



Updated January 2021

## **WELCOME TO THE GROW FOOD NORTHAMPTON ORGANIC COMMUNITY GARDEN!**

Grow Food Northampton (GFN) is committed to creating a just and resilient local food system. Joining our Garden Community is a tangible opportunity to participate in this mission through the stewardship of land, a commitment to building a just and equitable garden community, and by growing healthy food. The Community Garden has over 325 plots available for lease.

The Grow Food Northampton Community Farm is on land that has been under cultivation for thousands of years. Located on the fertile floodplains of the Mill River, the indigenous Nipmuc people farmed this swoop of the Mill River for centuries before Europeans colonized it. We honor them. We honor the abolitionist members of the Northampton Association for Industry and Education, including Sojourner Truth, who farmed this land in the nineteenth century, demonstrating that textiles and sugar could be produced without the labor of enslaved people. We honor the local families whose generations cared for this farm land as Northampton grew up around it. Finally, we honor the grassroots organizers who raised awareness and funds to purchase the land in 2009, and formed Grow Food Northampton.

Now it's your turn to help steward this rare and fertile resource in a way that respects the past and guides us to a future that advances food equity, racial justice, and ethical care of the land and climate. Our community garden is a place to grow food, flowers, friendships, as well as skills and knowledge as gardeners and as stewards of our land and community.

Welcome to the Garden!

Pat James, Community Garden Manager  
413-320-4799 ext. 103  
[pat@growfoodnorthampton.com](mailto:pat@growfoodnorthampton.com)

**TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE GROW FOOD NORTHAMPTON ORGANIC COMMUNITY GARDEN GO TO THE GROW FOOD NORTHAMPTON WEBSITE AND COMPLETE AN APPLICATION. YOU WILL BE PLACED ON THE WAITLIST, AND ASSIGNED THE FIRST AVAILABLE PLOT.**

### **GARDENER ELIGIBILITY, PLOT TYPES AND PLOT FEES**

**There are two categories of Gardeners – Primary and Additional.** Primary and Additional Gardeners may swap roles by notifying the garden manager.

#### **Primary Gardeners**

- Are the main point of contact for all matters such as fees, plot checks and completing the community service commitments.
- Accept all responsibility for their plot(s).
- Must be age 18 or older.
- Are sent notifications of fees, plot checks, community service requirements, and other issues concerning their plot(s).
- Must register anyone serving as an Additional Gardener.
- There is one Primary Gardener per plot.
- If there is more than one gardener in the household, registrants choose who is the Primary and who are Additional Gardeners.

#### **Additional Gardeners**

- Support primary gardeners to tend plots, pass plot checks and meet Community Service requirements.
- Do not have financial responsibility for the plot(s).
- Agree to follow all rules and guidelines described in this Guide.
- May be children, other family members, other household members, or friends.
- There can be many Additional Gardeners per plot.

#### **Getting your garden plot**

- Individuals, couples, families or household may register for one plot during their first season.
- Plot-holders may request a second plot after completion of one successful season in the garden in which they pass all plot checks and complete all community service commitments.
- Other adults residing in a household (including adult children) may be treated separately for eligibility purposes and may register for their own plots at the discretion of the Garden Manager.
- Primary Gardeners may transfer their plots, with the permission of the Garden Manager, to an Additional Gardener for that plot if that gardener has completed at least one full season in the Garden.
- Gardeners may not transfer plots to anyone else. If a gardener intends to give up a plot, management of that plot reverts to the Garden Manager who may then assign a new plot holder.
- Applicants may specify if they want a Full Plot or a Half Plot.
  - Full plots are twenty by twenty feet.

- o Half plots are ten by twenty feet.

## **FEES**

- The general plot fee is \$36 per plot per year.
- The fee for senior citizens (age 65 or more in the current year) is \$27.
- The fee for low income gardeners is \$9.
- Seniors and low income gardeners receive 5 free buckets of compost each season.
- Plot fees are must be paid by July 15 or plot may be assigned to a new gardener.
- Plots leased after July 15 are half price.
- Plots leased after October 15 are invoiced during the following season.
- Non-residents of Northampton, Florence or Leeds pay a \$10 surcharge per registration (not per plot).

## **GARDEN OVERVIEW**

### **GARDEN FEATURES**

- Garden Shed houses tools and equipment for use by all gardeners.
- Children's Play Area near the main entrance is being re-designed.
- Composting Outhouse is for use only by gardeners and their visitors, and farmers. *Please review details about using the outhouse below.*
- Edible Hedgerow is on the south edge of the Garden along Meadow Street.
- Gooseberry Patch is near the Giving Garden.
- Bramble Patch is along the north edge of the Garden.
- A Nut Grove is planted along Meadow Street.
- Medicine Garden is near the entrance.
- Pollinator Garden is in the NE section of the garden.
- The Giving Garden produces hundreds of pounds of food that is delivered to local soup kitchens and food pantries.

### **COMMUNITY GARDEN MEMBER BENEFITS INCLUDE:**

- A 20 x 20 foot full plot or a 10 x 20 foot half-plot.
- Access to Northampton municipal water from May through October.
- Free wood chips for mulching.
- High quality compost for sale.
- Access to the Garden Shed full of communal tools and equipment.
- Support from the Garden Manager and Grow Food Northampton staff, and a community of knowledgeable gardeners.
- Community service opportunities
- Educational workshops and community events.
- Opportunities to join in group purchases of other garden resources that may include plant starts, hay or straw, and organic pest controls.
- Membership in a great gardening community.

### **GARDEN COMMUNICATIONS**

- Gardeners agree to keep up to date with garden communications that update rules and

policies, highlight concerns, and announce plot checks, community service opportunities, events and workshops.

- News from the Garden Shed is the official newsletter for the Grow Food Northampton Organic Community Garden. Published monthly during the growing season, it comes by email unless you request a paper copy. If you are not receiving the newsletter or need a paper copy, please inform the Garden Manager.
- The [Gardeners Google Group](#) enables gardeners to communicate with each other to get advice on garden questions, share seeds and plants, share useable garden items, enlist someone to water or harvest your plot while you are out of town, and more. It may be used only for issues specific to the community garden. All gardeners are automatically added to the list, and may opt out anytime.
- Grow Food Northampton Monthly Newsletter. Gardeners are automatically subscribed to the GFN Monthly Newsletter, which provides timely updates about our work in the community.
- Garden Facebook Group. Share your stories and images of community gardening. (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/GrowFoodNorthamptonOrganicCommunityGarden>.)
- Visit the [Grow Food Northampton website](#) to learn more about the organization, our commitment to racial justice, equitable food access, and land stewardship. Check out the archive of Gardener Resources on pest management, water conservation, GMO's in the garden, soil testing, and more.

## **GARDENER REQUIREMENTS**

### **NEW GARDENERS MUST**

- Read the Garden Guide.
- Complete New Gardener Orientation before beginning to garden. New gardeners will receive an orientation schedule and may sign up for a time that is most convenient to them. All new Primary gardeners must attend, and additional gardeners are strongly encouraged to attend. Orientation includes:
  - Brief history of the land and Grow Food Northampton.
  - Review of rules and guidelines.
  - A garden tour.
  - Introduction to your to your plot.
  - Combinations to the shed and outhouse locks.

### **ALL GARDENERS MUST**

- Agree to follow all rules and agree to keep up-to-date with rule changes.
- Pay all fees in a timely manner.
- Complete and report three hours of community service per plot before the end of the calendar year.
- Pass all plot checks.

## **THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT GARDEN RULES**

## **RULE 1. Garden organically.**

- Use no chemical pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, or fertilizers. Products must show appropriate organic certifications, labeled “Organic” or bear the OMRI - Organic Material Review Institute seal. If you are unsure, please contact the garden manager.
- You may purchase compost from the Garden, or use organic compost sourced elsewhere.
- Avoid genetically modified seeds and seedlings (available in many big box stores).
- Remove diseased plants and trash from your plot in a timely manner, and take them out of the community garden. DO NOT put diseased plants or trash in the weed piles.
- Keep all weeds under control, and remove weeds before they go to seed.

## **RULE 2. Pass plot checks.**

- Plot checks are conducted every 6-8 weeks. Their purpose is to identify abandoned and untended plots and to correct problems and rule violations. If an unexpected disability, illness, injury or family crisis makes passing plot checks challenging, contact the Garden Manager as soon as possible to enlist a Garden Buddy to help.
- ***If a plot fails*** the primary gardener is notified within one week of the plot check.
- Gardeners must respond within one week of being notified with a plan to rectify the situation. Failure to respond can lead to forfeiture of the plot and all plants and items in that plot.
- Failure to fix the problem in a timely manner can result in forfeiture of the plot and all plants and items in that plot.
- Gardeners who fail two plot checks in one season, or fail a total of three plot checks over two seasons, may forfeit their plot(s) and their right to garden with us for at least a year.
- Gardeners who have unexpected crises that impact their ability to pass plot checks should contact the Garden Manager as soon as possible so arrangements can be made to support gardeners and enable them to keep their plots.

## **Plot Check Schedule**

**Early Season Check is generally the first or second week of June. Dates depend on when the weather allows the garden season to begin.**

- Each plot should show clear evidence of being cleaned up, planted, and tended.
- Plots should be at least 50% cultivated – planted with seedlings, seeds, or ready for planting.
- Plot numbers must be clearly visible.
- There are no banned plants, practices, structures or materials.
- Weed cover is less than 50% of the plot.
- Paths abutting the plot are mowed.
- Fences and hardscaping are at least 6 inches inside plot boundaries.

**Midsummer check is generally the last week of July or first week of August.**

- Plots should look recently and routinely tended.
- Plot numbers must be clearly visible.
- Plots are at least 75% cultivated with few or no weeds.
- There are no banned plants, practices, structures or materials.

- Paths abutting your plot are mowed.
- Fences and hardscaping are at least 6 inches inside plot boundaries.

**Late summer check is generally toward the end of September.**

- Plots should look recently and routinely tended.
- Plot numbers must be clearly visible.
- Plots are at least 75% under cultivation with few or no weeds going to seed.
- There are no banned plants, practices, structures or materials.
- Paths abutting your plot are mowed.
- Fences and hardscaping are at least 6 inches inside plot boundaries.

**End of the season.**

- Leave spent plants until spring to provide food and habitat for wildlife, and to prevent the loss of topsoil.
- Remove weeds.
- Do not leave bare soil. If you remove spent plants, please cover the soil with cardboard, straw, woodchips to keep topsoil from blowing away.
- All garden structures, fences, stakes, tomato cages, etc. must be secured to withstand strong winter winds.

**RULE 3. Complete Community Service.**

Gardeners play a key role in caring for the garden and its resources, infrastructure, tools, and communal areas. Community service enables us to keep our costs low, and fosters a sense of care for the garden community.

- The Primary Gardener is responsible for making sure that three hours of community service are completed per plot and reported to the Garden Manager by December 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Community Service may be done by either Primary or Additional Gardeners, by family members including supervised children, and by guests.
- Service is recorded by plot number and attributed to the Primary Gardener.
- Report hours by completing a Community Service Report Card in the Garden Shed and putting it in the mailbox, or by emailing the Garden Manager.
- Most service opportunities occur during the gardening season. Gardeners should not count on finding service opportunities after September.
- If an unexpected disability, illness, injury or family crisis makes completing the hours challenging, contact the Garden Manager as soon as possible.

**FAILURE TO COMPLETE COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Gardeners who do not complete 3 community service hours per plot, but who have passed all plot checks and are otherwise in good standing, may pay a fee in lieu of completing hours in order to maintain eligibility as a Returning Gardener.

- The fee is \$24 per hour of missed service, billed in minimum increments of ¼ hour. Senior and low-income gardeners will have this charge calculated accordingly.
- Community service fees are attached to the registration fee for the following season.
- Gardeners who neither complete and report their community service hours nor pay the fee forfeit their plots.

## **Community Service Options**

- Mow paths
- Weed and mow communal areas
- Tend community plantings including:
- Edible Hedgerow
- Bramble Patch
- Medicine Garden
- Play Area
- Compost and wood chip piles
- Work in the Giving Garden
- Join the Composting Outhouse Team
- Join monthly work parties
- Become a Garden Buddy to support gardeners with unexpected difficulties
- Clean and organize tools in the shed
- Help with Grow Food Northampton events and programs
- Lead a program in the Garden
- Clean and repair garden tools and equipment
- Skill-share - help maintain and repair garden infrastructure requiring carpentry, plumbing, GIS mapping, and more.

## **A FEW MORE DOS AND DON'TS...**

### **YOU MUST**

- Return all tools belonging to the Community Garden before you leave the garden.
- Mow the full width of paths abutting your plot. This is required plot maintenance and does not count as community service.
- Lock the shed every time you leave it. Never leave the shed unlocked while gardening, mowing, or involved in other garden activities away from the shed. Lock the shed if you notice that it is unlocked and not in use, even if you did not unlock it.
- Clean and return all tools to their proper place in the shed.
- Lock wheelbarrows and carts to the shed and lock them up each time you return them.

### **YOU MAY:**

- Plant annual and perennial fruits and vegetables, and most annual and perennial flowers. Check the list below for banned plants.
- Plant certain woody plants including blueberries, currants, gooseberries, and grapes. Grapes must be supported on trellises less than 6 feet high, and in a manner that doesn't significantly shade neighboring plots.
- Create small compost piles or in-ground compost. Do not use plastic composters.
- Use cold-frames if they have plastic or Plexiglas (not glass) covers.
- Use row covers, and plastic for solarizing or occularlizing your plot. You must make sure such items are securely fastened against intense winds.
- Put fencing around your plot. Fencing must be six inches inside plot boundaries.
- Use hardscaping (rocks, bricks) for paths and boundaries. Hardscaping must be at least six

- inches within plot boundaries and present no danger to lawn mowers.
- Store personal tools, hoses and equipment at your own risk in your own plot.

### **YOU MAY NOT**

- Store personal items in the Garden Shed.
- Use the following items in your plot:
  - Pressure treated wood and railroad ties.
  - Flame weeders.
  - Concrete to embed garden structures or fences.
  - Plastic compost bins.
  - Structures that include glass.
  - Soaker hoses.
- Plant genetically modified (GMO) plants and seeds, or plants and seeds treated with chemicals pesticides and fungicides.
- Plant bramble fruits such as blackberries and raspberries, woody plants except those listed above, or trees.
- Plant marijuana or hemp, per Massachusetts law.
- Leave dirt, weeds, wood chips, soil, rocks, plants, fencing, tools, stakes outside plot boundaries or in other common areas, especially paths.
- Plant anything in the common areas. If you wish to donate plants, shrubs, brambles or trees, contact the Garden Manager.
- Use tobacco, vape or marijuana on GFN land.
- Play loud music or other amplified sound. This includes car radios.
- Enter another garden plot without the expressed invitation from the plot holder.
- Plant banned plants (see list below).

### **BANNED PLANTS**

- Mint
- Bugleweed
- Goutweed and related plants
- Bronze fennel
- Morning glory
- Japanese honeysuckle
- Hollyhocks
- Most non-native ornamental grasses.
- Toxic plants such as castor bean, Jimsonweed, foxglove
- Current exceptions: plants including mallow, lamb's ear, yarrow, bee balm, and comfrey are currently allowed as long as they are carefully managed by the gardener.

### **COMPOSTING OUTHOUSE**

THE COMPOSTING OUTHOUSE WILL REMAIN CLOSED FOR THE DURATION OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

- Review and follow all instructions in the outhouse.
- Solid and liquid wastes are separated. Don't confuse the two.
  - On the commode, liquid waste goes in the smaller front opening.

- o Solid waste goes into the larger rear opening.
  - o There is a urinal for those who prefer to stand.
- Toilet paper always goes into the toilet with solid waste – the large hole in back of the commode.
- Add wood shavings after each deposit of solid material into the large hole in back of the commode.
- Do not put wood shavings or any other solid items into the urine separator – the smaller hole in front of the commode.
- Please accompany young children to ensure proper use.
- Never put animal waste in the composting outhouse. It is for human use only.
- Clean up after each use.
  - o Use provided vinegar spray and paper towel to clean the toilet seat. Deposit paper towel in the waste basket, not in the commode.
  - o Use hand sanitizer to clean your hands or use the hand wash station outside the outhouse
- The Composting Outhouse is for the exclusive use of farmers, community gardeners and their guests. Do not share the combination to the outhouse.
- Report any issues to the Garden Manager.

## **OTHER GARDEN CONCERNS**

Most of us would like to think that since this is a Community Garden, everyone always acts in the best interests of the community. While this is true of the Grow Food Northampton Community Garden most of the time, problems do crop up. Suggestions, concerns or complaints about the garden, how it is managed, or concerns about other gardeners or plots, should be directed to the Garden Manager ([pat@growfoodnorthampton.com](mailto:pat@growfoodnorthampton.com) or 413-320-4799).

## **PROBLEMS WITH OTHER GARDENERS**

Grow Food Northampton Organic Community Gardeners generally demonstrate a high level of respect for the garden and other gardeners, but sometimes people make mistakes. You are welcome to kindly discuss your concerns with the people involved, or to contact the Garden Manager.

## **DISPUTES WITH GARDENERS IN NEIGHBORING PLOTS**

Common issues include plants or structures that cast shade on neighboring plots, plants that overgrow other plots, disputed plot boundaries, and untended plots with weeds that are spreading or going to seed. Gardeners may not enter the plots of other gardeners, take seeds, cuttings, or produce without expressed permission from If a neighboring gardener is doing something that negatively impacts you, try to have a conversation with your neighbor about your concern, or contact the Garden Manager.

## **PROBLEMS WITH NON-GARDENERS**

The Grow Food Northampton Community Garden is for the sole and exclusive use of Grow Food Northampton and the gardeners who lease plots. The garden is a community asset that provides a wonderful place to walk, look at interesting garden plants and designs, or take a break at a picnic table. All visitors are expected to respect posted rules. If you notice problem behavior by visitors

that threatens the welfare of the garden or any of its members, you may kindly express your concern only if you feel safe to do so. If you witness incidents that are violent or may lead to violence, get to safety, call 911, and then contact the Garden Manager.

### **ILLNESS AND INJURY**

On rare occasions, gardeners fall ill or become injured while at the Garden. There is a first aid kit in the Garden Shed for minor injuries. If the illness or injury is more serious, please call 911, get support, and let the Garden Manager know of the incident.

*Gardeners who become ill or injured during the gardening season, or who face personal emergencies that prevent them from gardening, may reach out to other gardeners or to the Garden Manager to request assistance to keep their plots tended and healthy.*

### **CHILDREN**

- Children are welcome in the garden. Children under 12 must be supervised at all times.
- Children are welcome and encouraged to contribute to community service and to join monthly work parties. Children under 12 must be supervised by a parent or guardian at all times.

### **GUESTS**

- It is gardeners' responsibility to ensure that their guests follow all garden rules.
- No one may enter plots of other gardeners, take cuttings, seeds, or harvest produce of other gardeners without permission of those gardeners.

### **THEFT AND VANDALISM**

On rare occasion plants, produce or tools have been taken from gardeners' plots. Occasionally plots have been vandalized. Sometimes the culprits are two-legged critters, and sometimes it's four-legged critters, and often it's difficult to know for sure. Usually there isn't much we can do to recover lost or damaged items, but it is helpful to report issues to the Garden Manager to establish if there is a pattern.

### **NOISE**

- Amplified sound is not permitted except during events organized by GFN.
- Use headphones for personal listening.
- Turn off cars and car radios.
- Keep cell phones and conversations to a reasonable volume.
- Per Northampton's noise ordinance, loud machinery (like mowers) may not be used between 10PM and 7AM.

**DRONES AND OTHER REMOTE CONTROLLED ITEMS** are not allowed in the Community Garden. Occasionally GFN staff will engage someone to fly over the Garden to take photographs to document changes. These generally occur very early in the morning to avoid disturbing gardeners.

### **WASTE, LITTER AND EXTRA STUFF**

- Take all diseased plants, kitchen scraps, trash, dog poop or other waste material out of the

Garden and dispose of them appropriately.

- Do not put anything but weeds and non-diseased plants in the weed piles.
- Do not leave personal items or any items that are not the property of Grow Food Northampton in the shed or in other common areas.
- Do not or leave unwanted items in common areas.
- If you have useful items to donate to other gardeners, keep them in your plot and offer them via the Google Group. Do not leave them in common areas.

### **CARS IN THE GARDEN**

- The speed limit is 5 MPH at all times. Driving faster endangers people and generates dust that is harmful to plants and people.
- The traffic direction on the main garden loop is one way (clockwise) at all times.
- Park along the road parallel to Meadow Street, or at the far end of the road in the designated area.
- Car radios must be turned off.
- Cars must be turned off while parked.
- 10-minute drop-off or pick-up on the road near your plot is permitted, but cars must then be moved to a parking area.
- NEVER drive on the grassy areas between plots. Drive only on gravel roads.
- Overnight parking is never permitted.
- Do not leave your car parked at the Garden if you leave the Garden.
- For accommodation to park closer to your plot for longer time periods because of illness, disability, or small children, contact the Garden Manager.

### **BICYCLES IN THE GARDEN**

- Use the bike rack near the Play Area; or
- Keep your bike in or next to your plot, or in a community area near your plot.
- DO NOT lean or lock bikes on the Shed, Outhouse, Play Area structures, Garden signs or spigots.

### **DOGS AND OTHER PETS**

- Dogs and other pets must be on leash at all times (per Northampton ordinance).
- People with unleashed dogs or other pets will be asked to leave the garden.
- Dogs and other pets may not enter plots of other gardeners.
- All pet waste must be picked up and removed off site.
- Never put pet waste in compost piles or in the outhouse.
- Report unattended unleashed dogs to Northampton Animal Control.

### **WILDLIFE**

- Respect wildlife in and around the Garden. Do not harass or remove wildlife.
- Traps or poisons of any kind are not allowed.
- Use only organic and non-lethal methods to repel rodents and other pests.
- If ground-nesting birds nest in your plot, notify the Garden Manager. Federal law requires leaving the nests undisturbed until the birds have fledged. Gardeners with nests in their plots get community service hours in exchange for not gardening until the birds have

fledged.

- Report injured or diseased wildlife to the Garden Manager.
- Gardeners may put birdhouses in their plots and may tend them as they see fit.

# GROW FOOD NORTHAMPTON CONTACT INFORMATION

Administrative Offices:

221 Pine Street, Suite 349,

Florence, MA 01060

General email: [info@growfoodnorthampton.com](mailto:info@growfoodnorthampton.com)

Phone: (413) 320-4799

Website: [www.growfoodnorthampton.org](http://www.growfoodnorthampton.org)

Social Media: Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GrowFoodNorthampton>

Community Garden Facebook Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/GrowFoodNorthamptonOrganicCommunityGarden>

Gardener Google Group: [gardeners@growfoodnorthampton.org](mailto:gardeners@growfoodnorthampton.org)

The Grow Food Northampton Organic Community Garden is located at:

140 Meadow St, Florence, MA. (*This is not a mailing address.*)

Garden Manager: [pat@growfoodnorthampton.com](mailto:pat@growfoodnorthampton.com)

## GROW FOOD NORTHAMPTON STAFF

Alisa Klein, Executive Director

413-320-4799 Ext. 101

[Alisa@growfoodnorthampton.org](mailto:Alisa@growfoodnorthampton.org)

Ellena Baum, Land and Community Education Coordinator

413-32-4799

[Ellena@growfoodnorthampton.org](mailto:Ellena@growfoodnorthampton.org)

Francie Lin, Food Access Coordinator

413-320-4799

[Francie@growfoodnorthampton.org](mailto:Francie@growfoodnorthampton.org)

Jules White, Terracorps Youth Education and Community Engagement Coordinator

413-320-4799

[Jules@growfoodnorthampton.org](mailto:Jules@growfoodnorthampton.org)

Megan Saraceno, Office Manager and Community Engagement Coordinator

413-320-4799

[Megan@growfoodnorthampton.org](mailto:Megan@growfoodnorthampton.org)

Michael Skillicorn, Associate Director

413-3204799 Ext. 109

[Michael@growfoodnorthampton.org](mailto:Michael@growfoodnorthampton.org)

Niki Lankowski, Communications Manager

413-320-4799 Ext. 105

[Niki@growfoodnorthampton.org](mailto:Niki@growfoodnorthampton.org)

Pat James, Community Garden Manager

413-320-4799, Ext. 103

[Pat@growfoodnorthampton.org](mailto:Pat@growfoodnorthampton.org)

Rowyn Davis, Tuesday Market Assistant

[Rowyn@growfoodnorthampton.org](mailto:Rowyn@growfoodnorthampton.org)