North Plains Community Garden
Policy Manual
North Plains Community Garden
31383 NW Commercial Street, North Plains, OR 97133

Contents
Growing Season Timelines ........................................................................................................3
How to Get a Plot ..................................................................................................................3
Plot sizes ................................................................................................................................4
Being A Community Gardener .............................................................................................4
Parking ..................................................................................................................................4
Use of Plots ............................................................................................................................4
No Refunds .............................................................................................................................4
Vacations or Absences ............................................................................................................4
Summer Planting and Growing .............................................................................................5
Mulching ...............................................................................................................................5
Harvest ...................................................................................................................................5
Pathways ...............................................................................................................................5
Working Garden .....................................................................................................................5
What is appropriate to grow? ...............................................................................................5
Weeds and Plot Upkeep ..........................................................................................................6
Natural Gardening Encouraged ............................................................................................6
Gardening Courtesy ..............................................................................................................6
Theft and Vandalism ..............................................................................................................6
Water Availability .................................................................................................................6
Garden Debris .......................................................................................................................7
Rodents and other animals .................................................................................................7
Children ...............................................................................................................................7
Dogs ......................................................................................................................................7
Smoking ...............................................................................................................................7
Garbage ...............................................................................................................................7
Picnics (BBQ) ......................................................................................................................7
Questions ..............................................................................................................................7
North Plains Community Garden

Community gardens provide an opportunity for residents to grow food and ornamental crops, enjoy the exercise, relaxation and educational benefits of gardening. Gardens promote sustainability and community building. The City of North Plains supports a community garden located on 31383 NW Commercial Street across from the Fire Department and next to Robinson’s Floral Ltd, which donated the use of the land.

The City of North Plains began a community garden program in Spring 2012. Policies and rules are in place to help this venture be successful for everyone: the gardeners, the neighbors, and the City. The goals of the community garden are simple:

- Opportunity: Provide a place for local residents to grow food and ornamental crops, enjoy the exercise, relaxation and educational benefits of gardening.
- Stewardship: Promote sustainability, natural gardening and wise use of land.

Our program is likely to evolve over time, and it is possible our rules may evolve as well. As a participating gardener, you can help guide the future of community gardening in North Plains.

Growing Season Timelines

Gardening can begin as early as February and gardeners are expected to make use of their plots by May. Some gardens might be reserved with the best of intentions, but end up not being planted. Unfortunately, if your garden is not started by May, it will likely be reassigned to a gardener on the waiting list. If for any reason it is not possible to start your garden by then, please contact City Hall to discuss alternative options.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>January</th>
<th>Returning gardener deadline to submit registration for priority plot renewal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Open registration begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February - March</td>
<td>Garden kick-off notice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March – April</td>
<td>Spring clean-up time and water available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Gardens must be in the &quot;getting started&quot; phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Fall clean-up, water turned off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Mulch or cover crop installed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Garden renewal registration begins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How to Get a Plot

Registration forms for garden plots are through North Plains City Hall. Because of the limited number of plots available, registration is limited to North Plains.
residents only. Only registered gardeners may use the garden plots. Gardeners can register and pay for a plot in person 31360 NW Commercial Street. All gardeners are required to sign a use agreement waiver.

Because our garden is so small, we are limiting gardens to one plot per gardener or gardening family. If there are unassigned plots after May 1st, gardeners can register for additional plots for current growing season; however, the additional plots will return to the "new gardener" pool the following year.

Plot sizes

| 2' x 6' | $15/year |

Being A Community Gardener

Each gardener is part of a community of gardeners and needs to work with others in relative harmony in order to make a positive gardening experience for everyone. The gardeners are responsible not just for their plot, but for the pathways surrounding their plot, and for helping the garden area as a whole.

Gardening hours are from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. or dusk, whichever comes earlier. The use of power equipment is restricted to the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Parking

Street parking is available to gardeners. Better yet bike or walk to the Community Garden.

Use of Plots

Plots are not transferable without the permission of the City. Gardeners are responsible for keeping addresses and phone numbers current with City Hall. If for any reason, you need to relinquish your space, call the City at 503-647-5555.

Existing gardeners have the first opportunity to renew plots before garden registration opens to public. Existing gardeners will typically keep the plot they are currently gardening in, however, if they request a different plot and it becomes available, it will be assigned on a first come first serve basis in reference to the waiting list.

No Refunds

The garden registration fee you pay only partially covers the costs of operating the Community Garden Program. If you give up your garden plot after you have registered, or if you fail to maintain your plot and it is transferred to another gardener, your plot fee will not be refunded.

Vacations or Absences

Please arrange for others to help care for your garden if you are away on vacation, ill, or not able to make it to the garden for multiple days. Alternatively use a “water me” sign to let others know you are away so they can assist with watering and harvesting.

By June 1st, your garden should be in the “getting started” stage. This deadline is to motivate gardeners to show that they are going to utilize the garden plot, and not waste it. Some garden plots are reserved with the best of intentions, but end up not being planted. If you haven’t started
preparations by this date, there is probably someone on the waiting list who would be willing to take over

The requirements of “getting started” include
- Weeding and planning;
- Working the soil in preparation for planting;
- Pathway clean-up.

**Summer Planting and Growing**

By June 15th, there should be substantial progress towards a productive garden and signs of gardening activity, which includes:
- At least half of the plot worked and planted;
- Consistent removal of weeds;
- Some established plants being cared for;
- Continued pathway maintenance.

**Mulching**

Mulching is an effective method to save water and improve garden soil. Gardeners are encouraged to use organic mulch. Newspaper is not allowed as a mulching agent/weed barrier

**Harvest**

Annual crops should be harvested and plants cleaned up and composted. Garden plots should be cover-cropped, and/or have mulched placed around perennial plants by November. The City of North Plains can provide leaves onsite for gardeners that wish to use leaves as a cover crop. Make your request in writing to City Hall.

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**Pathways**

The City does not mow or provide regular upkeep of the pathways or other common areas at the Community Gardens. Your garden space may stop at the edge of your plot—but your responsibility includes the pathways surrounding your garden. From time to time, the gardeners may organize work parties to replenish chips in the pathways or perform other communal tasks your plants must remain within the perimeters of the designated plots, allowing adequate space for growth and keeping pathways clear. Allow for access within your own plot.

**Working Garden**

Gardeners are responsible for keeping garden plots maintained, planted or mulched and kept within its boundaries. Plots may not be weedy, untended, or filled with debris. Gardeners are expected to spend least two hours per week, on average during the growing season, tending the plot.

**What is appropriate to grow?**

Vegetables, herbs, flowers and small...
fruit plants for home consumption and donation are appropriate. No large structures, trees, or large collection of non-plant items are allowed. Crops must be legal and for personal use or donation. Do not allow your plants to shade an adjoining garden or encroach on the pathway.

**Weeds and Plot Upkeep**

Weeds affect other gardeners and it is important to keep a tidy plot. If a plot begins to be overtaken by weeds and appears abandoned, a warning will be issued. If the plot remains abandoned after two warnings, it will be assigned to a gardener on the waiting list and no refund will be issued.

**Natural Gardening Encouraged**

Use of herbicides and/or weed killers is not allowed. Use of chemicals or propellants banned by the federal, state, or local government shall be grounds for forfeiture of the privilege to use the Community Garden. Gardeners are encouraged to use natural gardening techniques. Chemical fertilizers (such as those commercially produced) are permitted.

**Gardening Courtesy**

One of main goals of community gardening is to work together or next to each other in relative harmony. Please be courteous:

- Keep weeds under control so they don’t spread to neighboring plots.
- If you want music, use a personal sound system with headphones; others may enjoy the quiet of the garden.
- Help maintain community and shared areas of the garden, including pathways.
- Pick only your own crops unless requested by another gardener.
- Water only you own plot and don’t leave water running for extended time.
- Harvest ripe produce on a daily basis.
- Make friends with other gardeners and neighbors.
- Report any problems to City Hall.

**Theft and Vandalism**

Any gardener reported for taking vegetables, flowers or supplies from another’s plot without permission may have their garden privileges revoked.

Please call the police at 9-1-1 if you see suspicious activities.

**Water Availability**

Water in the gardens is available from May – October. Garden registration fees are used to pay for water use. There is roughly one water source for every four garden plots. Please be courteous to neighbors by taking turns watering. Gardeners must be present to water at all times. Various methods of irrigation can be used; however, gardeners must be courteous to their neighbor and avoid over watering. Irrigation timers to regulate watering are not permitted. The North Plains Water Department graciously donates materials and supplies to support conserving water in the gardens each year. Compost is often made available at no cost for gardeners to use throughout the season to help save water. We encourage watering before 10:00 am and after 6:00 pm. If you are going on vacation or will not be able to tend to your plot for a period of time, please use the “water me” signs.
located in the garden tool shed. This will help keep your produce healthy while you are absent. **Water will only be available from 7:00 am to 9:00 pm daily.**

**Garden Debris**
An onsite bin will be provided with compost.

Throughout the year, the City will provide a drop box for collecting garden debris to take off-site for composting. Gardeners will be given notice of when the box will be available. Garbarino Disposal has graciously provided compost bins at our garden site that is available on a first come first serve basis. They are dumped biweekly.

**Rodents and other animals**
Because rodents and other animals may be prevalent in the nearby natural areas, it will be the responsibility of the individual gardener to control these pests within their own garden space. Non-permanent fencing is allowed, but may not cross garden pathways.

**Children**
Children are encouraged to garden with their parents, but they must stay on the paths of their assigned garden without going through the plots of other gardeners.

**Dogs**
Well behaved dogs are allowed to visit the gardens with their owners. Dogs must be on a leash at all times and owners must clean up after their pets. Dogs are only allowed at their owners plot and must stay out of surrounding plots.

**Smoking**
No smoking is permitted in the garden, which is a public facility.

**Garbage**
Please keep trash and litter cleared from your plot and take home your recyclables.

**Picnics (BBQ)**
Gardeners are encouraged to bring snacks or lunches and picnic in the community area. Barbecuing is not permitted in the garden.

**Questions**
Please contact the City of North Plains at 503-647-5555 if you have any questions or suggestions regarding the community garden program.