

City of Mercer Island P-Patch Community Garden Program Guidelines

Gardener's Responsibilities



1. Being a Considerate Community Gardener:

- P-Patches are public spaces. Respectfully welcome visitors to the garden.
- Refer to the P-Patch Program Code of Conduct for a list of prohibited behaviors.
- Do not take produce from other garden spaces without permission.
- No Smoking or vaping within P-Patch garden.
- Well-mannered, leashed dogs are allowed within your own garden space, unless complaints are received.
 - Please scoop and remove feces. Follow WA rules on scooping animal feces and managing your pet (WAC 332-52-140)
- Use common courtesies and direct communication to resolve differences in a timely and neighborly way.
 - To resolve problems with fellow gardeners, please speak directly with each other before contacting City Staff. Be polite and listen carefully, usually a solution is within reached. Refer to the P-Patch program grievance procedure if you are unable to resolve differences.

2. Use of individual Plot Space, Gardening and Maintenance

- Strictly employ organic gardening methods and inputs.
 - No synthetic chemicals including pesticides, insecticides, herbicides, weed killers, and fertilizers.
 - Organic fertilizers are allowed (compost, fish meal, composted manure, lime, etc.)
- Year – round gardening and maintenance of the assigned garden space is the plot holder’s responsibility. Garden space is defined as a garden plot and the 2 feet of adjacent pathway that surrounds the plot
 - Garden space must be weeded and planted within 2 weeks of plot assignment if assigned between April 1 – October 31
 - Planting season check-in

APRIL 15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in • Must show effort

May 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in • Must Show Progress

May 15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Progress will be removed From garden

- Active gardening reflects seasonality (I.e., winterization by October 31, spring weeding and fall cleanup, summer maintenance harvesting, etc.)
- Arrange for care by a substitute if unable to tend to plot due to vacations or other circumstances, following P-Patch standards.
- Monitoring plot use: P-Patch staff and volunteers sites leaders monitor plots throughout the year. When a garden space is untended, the plot holder will be contacted. If P-Patch staff and or volunteer site leaders contact a plot holder about an untended garden space twice in one your and it becomes untended a third time, staff will reassign the garden space.
- Do not expand your garden space beyond its designated area.
- The P-patch garden cannot be used to conduct personal commerce. The sale of produce, flowers, is not permitted.

3. Pathways

Maintain garden pathways adjacent to your plot: keep them sage, level, clear and weed-free within a 2-foot radius. Beware of hoses as tripping hazards.

4. Plot Turnover

- Annual renewal: plot holders in good standing can renew their garden space annually (Every Feb. Payment due Feb. 28)
- A plot holder cannot give garden space to others (there is an established waitlist)
 - Co-gardeners are allowed. However, they can only become the primary plot holder if they have been co-gardening long enough to be assigned a plot from the interest list.
- When the plot holder no longer wants the plot:
 - They must notify coordinator and establish a timeline for turnover with City Staff.
 - They need to leave the garden space in reasonable condition. They must remove all structures and other non-plant materials unless arrangements are made with garden leaders.
- Plot holders are not allowed to permanently work other peoples' plots.

5. Structures (fences, raised beds, trellises, etc.)

- You build it, you remove it. Prior to designing, purchasing, and implementing individual plot construction, please check with staff and garden leadership to ensure your project is feasible (no permanent structures).
- The P-Patch program discourages plot structures. If the plot holder feels there are conditions that warrant fence, raised bed, trellis etc., the plot holder must adhere to the following criteria:
 - The height limit for premier plot fencing is 6 ft
 - For the safety of gardeners, visitors, and wildlife the structure must be:
 - Placed within the perimeter of the plot
 - Securely and safely built, without infringing upon any pathway or neighboring plot
 - Be safely secured and must not shade neighboring plot
 - Must not pose potential harm to others.
 - No permanent or fixed lighting fixtures including string, flood, or similar installations.
 - Temporary plant supports and trellises must be taken down for winter by October 31
- Locks: anything that gives the visual impression of a lock on your fence or in your plot is not allowed.
- Tires, railroad ties, plastic ground covering, and treated/painted lumber are not allowed.

6. Plants

- Tall plants and trellises that support them must not shade neighboring plots.
- No trees (including fruit) or large shrubs are allowed in plots.
- Keep invasive, vining and spreading plants confined to pots.

7. Water

- Service is turned off and drained by November 1. It remains off for the winter months and is turned back on in the spring after March 1 (pending weather forecast).
 - Water responsibly – always check hose attachment for leaks
 - Report water leaks to garden leadership and City Staff.
 - Sprinklers and drip:
 - The gardener must be present while water is running.
 - The system must not affect other gardening space or a gardener's access to water.
 - Never water others' garden space without permission.

Signature _____ Date _____

A Plot holder in good standing is a gardener who has had no outstanding plot compliance issues during the previous year.