

Sustainable Renton Community Garden

Gardener Handbook

Mission

The Sustainable Renton Community Garden & Food Forest grows more than food—it cultivates resilience, compassion, and community. Through sustainable gardening and education, we empower individuals to grow their own food, share abundance, and steward the environment. Our garden is a welcoming space to build connections, support food security, and nurture a sustainable, inclusive future.

Supporting Local Food Security

You can strengthen food access in our community by:

- Sharing extra produce with family, friends, or food banks
- Participating in garden projects and fundraisers
- Volunteering your time to keep the garden thriving

Communication

Garden news, updates, and notices are shared through Microsoft Teams. It is each gardener's responsibility to stay informed about events, projects, and garden needs.

Plots & Registration

- Eligibility: One plot per household (with limited exceptions for returning gardeners in good standing).
- New Gardeners: Must sign and return plot agreements with payment within one week of selection.
- Returning Gardeners: Renewal applications due January 10. Plots not renewed will be offered to waitlisted gardeners.
- Waitlist: Open January 1–February 28; expires October 31. Plots are assigned by lottery.
- Surrendered Plots: Must be cleared of structures, perennials, and weeds by February 1.

Key Dates

- Dec 15 – Renewal applications sent
- Jan 1 – Waitlist applications open
- Jan 10 – Renewal deadline
- Feb (2nd Saturday) – Plot lottery/in person selection
- Feb 28 – Payments due
- Mar 1 – Garden season begins

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Plot Fees & Volunteer Hours

Option	Fee	Volunteer Hours
Full value	\$250	0 volunteer hours
Standard	\$125	6 volunteer hours
New Gardeners	\$75	12 volunteer hours
Returning gardener	\$60	12 volunteer hours

- Service hours support garden upkeep and projects.
- 100% of hours must be completed by **Oct 31** for plot renewal.
- Scholarships available (by confidential request - limited scholarships available).

Community Guidelines

- Welcome Visitors: The garden is open to the public. Please greet guests kindly.
- Children & Pets: Children are welcome with an adult; no pets allowed.
- Harvest: Enjoy your own crops; ask permission before picking from others. Community farm fruit/berries are limited to one serving per week per gardener.
- Tools & Supplies: Shared tools must be cleaned and returned; garden supplies are for on-site use only.
- Compost & Waste: Use bins for compostable plant material; take other waste home. Church bins are not for garden use.
- Donations: Only approved items may be donated; no dumping.
- Clean-Up: Keep grounds and sheds tidy. Secure water, tools, and gates before leaving.

Pathways & Borders

- Maintain clear, safe paths around your plot with bark mulch.
- Do not expand into paths or use them for storage.
- Border plots may use fence space for limited storage (e.g., barrels, supports). Paths must remain walkable.

Water Use

- Conserve water—mulch to retain moisture.
- Gardeners must be present while watering.

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- Hoses, drip lines, and soakers allowed if they do not affect others.
- Always turn off valves and master switch.

Structures & Plants

- Manager approval required for fences, raised beds, or trellises.
- Max fence height: 3 ft. Max tree/vine height: 6 ft (must be in hard containers).
- No toxic materials, treated wood, or permanent shade structures.
- Remove temporary supports by Oct 31.
- Use non-GMO seeds when possible; avoid invasive plants, such as mint. in beds (pots only).
- Remove diseased plants promptly and dispose of them at home.

Compost

- Chop plant material before composting.
- Add water during dry months.
- Turning compost counts toward volunteer hours.
- No wood, branches, large cardboard, or plastics.

Absences & Plot Use

- Notify the manager if you will be away; arrange care for your plot.
- Plots must be actively gardened at least one season per year.
- Untended plots (3+ weeks May–Aug) may be reclaimed.

Accountability

- Three warnings in one season may result in non-renewal.
- Conflicts are first addressed with the Garden Manager, then with Sustainable Renton leadership if unresolved.
- Garden subcommittee meetings are held monthly; all gardeners are encouraged to participate.