

City of Mercer Island

P-PATCH COMMUNITY GARDEN RULES

Endorsed by the Mercer Island Parks and Recreation Commission- October 5, 2023

Purpose Statement:

The Mercer Island P-Patch is a community garden program coordinated by the City of Mercer Island and cultivated by Mercer Island residents through environmentally sustainable practices. The P-Patch program provides the opportunity for participants to grow food and ornamental plantings within individual plots enabling opportunities for connections within the community, increased food security, and improved physical and mental health for visitors and participants alike.

Program Objectives:

- Provide and allocate designated plot areas for community gardening activities.
- Enable gardening and gathering opportunities which improve both mental and physical health.
- Align participation with maintaining the natural character of the park and minimize unnatural physical and visual impacts to the surrounding park and neighborhood area.
- Provide an environment that enables participants of different ages and demographics to come together, interact, and cultivate meaningful relationships through gardening.
- Utilize garden plots and the surrounding area to enhance biodiversity and contribute to the preservation of the environment.

GENERAL:

1. Plot holders must be Mercer Island residents, at least 18 years of age, and registered annually by February 1 to be eligible for participation.
2. Priority for plot allocation will be given to the previous year's plot holders, with available remaining plots distributed to those on the waitlist, then on a first-come, first-serve basis.
3. There is a maximum of one plot per household.
4. Plot holders may not transfer their garden space to others.
5. Children are welcome and encouraged to garden, those under the age of twelve (12) must be supervised by the plot holder. Do not allow children to run in the patch area or play in/on other plots.
6. Dogs, cats, and other animals are not allowed in the garden at any time (except service animals).
7. Plot holders and guests shall conduct themselves in a courteous, respectful manner at all times. Plot holders and guests shall refrain from profanity, harassment, disruptive behavior, or abuse of any kind.
8. Smoking, vaping, and alcohol are prohibited in the P-Patch area.
9. Do not enter other plot spaces without the permission of the plot holder.
10. Motorized equipment is not allowed in the P-Patch area, except for battery powered garden tools. Only City vehicles are permitted to drive to the P-Patch area.

11. Plot holders are responsible for cultivating, weeding, fertilizing, watering, end-of-season clean up, and all other care for their plots.
12. Tools, equipment, materials, and supplies must be neatly stacked and stored or discarded of. Plots may not exhibit signs of abandonment, neglect, safety hazards, or be overrun by weeds.
13. Plants on the State's Noxious Weed List as well as illegal, controlled, or invasive plants are prohibited.
14. The P-Patch program is an organic gardening program. Use of pesticides, herbicides and insecticides made from synthetic materials as well as use of chemical fertilizers is prohibited. Fully composted manures such as steer and chicken manure are allowed.
15. Plantings, materials, fencing, and equipment must be kept within the borders of your identified plot. Allow space for vining or spreading crops within the plot boundaries.
16. Sale of harvests and/or use of a plot for commercial purposes is prohibited.
17. Plot holders will have seasonal access to hose spigots and must be present at their plots while watering. Drip irrigation may not be left on or unattended. Hoses must be disconnected when not in use and must be neatly stored within plot holder's plot.
18. Tarps, plastic sheeting, gravel, stone, concrete, and other non-permeable ground coverings are prohibited. Porous landscape/weed barrier fabric, wood chips, and burlap are allowed.
19. Plot holders are responsible for keeping pathways and fence lines adjacent to their plot clear and free of rocks, tools, plantings, and other obstacles.
20. Permanent structures and non-planting related installations are prohibited.
21. With prior approval from the Recreation Coordinator, plot holders may install raised bed structures and storage units (up to 30 inches in height). These installations will be allowed as long as they do not disrupt adjacent plots and do not obstruct pathways.
22. Temporary trellises must not exceed 6 ft in height or disrupt adjacent plots.
23. The following items are prohibited in plots: Painted/stained building materials, overhead netting or covers, yard art/decor, signage, displayed verbiage, lighting, and electric deterrent noise devices. Plant identification markers or tags no bigger than 20 square inches are permitted.
24. Plot Fencing:
 - a. May be a maximum of 6' in height including all posts and gates (measured from lowest point).
 - b. Only steel/wire fencing is permitted and must not be coated or painted.
 - c. Posts may not be set in concrete, must be no larger than 4" x 4", and have a separation of no less than 8' between posts. A single gate may be placed with a shorter distance between posts.
 - d. All metal stakes must have caps.
25. City staff may prohibit installations, plantings, or behaviors that do not align with the P-Patch program's objectives, violate the anti-harassment policy, or which negatively impact others.

Revised: Oct. 5, 2023

WARNING:

Those who do not follow P-Patch Community Garden Rules will be notified with one written warning. Non-compliance and/or lack of communication within 2 weeks of that notification will result in dismissal from the P-Patch Community Garden program. All fees are non-refundable. Any plot that remains unattended or uncultivated by May 1st of each year will be cleaned out and reassigned without refund or access to crops. Repeated failures to abide by the P-Patch Program rules will result in dismissal from the P-patch Community Garden program and will void future eligibility.

SECURITY NOTICE:

If you witness or experience garden theft or vandalism, please notify the police by calling (206) 275.7610 to file a report. Please also call the Parks and Recreation office at (206) 275-7609. Due to the open nature of parks and garden sites, The City of Mercer Island is not responsible for loss of garden products or personal items left on site.