



## Community Garden Guidelines for Gardeners

It's preparation and planting time for gardeners. Community gardening for growing food is an allowed outdoor activity under the Safer at Home Order, and gardens can remain open. By following these guidelines gardeners can help to minimize the spread of COVID-19.

- Do NOT visit the garden if you are feeling sick, showing signs of illness, or have had contact with anyone who is sick or has shown signs of illness.
- Be patient and flexible with your community and garden organizers as they navigate changing conditions and guidance from other partners and agencies.
- Wash or sanitize hands before and after visiting the garden and regularly while at the garden, especially before or after touching any common surfaces or using any tools that may have been touched or used by someone else.
  - ✓ Bring your own sanitizer or disinfecting wipes if you would prefer; even better, bring some to share or donate for the garden community to use if you can spare.
  - ✓ If using gloves, machine wash gloves after each use if you can; consider packs of low cost cotton gloves that can be rotated.
- Minimize contact with surfaces (for example, doorknobs, gates, latches, railings).
- Cough or sneeze into your arm—do not cover mouth or face with your hands.
- Avoid touching your face while gardening.
- Rinse produce and wash hands well after returning home from the garden.
- Follow all new and existing garden policies, if you are unclear what your garden's policies are, contact your garden organizers for more information.
- Maintain physical distancing of 6 feet or more between yourself and others who may be present.
- Limit interactions and time spent at the garden.
- Limit the number of people from your household or family that go to the garden with you to the minimum possible.
- If possible, bring and use only your own tools. If using common or shared tools, wash the tools and your hands well with soap and water before and after use.
- Plan ahead and be prepared for limited access to the garden or inability to visit the garden if you or someone you live with gets sick.
  - ✓ Mulch now to prevent weeds and reduce soil moisture loss.
  - ✓ Use row covers for insect control when feasible.
  - ✓ Stay ahead of seasonal tasks.
- Physical distancing does not mean social isolation; gardeners are encouraged to stay in touch (for example, email, Zoom, Facebook).





# Jefferson County Health Department

1541 Annex Road ♦ Jefferson, WI 53549  
920-674-7275 (Phone) ♦ 920-674-7477 (FAX)  
[www.jeffersoncountywi.gov](http://www.jeffersoncountywi.gov)



## A Message from Gail Scott, Director/Health Officer Safe Community Garden Guidelines April 29, 2020

The days are getting warmer and with that comes planting time for gardeners. Community gardening for food production is an allowed outdoor activity under the Safer at Home Order, and gardens can remain open. The following are best practices and considerations for garden coordinators and gardeners to support the safe operation of a critical community food source while minimizing the spread of COVID-19. Each garden should proactively take action to provide a safe environment, while considering the unique needs of the community. Not all recommendations will be suitable for all gardens.

### For Garden Organizers/Coordinators

#### Safety measures:

- Cancel all events and group work days and make other arrangements for garden tasks, such as tilling by machine or hand, planting, fertilizing and soil amending, planting, watering, pest management, maintenance, and harvesting.
- Create a garden schedule based on plot location or number.
- If anticipating large numbers of gardeners (for examples, weekends), create a schedule to stagger times for arrival and availability to reduce crowds and allow for safe spacing. One option is to divide the plots into two groups based on a checkerboard design, having separate shifts (for example, AM/PM, Sat/Sun) for each group to increase spacing.
- Consider creating designated work hours only for vulnerable populations and those at higher risk.
- Consider limiting access to or not supplying common or shared tools.
  - ✓ Do not allow for the sharing of gardening gloves.
  - ✓ If limiting or not supplying, consider providing information on where to get low- or no-cost supplies.
  - ✓ If limiting or not supplying, consider working with community partners to obtain donated supplies that can be given to an individual for personal use.
  - ✓ If limiting access, provide information on proper cleaning and disinfection of tools and instructions on where to dispose of cleaning material safely off-site.
  - ✓ Limit access to tools with wooden handles as much as possible; if accepting tool donations, specify that you are seeking tools with hard, nonporous material for the handles, such as aluminum or plastic, as they are easier to clean and disinfect. If sharing tools or a wheelbarrow with wooden handles, clean the handles with a detergent or soap and water, and wipe the outer surface with a disinfectant.
- Consider that items that cannot easily be cleaned (for example, garden hoses) could be a site for the transfer of the virus.
  - ✓ Require gardeners to wash hands before and after handling the hose.
  - ✓ If possible, hoses could be locked up permanently and alternative sources for watering could be used, such as providing individual watering cans or gallon jugs.
- Commonly touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected regularly (for example, gates, railings, water spigots, tables, doorknobs).
- Consider leaving garden gates open during hours of operation to avoid frequent contact with gate and handles.
- Remove or cordon off public benches, picnic tables, or any other shared spaces that may promote close contact.

### **Communication:**

- Clearly communicate through social media, newsletters, and signage the safety steps the garden is taking and what it means for gardeners
- Clearly and quickly inform your gardeners and wider community of any policy changes.
- Post signage at garden to encourage washing of hands and tools; gloves do NOT replace proper hand hygiene and can transmit disease from one surface to another, including to yourself and others.
- Post signage reminding individuals to practice physical distancing of 6 feet or more while working.
- Post signage and communicate through other networks that individuals should NOT go to community gardens if they feel sick or have come into contact with someone who feels or has felt sick.
- Post signage and communicate through social media and other networks that even individuals who do not feel sick (and have not had contact with someone who has) should assume they are sick and asymptomatic, and they should practice physical distancing, good hygiene, and other preventive measures when at the community garden.
- Post signage and communicate through other networks that when possible, the minimum number of people from a given household or family should come to the community garden; this decreases the number of individuals interacting at the garden and touching common surfaces or objects, which decreases the risk of spread for everyone.
- Post all signage in multiple languages (for example, English, Spanish, Hmong, Somalian, Lao).
- CDC advises the use of simple cloth face coverings as an additional, voluntary public health measure; instructions on making a [cloth face covering](#) are available from the CDC. You can also see our flyers for making cloth face masks: [How to make a cloth face covering without sewing](#) and [How to make a cloth face covering using a bandana](#).

### **Supplies:**

- Hand and tool washing soap and facilities at each garden.
  - ✓ See: [How to build a hand-washing station for \\$20](#)
  - ✓ Hand sanitizer if a washing station is not possible
- Cleaning materials to sanitize commonly touched surfaces such as spray bottles with a bleach mixture of 5 tablespoons bleach per gallon of water or 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water.
- Secure place to lock up common tools so they can't be a source of transmission.
- Nonporous plastic tables that can easily be cleaned and disinfected.
- Automatic irrigation systems when possible.

### **To consider:**

- Be prepared and understand that community gardens will be different this year due to the circumstances—be as flexible and understanding as possible.
- There may be fewer plots than normal as people avoid the garden due to sickness or fear of becoming sick—consider proactively working with members and other local partners to engage in fundraising or donations if you are concerned about revenues.
- There may be more gardeners or more new gardeners than normal, as high unemployment and food insecurity may make gardening an attractive option.
- Many municipal services that community gardens rely on may be operating different than normally—be patient and work with partners to address any disruptions this may cause your garden.
- Consider how you may be able to use harvest from your gardens to improve access for vulnerable populations in your community to fresh and healthy produce.