threatened and may lash out.

If you do not feel comfortable confronting them:

Consider taking a picture with your phone/camera. Report any thefts or concerns to the Bylaws office at 604-276-4284 (In accordance with Bylaw #7310, taking things from garden plots is considered theft) and at the office at 604-244-7377 or by email at

cg@richmondfoodsecurity.org

12.) Conflict Resolution:

Like every shared space, conflict can occur and we want to ensure that our gardeners feel fully equipped to handle any situation that they confront within in our gardens. Although it is very rare, and very unlikely, conflict has occurred within our gardens. We outline a few tips:

- Use active listening, hear what they have to say
- Use 'I', make it about how you feel, don't attack the person
- Not a 'you vs me' approach, but 'us vs the problem' - what will the resolution be?
- Bring a neutral person in to create safety and honesty

13.) Water Conservation Tips:

- ✓ Choose to plant lower water use plants (cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, swiss chard)
- ✓ Water your plot in the morning, when temperatures are cooler and winds are lower, to minimize evaporation
- ✓ Use a layer of organic mulch (compost, grass clippings, untreated wood/bark) 2-6 inches deep around plants to reduce evaporation.
- ✓ Group plants with the same watering needs together to get the most out of your watering time
- ✓ Try to space plants close together, so there is less area to water.
- ✓ Weed your garden regularly. Weeds compete with other plants for nutrients, light, and water.
- ✓ While you may use organic fertilizers to promote plant growth, this also increases water consumption. Apply the minimum amount of organic fertilizer needed.

- ✓ More plants die from over-watering than from under-watering. Be sure to only water plants when necessary.

14.) Volunteer Information:

We encourage gardeners to take a greater role in the garden as it is a *community* garden, and requires the work of many people to run.

Volunteer Jobs:

There are various jobs to do around the garden including:

- Put green carts at the curb/ and put away on pick up day (see schedule/ placement sheet in the garden shed)
- Post newsletters, brochures, information sheets from the Programs Coordinator (contact Coordinator for this job)
- Tool shed - clean up
- Tool maintenance- check for broken tools, repair and fill flat tires on wheelbarrows

- Help your neighbour- watering/weeding if they are away, help them to clean up garden plots
- New gardener support- we need gardeners who will help support new gardeners starting on the site. This will include meeting with them on site and showing them around, where they will find tools, and answer any questions.
- Helping our senior gardeners- there are many seniors in the gardens who need help, especially in the Spring and Fall.
- General site maintenance - weed trimming around common areas
- Seed saving

There are many other jobs around the garden sites depending on where your garden plot is. To sign up for these positions, please fill out the form that has been emailed, or contact the Urban Ag program coordinator. Also contact the program coordinator if you are unsure about volunteer jobs and tasks that need to be taken on or you have suggestions for other tasks.

15.) Community Gardens Calendar of Events:

January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garden Renewals (All Month) • Sign Up For Garden Volunteer Positions
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewals Complete • Allocate Volunteer Positions
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seedy Saturday - First Saturday Of March • New Gardener Orientation: Mid - late March • Garden Workshop 1
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring Garden Clean Up - Start Of Season • Garden Workshop 2
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garden • Garden Review Training • Spring Review • Garden Workshop 3
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring Review Follow-up • Garden Workshop 4
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garden Workshop 4/5
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer Review • Garden Workshop 5/6
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer Review Follow-up • Garden Workshop 6
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garden Clean Up - Get Ready For Winter
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaned Up By November 1st • Winter Review • Garden Survey Sent Out

16.) Ecological Garden:

We encourage our gardeners to take a more ecological approach to gardening through our policies regarding organic gardening methods and the Butterflyway Project.

The Butterflyway project is a program created through the David Suzuki foundation. They train rangers who then engage the public on how to plant gardens focused on butterfly friendly plants allowing for the recovery of butterfly populations. There are three Butterflyway Project chapters in B.C. including North Van, Victoria and Richmond.

Through David Suzuki butterfly gardens have been created throughout Richmond encouraging the recovery of butterfly populations.

More info can be found here:

<https://davidsuzuki.org/take-action/act-locally/butterflyway/richmond/>



Consider planting butterfly friendly plants alongside your vegetables. Focusing on local plants also benefits local insects as they are adapted to the plants that grow the best in our area.

17.) Starting your Garden:

You can start planning your garden as early as March, getting seeds at our Seedy Saturday and deciding what you would like to try.

We'll also be hosting workshops from March to September to help you get the most out of your garden. Through your membership one free workshop for every workshop you pay for, a buy one get one free sale

Topics of the workshops are:

- 1.) Planning a garden
- 2.) Seeds and transplanting
- 3.) Soil and composting
- 4.) Pests and beneficial insects
- 5.) Companion and succession gardening
- 6.) Winter and your garden

Seeds to start in March would include:

- Tomatoes
- Onions
- Leeks
- Cauliflower
- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Various herbs

Seeds to direct sow:

- Peas
- Beans
- Root vegetables
- Squash
- Zucchini

Check our website for more information!

18.) Garden Planning Resources:

- West Coast Seeds website - Planning Charts
- Grow Veg - Online garden planning tool for a fee, but great youtube videos
- The Spruce - General Planting tips