

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 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.e.). These fees are nonrefundable except as otherwise specified by law or Saco city policy.
- b) 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 assignments are managed online through the Saco Parks & Recreation website.
- c) 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.
- d) 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.
- e) Ten plots are designated as year-round: #1, 2, 13, 14, 25, 26, 37, 38, 49, and 50. These may have perennial plants and fall plantings. Fixtures such as plant supports and walkways 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 specified in subsection (b), and the following:
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-glossy newspaper, Bt, diatomaceous earth, and deterrent sprays from nontoxic materials such as garlic, soap, hot pepper, and seaweed.
- b) The following are not allowed:
 - 1) Botanical insecticides like rotenone, pyrethrum and neem are not permitted as they harm earthworms, fish and beneficial insects. Bark mulches, sawdust, wood chips, etc.
 - 2) Treated lumber or other objects that are treated or painted with toxic substances that can leach into the soil. Garden signs must be painted with non-lead paint. 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.

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5. USE OF PLOTS:

- a) 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.
- b) Because of the difficulty of managing potato beetles, potatoes are prohibited.
- c) **Any vegetation or structure over 6' is discouraged.** Gardeners should consider the effect of shading on neighboring plots when planting, and locate plants appropriately. Gardeners may be asked to trim any structures or plants that impede pathways and neighboring plots.
- d) Children are encouraged to participate in the garden with their families, but they must be supervised.
- e) Pets are not allowed in the garden
- f) 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 gate when you leave.

6. GARDEN MAINTENANCE:

- a) Gardens must be tended, weeded, and harvested regularly.
- b) Trash may not be left in the garden. The SCG has a carry in/ carry out policy for trash.

7. SHARING:

- a) Donated or extra seedlings and plants may be left on the picnic table or near the shed for fellow gardeners. Produce and plants other than in garden plots are considered to be available to others.

8. 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, and non-compostable materials such as string and plastic, before placing organic matter into the bins.
- c) Chop compostable 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.

9. PATHS:

- a) Each gardener is responsible for assuring plants in their garden do not impinge on paths and perimeters (around all sides of plots). Sweeping paths is not considered volunteer activity (see Section 13).

10. PERIMETER STAKES:

- a) Stakes mark the corners of the individual garden plots (the raised beds mark the boundaries of plot #7). Do not remove or relocate these stakes.

11. 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, close and lock the gates. Renters will be given the lock combination when they complete their renter registration.

12. GOOD HABITS:

- a) Gardens should be maintained according to the standards outlined in these guidelines. Failure to comply may result in the SCG requesting compliance or taking action. Continued failure to comply may result in forfeiture of the garden plot. Renters should direct any questions or concerns to the SCG Steering Committee.

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13. 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.

14. 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.

15. 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.

16. 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. No other types of communication will be provided, although individual gardeners may be contacted as the need arises.
- 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) 283-1025
 - Website: <https://sacocommunitygarden.org>
 - Mail: Saco Community Garden
c/o Peg Mills
168 Simpson Rd.
Saco, ME 04072

17. 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 whenever the information changes.

Adopted: May 14, 2009
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October 20, 2011
November 15, 2012
October 21, 2013
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February 12, 2020
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