



## Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy Community Organic Garden 2010 Rules & Guidelines

By signing the *Responsibility Agreement* on the registration form, you agree to the following rules and guidelines, set by the Garden Committee, to ensure success of the Community Organic Garden.

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- **Park at the pole barn or along the road.** To avoid additional damage to the 2-track path and surrounding fields, do not drive out to the garden. (One exception: If you need to bring in a load of dirt or compost, please check with the SMLC staff first to make sure the lane is ok to drive on.)
- **Work your plot by Memorial Day.** Any plots that have not been actively worked will be reassigned.
- **Keep your soil healthy.** Mix well-composted organic material into your plot(s) to keep the soil's living ecology rich and active. You are encouraged to plant cover crops and use organic mulch.
- **Gardener must be present when their plot is being rototilled.**
- **Water your garden sparingly; water deeply, rather than many shallow waterings. Water only at the base of plants. Use watering cans as much as possible; do not spray with hose in the air. The gardener must stay on site during watering. Make sure the water is turned off when done.** Please be considerate of others when using water. Use a biodegradable mulch to retain moisture.
- **Organic gardens do not contain genetically modified organisms (GMOs).** Organic seeds and seedlings can be obtained from Downtown Home and Garden Center in Ann Arbor, English Gardens, the Ann Arbor Farmer's market, as well as from mail order sources.
- **Fertilizers and Soil Amendments:**  
Use only products approved for organic gardens. Look for the "USDA Organic" label. Products of plant or animal origin i.e. compost, leaf mold, livestock manure, blood and bone meal, cover crops, fish emulsion, kelp meal, liquid seaweed, and commercial organic fertilizers are acceptable. Livestock manure must come from non-meat-eating animals and cannot come from dogs or cats. Natural mineral fertilizers, i.e. greensand, granite dust, and ground limestone are also acceptable. Gardeners are strongly urged to add as much organic material i.e. compost, leaf mold, and manure as possible to their plots to maintain soil fertility. Synthetic fertilizers / amendments are prohibited. **If in doubt, ASK.**
- **Insect Control:**  
Synthetic insecticides are prohibited. Look for the "USDA Organic" label. Preferred control methods are crop rotation, hand picking of insects pests, introduction of predator species and companion planting. **If in doubt, ASK.** Let a garden coordinator know if you have an insect infestation.
- **Disease Control:**  
Maintaining healthy soil, choosing disease-resistant varieties (non-GMO), and removing diseased plants from the garden should control most problems. To prevent the spread of the disease, diseased plants should not be put into the community compost bins. These plants should be bagged and removed from the site.
- **No dogs allowed within the fenced garden area. Please respect fellow gardener's plots by staying on woodchip paths.**

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- **Non-Acceptable Plants:**  
The Community Organic Garden cannot allow plants with the following characteristics to be grown in any of the gardens.
  - Invasive species such as comfrey, all mints, Jerusalem artichoke, garlic mustard, purple loosestrife or ornamental grasses
  - Trees, bushes, or other woody perennials
  - Illegal or dangerous plants
- **Plot corners should be clearly marked with stakes.** Please leave stakes in place during the growing season.
- **Do not use “treated” lumber or concrete.** Creosoted, wolmanized, or pressure-treated lumber contains arsenic or other toxic chemicals, as well as the concrete, that can leach into the soil.
- **Keep your weeds down (no taller than 12”). Do not let them go to seed.** You can significantly reduce weeds by using a biodegradable mulch to cover the soil. A supply of hay is available in the barn. The use of plastic, cardboard, weed fabric and newspaper is prohibited. Manual controls i.e. hoeing (behold the wonders of the stirrup hoe!), mulching, and hand weeding are recommended. If using grass clippings or leaves from home, they should not be treated or sprayed and should not be stored at the garden in bags. Each gardener is responsible for keeping weeds down and spreading woodchips on the common pathways along their plots.
- **Keep your plot clean throughout the growing season.** You must remove rotten vegetables from your plot in a timely manner as they can provide a breeding ground for insects and diseases. Place organic matter in the “Add To” compost bin. Extra vegetables can be donated through Plant-A-Row (PAR) and Food Gatherers. Remove all empty plant trays from your plot.
- **If you are going on vacation** let us know so that we do not think your plot is abandoned. Inform us if you have arranged for someone to tend your plot. Let us know if you would like someone to pick ripe vegetables to donate to Plant a Row (PAR) or other food programs.
- **Prepare your plot for winter by October 31.** Remove all your spent vegetable plants from that season. Compost all debris, including weeds and spent fruit and vegetable plants. Put all corn & sunflower stalks in the burn pile not in the bins. Fall is a good time to add a layer of compost to your plot and/or plant cover crops.
- **Deadline for plot renewal is February 15.** If you are a returning gardener, please fill out a new registration form for that year which can be found on the website and send it in to the SMLC office.
- **Volunteer time for general maintenance.** Help out to keep the garden site looking good and successful. Emails will be sent out periodically for tasks that need to be done. (example: Turning the compost pile, spreading woodchips, etc.)
- **Collect seeds for sharing and planting next year and share ideas and knowledge with fellow gardeners.**
- **Attend SMLC and Garden Community events.** All gardeners are encouraged to attend garden potlucks, workdays and other special garden projects. All are also welcome and encouraged to attend other SMLC events such as nature tours, preserve cleanups and full-moon campfires.

**In the spirit of the community garden, all gardeners are expected to work together to support these rules. In the event that it is observed that the rules are not being followed, the offender will be contacted by a member of the Garden Committee to correct the situation. Continued disregard of the rules will result in forfeiture of your plot. The Garden Committee will provide oversight and enforcement. Any gardener observing rule violations should contact a member of the Garden Committee. Have fun gardening!**