

Community Garden Charter

Garden Name: [Your Garden Name]
Location: [Address or Description]
Established: [Date]
Land Status: [Owned / Leased / Licensed / Other]

1. Mission and Vision

Our Purpose

[Example: To create a thriving green space where neighbors grow food, build community, learn together, and nurture connection with the earth.]

Our Vision

We envision a garden that:

- Provides fresh, healthy food for our community
- Serves as a gathering place for neighbors
- Teaches sustainable growing practices
- Welcomes people of all ages and backgrounds
- Honors the land and its ecosystems
- [Add your specific vision elements]

Our Values

- **Stewardship:** We care for the land for future generations
- **Accessibility:** Everyone in the community can participate
- **Learning:** We share knowledge freely
- **Diversity:** We grow diverse plants and welcome diverse people
- **Sustainability:** We use organic, regenerative practices
- **Community:** We build relationships through growing together

2. Membership

Who Can Join

- Open to all residents of [neighborhood/area]
- [Age requirement if any: Youth under 16 with adult supervision]
- No gardening experience necessary
- Commitment to garden principles required

Membership Process

1. Attend orientation meeting
2. Sign this charter and liability waiver
3. Pay annual fee (if applicable): \$_____
4. Receive plot assignment or join waiting list
5. Participate in [required work days / hours]

Member Responsibilities

- Care for assigned plot(s)
- Participate in common area maintenance
- Attend at least [X] community work days per season
- Respect other gardeners and their plots
- Follow organic/sustainable practices
- Communicate about absences or plot changes
- [Optional: Contribute ____ hours to garden leadership/tasks]

Member Benefits

- Growing space: [Plot size, e.g., 4'x8' raised bed]
- Access to: Water, tools, compost, common areas
- Workshops and skill-shares
- Community and connection

- Harvest from your plot
- [Optional: Share of common harvest]

3. Plot Allocation and Use

Plot Assignment

- Plots assigned by: [First-come / Lottery / Rotating basis]
- [Standard plot size: ____ sq ft]
- [Optional: Larger plots available for: families / experienced gardeners / etc.]
- Maximum plots per household: [Usually 1-2]

Plot Care Standards

Minimum Requirements:

- Plant plot within [2-4 weeks] of assignment
- Maintain actively throughout growing season
- Keep plot free of noxious weeds (especially: [list local invasives])
- Water regularly
- No plants encroaching on paths or neighboring plots

What Happens if Plot is Neglected:

1. Friendly reminder notice placed on plot
2. Email/phone contact from garden coordinator
3. If no response within [1-2 weeks]: Plot reassigned
4. Member may reapply for next season

Growing Practices

Encouraged: ☒ Organic methods

☒ Companion planting

☒ Native pollinator plants

☒ Vertical growing (trellises)

☒ Season extension (row covers, cold frames)

- ✓ Seed saving and sharing
- ✓ Experimentation and learning

Prohibited: ✗ Synthetic pesticides or herbicides
✗ Chemical fertilizers
✗ Plants over [height limit, e.g., 6 feet without approval]
✗ Invasive species: [List specific plants]
✗ GMO seeds [if agreed upon]
✗ [Other restrictions based on lease/ordinances]

What You Can Grow

- Vegetables, herbs, flowers
- Small fruit bushes (with approval)
- [Perennials: Require approval / Not allowed / Allowed]
- Check before planting: Trees, large shrubs, aggressive spreaders

4. Common Areas and Shared Resources

Common Spaces

- **Tool Shed:** [Location and access]
- **Compost Area:** [Location and usage guidelines]
- **Children's Garden:** [If applicable]
- **Gathering Space:** [Picnic area, benches, etc.]
- **Pollinator Garden:** [Maintained by: committee / volunteers]
- **Herb Spiral/Food Forest:** [If applicable]

Shared Tools and Equipment

Available Tools:

- Hand tools: Shovels, hoes, rakes, trowels
- Watering cans and hoses
- Wheelbarrows
- [Other equipment]

Tool Use Guidelines:

- Return tools clean to shed after use
- Report damage immediately
- Don't remove tools from garden
- Priority: [First-come / Sign-up sheet]

Water System

- Type: [Municipal / Well / Rain catchment]
- Access: [Hours / Always available]
- Conservation: [Mulch, drip irrigation encouraged]
- Rationing: [If needed during drought]
- Cost: [Included in fees / Pay per use]

Compost

- System: [Bins / Tumblers / Pile]
- Add: Vegetable scraps, plant material, grass clippings
- Don't add: Meat, dairy, diseased plants, noxious weeds
- Finished compost: Available to all members
- Turning schedule: [Community task]

5. Community Work and Maintenance

Required Participation

Each member contributes to garden maintenance:

Option A: Work Hours

- ☒ hours per month or [Y] hours per season
- Log hours in: [Sign-in sheet / Online system]
- Counts: Work parties, watering, tool maintenance, etc.

Option B: Work Days

- Attend [number] community work days per season

- Scheduled: [Usually monthly, spring-fall]
- Projects: Path maintenance, compost, planting commons

Tasks Include:

- Mowing paths
- Mulching
- Weeding common areas
- Tool maintenance
- Compost management
- Opening/closing for season
- Special projects

Volunteer Roles

Gardens function through volunteer leadership:

Garden Coordinator(s): [1-2 people]

- Overall garden management
- Coordinate work days
- Plot assignments
- Communication hub

Plot Manager:

- Track plot use and care
- Send reminders for neglected plots
- Manage waiting list

Tool Manager:

- Organize and maintain tools
- Order supplies
- Manage storage

Compost Captain:

- Maintain compost system
- Educate members

- Distribute finished compost

Water Monitor:

- Check systems weekly
- Report leaks
- Coordinate repairs

Social Coordinator:

- Plan community events
- Organize potlucks/celebrations
- Welcome new members

[Other roles specific to your garden]

Terms: [6 months / 1 year / Rotating]

Selection: [Volunteer / Elected / Appointed]

6. Governance and Decision-Making

Decision-Making Authority

Individual Gardeners Decide:

- What to plant in their plot
- When to harvest
- How to arrange their space
- Whether to share harvest

Garden Coordinator(s) Decide:

- Day-to-day operations
- Scheduling work days
- Plot assignments
- Minor purchases under \$_____

General Membership Decides:

- Changes to this charter

- Major expenditures over \$_____
- New infrastructure projects
- Policy changes
- Budget and fees

Meetings

General Meetings:

- Frequency: [Quarterly / Biannually / Annually]
- Notice: [2 weeks in advance]
- Attendance: Open to all members
- Quorum: [____% of members or ____ members]
- Decision method: [Consensus / Majority vote]

Work Parties:

- Social and practical
- Brief check-in at start
- Potluck lunch/snacks
- Celebrate accomplishments

Communication

- **Primary method:** [Email list / Facebook group / Other]
- **Bulletin board:** At garden for notices
- **Emergency contact:** [Garden coordinator phone/email]
- **Annual newsletter:** [If applicable]

7. Financial Management

Funding Sources

- Member fees: \$_____ annually
- Grants: [If applicable]

- Fundraisers: [Plant sales, garden tours, etc.]
- Donations: [Accepted / Solicited]
- In-kind contributions: [Materials, tools, time]

Budget Categories

- Infrastructure: Beds, fencing, water system
- Soil and amendments
- Seeds and starts (for common areas)
- Tools and equipment
- Water/utilities: \$_____ annually
- Insurance: \$_____ annually
- [Other expenses]

Financial Transparency

- Treasurer maintains records
- Budget shared at annual meeting
- Financial reports: [Quarterly / Annually]
- All members can review books

8. Children and Families

Children in the Garden

- Children under [age] must be supervised
- Youth gardeners: [Welcome / Age requirements]
- Kid-friendly features: [Children's plots, mud kitchen, etc.]
- Teaching opportunities: [School programs, youth workshops]

Family Plots

- Families share plot responsibilities

- Great learning opportunity
- Kids' harvest belongs to kids
- Family work hours count collectively

9. Harvest and Food Sharing

Your Plot Harvest

- What you grow is yours to harvest
- Harvest regularly (don't leave rotting produce)
- Share with neighbors [encouraged / required / optional]
- [Food pantry donation encouraged]

Common Area Harvest

[If applicable]

- Herb spiral: Free access to all
- Fruit trees/bushes: [Shared harvest days / First-come]
- Food forest: Harvest respectfully
- Donate surplus to: [Food bank / Free table]

Gleaning

- After plot-holder harvests, others may ask to glean
- Respect gardener's wishes
- Don't enter plots without permission

10. Events and Community Building

Regular Events

- **Opening Day:** [Spring date]
 - Prepare beds, distribute compost, plant cool-season crops
 - Potluck and garden blessing/ritual
- **Summer Solstice Celebration:** [If desired]
 - Garden tour, farm-to-table meal, music
- **Harvest Festival:** [Fall date]
 - Celebrate abundance, share food, prepare for winter
- **Closing Day:** [Late fall]
 - Put garden to bed, tool cleaning, appreciation circle

Workshops and Skill-Shares

- Member-led or invited experts
- Topics: [Seed starting, composting, season extension, etc.]
- [Free to members / Small fee for materials]

Potlucks and Social Gatherings

- [Monthly / Seasonally / As desired]
- Bring dish to share (garden ingredients encouraged!)
- Kid-friendly and inclusive
- Build community bonds

11. Garden Rules and Etiquette

Respect and Community

- ✓ Greet fellow gardeners warmly
- ✓ Ask before entering someone's plot
- ✓ Share knowledge generously
- ✓ Supervise children
- ✓ Keep paths clear
- ✓ Clean up after yourself
- ✓ Report problems to coordinator
- ✗ Don't harvest from others' plots (without asking)
- ✗ Don't walk through growing areas
- ✗ Don't let dogs into garden
- ✗ No loud music
- ✗ No smoking in garden
- ✗ No littering

Hours of Access

- Garden open: [Dawn to dusk / 24 hours with gate code]
- Quiet hours: [If applicable]
- Respect neighboring properties

Parking

- Park in: [Designated area]
- Don't block: [Driveways, fire hydrants, etc.]
- Walk/bike encouraged

Safety

- Watch for: Bees, wasps, snakes
- Wash hands after gardening
- Tetanus vaccination recommended
- First aid kit: [Location]
- Emergency contact: 911 and [garden coordinator]

12. Environmental Stewardship

Integrated Pest Management

1. Prevention (healthy soil, proper spacing)
2. Monitoring (check plants regularly)
3. Mechanical removal (handpick pests)
4. Biological controls (beneficial insects)
5. Organic sprays (as last resort: neem, insecticidal soap)

Pollinator Support

- Plant flowers among vegetables
- Avoid spraying during bloom
- Provide water source
- Leave some areas "wild"
- No neonicotinoids

Soil Health

- Add compost regularly
- Use mulch
- Cover crops [if feasible]
- Crop rotation
- Build soil, don't deplete it

Water Conservation

- Water in morning or evening
- Mulch to retain moisture
- Choose appropriate plants
- Fix leaks immediately
- Drip irrigation [encouraged]

Wildlife

- Welcome beneficial creatures
- Bird houses and bee hotels [encouraged]
- Deer fencing [if needed]
- Don't use poison (for any purpose)

13. Conflict Resolution

When disagreements arise:

1. **Talk directly** with the person involved
2. **Seek mediation** from garden coordinator if needed
3. **Bring to general meeting** if unresolved
4. **Focus on** solutions, not blame

Common conflicts:

- Overgrown weeds spreading
- Water use during drought
- Kids running through plots
- Interpretation of organic practices

Resolution goal: Maintain community while addressing issues.

14. Violations and Consequences

Minor Violations

First occurrence:

- Friendly reminder
- Assumption of good faith

Repeated occurrences:

- Written notice
- Conversation with coordinator
- Required remedy

Serious Violations

- Use of prohibited chemicals
- Damaging others' plots
- Harassment or discrimination
- Repeated neglect after warnings

Consequences:

- Loss of plot
- Membership suspension
- Removal from garden
- [As determined by: garden leadership / general membership]

Due Process

- Person notified in writing
- Chance to respond
- Decision by: [Coordinator / Membership vote]
- Appeal process: [General meeting]

15. Land Tenure and Agreements

Land Status

- Owned by: [Municipality / Land trust / Private owner]
- Garden's agreement: [Lease / License / MOU]
- Term: [Duration and renewal process]
- Rent/fees: [Amount if applicable]

If Garden Must Close

[Outline plan for]

- Advanced notice to members
- Disposition of infrastructure
- Removal of personal property
- Return of fees [if applicable]
- Soil testing/remediation [if needed]

16. Amendments to Charter

This charter may be amended:

- Proposed changes in writing [2 weeks before meeting]
- Discussion at general meeting
- Vote by: [Consensus / 2/3 majority]
- All members notified of changes
- Updated charter signed by new members

Next Review Date: [Annually or biannually]

17. Signatures

By signing, I commit to upholding this charter and contributing to our garden community.

Name	Address	Email	Phone	Plot #	Date

Appendix: Garden Map

[Insert or attach garden layout showing:]

- Plot numbers and dimensions
 - Common areas
 - Tool shed
 - Compost
 - Water access points
 - Paths
 - Gates/entrances
-

Appendix: Seasonal Calendar

Early Spring (March-April):

- Opening day work party
- Plot assignments
- Start cool-season crops

Late Spring (May):

- Transplant warm-season crops
- Mulch plots
- First workshop series

Summer (June-August):

- Harvest and maintain
- Summer solstice celebration
- Stay on top of weeds and water

Fall (September-October):

- Plant fall crops
- Harvest festival
- Save seeds

Late Fall/Winter (Nov-Feb):

- Closing day

- Put beds to rest
- Tool maintenance
- Planning for next season

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