

Community Gardens
Information
Handbook

3-1-1

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BRAMPTON
Flower City

What is a Community Garden?

A Community Garden is a unique opportunity available to City of Brampton residents whereby a group of community members will join together to manage and maintain an identified plot of land for the purpose of growing fresh produce and plants. These opportunities are typically made available for residents who do not have access to a suitable space for a garden.

Community Gardens provide opportunities for neighbourhood improvements, a sense of community, and a connection with the environment. Although the actual space is owned by the City of Brampton, in terms of ownership, access and management, the garden itself is overseen by a Community Garden Group.

City Community Gardens can be as diverse as its gardeners. Some may only grow flowers or produce or both, but they will all be nurtured communally and their bounty shared. Though similar in their function, each Community Garden is the responsibility of a Community Garden Group which will work together to:

- Establish the garden;
- Make operational decisions; and
- Maintain the overall upkeep.

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Why Have a Community Garden in Your Neighbourhood?

Community Gardens provide a wonderful opportunity for neighbours to meet one another, share information, and work together; becoming a supportive and cohesive community. This is a great way for newcomers to Brampton to become involved in their new community and to enjoy the outdoors.

Why are community gardens beneficial?

Community Gardens are beneficial because they:

- Promote healthy eating
- Promote positive social interactions
- Promote outdoor activity
- Promote intergenerational and cross-cultural connections
- Reduce crime and vandalism in our parks and communities



Is there a difference between a Community Garden and an Allotment Garden?

Yes. Allotment Gardens are usually larger than a Community Garden, there is a fee associated to rent the specific plot, and these plots are not typically located within a neighbourhood. A Community Garden is located within (or as close to) a neighbourhood to encourage ease of access for the gardeners, there is no associated fees, and all decisions concerning the running of the garden are made by the Community Garden Group themselves without influence.

What can you grow in a Community Garden?

Community Gardens grow many things, not just vegetables. You can grow fruit, herbs or annual flowers.



How much time do I need to spend in the garden every week?

Most Community Gardens require every gardener to spend enough time in his or her garden so that each plot is kept properly maintained and as weed-free as possible. Most will hold a couple of Community Garden Group workdays every year, usually for spring and fall cleanup. Often there will also be an improvement project that the Community Garden Group organizes, like building a seating area or a children's garden area. Every Community Garden will establish their own rules about required participation for these Community Garden Group workdays.

Do I need to be a part of a Community Garden Group to participate?

Yes. An individual can participate in the program however they cannot act on their own. They will be asked to join an existing Community Garden Group and work together with its members.



City of Brampton Support of Community Gardens

The City of Brampton recognizes the value of local citizens who want to participate in gardening opportunities in their neighbourhoods. They will assist in these efforts where activities are conducted with the consent of the Community Services Department.

Though this support is intended as a goodwill gesture, it is not a means of full compensation. Participants can expect the following types of assistance from the City of Brampton:

1. Resource information on community gardening;
2. Expertise on the garden location;
3. Provide a water source; and
4. Installation of:
 - Garden plots (soil, wood framing);
 - Woodchip pathway;
 - Fencing;
 - Signage; and
 - Storage shed.

Access to other utilities where permanent City services are not available and/or proximate to site, will be determined prior to establishing the garden.

How to Start a Community Garden

In order for a Community Garden request to be considered, the following details are suggested to be in place:

1. Form a Community Garden group of five (5) committed gardeners.
2. Nominate a Community Garden Coordinator to be the liaison between the City of Brampton and the gardeners.
3. Submit an Establishing a Community Garden Application to the City of Brampton stating the desire to manage and maintain a Community Garden in your neighbourhood.
 - Depending on the site size, a Community Garden could accommodate up to twenty-five (25) gardeners
 - All group members must be identified
4. Explain how the Community Garden Group is organized and what the associated roles are (eg. Secretary – meeting organizer; Treasurer – manages group finances; etc).
5. Identify how the Community Garden Group will make decisions regarding the garden.
6. Outline the potential funding strategy for the garden including:
 - Budget (estimate)
 - Inventory of the items required to run the garden



Application Process

The Establishing a Community Garden Application can be found on the City of Brampton website (www.brampton.ca). Applications will adhere to the following:

1. Be received yearly, between June 1 and October 1.
2. Filled out completely in order to be considered.
3. Identify at least five (5) committed gardeners.
 - Including the names of all gardeners and their role within the Community Garden Group

There is no fee to participate in a Community Garden. However, applicants should consider that there are costs involved in running a Community Garden and the Community Garden Group will be held solely responsible.

In order to allow sufficient preparation time, the process to establish a Community Garden may take up to six (6) months.

The Establishing a Community Garden Application will be submitted to:

Attn: Parks Community Development Coordinator
City of Brampton, Community Services
Parks Maintenance and Operations
2 Wellington Street West
Brampton, Ontario
L6Y 4R2

Upon receipt of the Establishing a Community Garden Application, the Parks Community Development Coordinator will meet with the Community Garden Coordinator and/or the Community Garden Group to:

1. Assess the level of interest of the City of Brampton in a Community Garden in the proposed area.
2. Discuss the proposed site.
3. Outline the process and steps for approval and deadlines.

Criteria for Site Selection

City of Brampton Parks staff will identify a suitable site based on the following criteria:

1. Minimum of six (6) hours of daily sunlight.
2. Consider sun and shade patterns throughout the day.
3. Reasonably flat surface.
4. Suitable water source and storage.
5. Existing trees, shrubs and other plant material.
6. Does not affect the community's enjoyment of other Parks functions.
7. Site is chosen keeping in mind sensitivity to the surrounding neighbourhood.
8. Easy access for community users.



Application Review Process

The review process for the proposed Community Garden includes:

1. Application review by City of Brampton, Parks Maintenance and Operations Division.
2. Application review by Ward Councillors.
3. Community Information Session held at the closest recreation centre to the proposed site for the surrounding neighbourhood.
4. Formal decision communicated by November 1.

If the application is approved, work would commence in the Fall (weather permitting). The Community Garden would be ready for use May 1 (weather permitting).

Once the Application is Approved

The Parks Community Development Coordinator will manage and co-ordinate ongoing contact with Community Garden Group members regarding the program. Additionally, they will:

1. Assist the Community Garden Group in organizing through recruitment or referral through the City of Brampton.
2. Arrange and facilitate Orientation Workshops prior to the opening of the Community Garden. Attendance for the Orientation Workshops will be mandatory for all Community Garden Group members.
 - Topics to be covered at Orientation Workshops will include (but not limited to):
 - i. Volunteerism;
 - ii. Rules and Regulations;
 - iii. Risk Management; and
 - iv. Weekly Inspections

Installation

The City of Brampton is responsible for the installation and regular inspections of the all Community Gardens.

The size of the Community Garden is dependent upon two (2) factors:

1. Location within the parkland; and
2. Site considerations.

City of Brampton Parks staff will compile a list of potential suitable sites within the Parks system based on the following criteria:

1. Drainage patterns;
2. Objectionable views, noises, smells that may need screening;
3. Desirable views that should not be blocked;
4. Wind patterns and direction;
5. Changes in elevation (slope); and
6. Circulation patterns (is the desired site a pedestrian short cut).



The following aspects of the Community Garden will be initially executed by City of Brampton Parks staff:

Community Garden Plot

The Community Garden plot (recommended size 2.44 metres x 3.05 metres (8 feet x 10 feet)) will be constructed by City of Brampton Parks staff.

This installation will include all wood framing (as well as any future maintenance) along with a onetime delivery and spread of soil.

1. The Community Garden Group will be responsible for any future soil requirements; and
2. The City of Brampton does not test soil.

If the Community Garden Group chooses to do so, it would be their responsibility and at their own cost

Fencing

The City of Brampton will be responsible for installing fencing (1.22 metres, 4 feet) chain link fencing). Any damage to the fencing must be immediately reported to the City of Brampton, Parks Maintenance and Operations Division for repair.

Signage

The City of Brampton will install a sign at the Community Garden to identify the space.

Water Source (water bib)

The City of Brampton will provide a water source for Community Garden use, as well as any future maintenance of the water source.

Wood Chips for Pathway

The City of Brampton will initially deliver and spread the wood chips along the pathways.

- Any additional wood chips can be delivered by the City of Brampton Parks staff to the site, but will be the responsibility of the Community Garden Group to spread along the pathways.

Shed/Storage for Tools

The City of Brampton will install and maintain a shed on site for the use of the Community Garden Group to store their tools.

- The storage of gas and/or gas powered tools is strictly prohibited.

Inspection

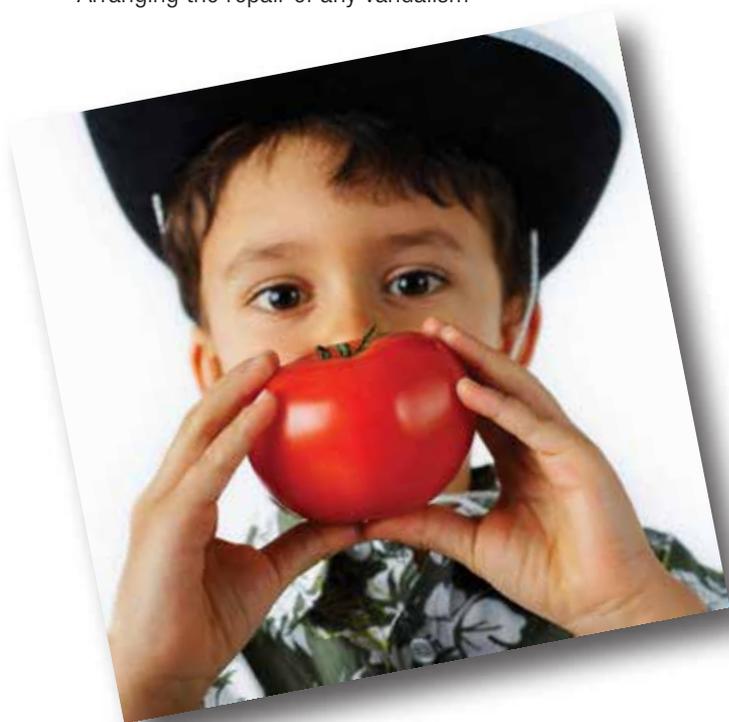
The City of Brampton will conduct regular inspections of all Community Garden areas. If any contravention of the Rules and Regulations are found, the Community Garden Coordinator will be immediately notified, and it may result in cancellation of garden privileges and or affected Community Garden plots being closed for the remaining season.



Responsibilities of Community Garden Group

Once established, the Community Garden Group will adhere to the following:

1. Identifying a Community Garden Coordinator who is responsible for:
 - Coordinating overall site upkeep:
 - i. Spring setup;
 - ii. Fall cleanup; and
 - iii. Compost maintenance
 - Orienting new gardeners on:
 - i. Operating procedures;
 - ii. Horticultural information;
 - iii. Trash removal;
 - iv. Mulch;
 - v. Composting activities; and
 - vi. Clean-up days
 - Answering questions and settling disputes amongst the Community Garden Group
 - Maintaining a current list of gardeners
 - Arranging the repair of any vandalism



- Ensuring that entire plot is weeded and properly maintained based on weekly inspections
 - Being the point of contact for the City of Brampton for site issues (eg. tools left on site, site upkeep, etc)
 - i. In the event of non-compliance, a written notice will be issued to the Community Garden Coordinator. If, at the end of a two (2) week period, the problem has not been solved, the plot may be reassigned and the Community Garden Group's gardening privileges revoked
 - Informing the City of Brampton if any of the above responsibilities cannot be fulfilled
2. All members of the Community Garden Group will:
- Attend the mandatory Orientation Workshop
 - Sign the Community Garden Group Conditions of Usage form to identify being a part of the Community Garden Group
 - Sign the Community Garden Group Plot Permit form to acknowledge understanding of their roles and responsibilities
3. Maintain the garden to the satisfaction of the Parks Community Development Coordinator based on the Community Garden Rules and Regulations.

All returning groups must express an interest in returning by February 1 of the new season. The City of Brampton has the right to refuse any group based on past conduct that did not meet City expectations based on the rules and regulations.

Goodwill Recommendation

As a goodwill gesture, it is strongly recommended that the Community Garden Group donates a percentage of produce to a local Brampton food bank.



Rules and Regulations

By acknowledging participation in a Community Garden Group, members will be bound by all applicable City of Brampton By-laws and the following rules and regulations.

- **Hours of Operation** – the Community Garden is officially open from May 1 to October 31 from dawn to dusk. Children under eighteen (18) years of age must be accompanied by an adult.
- **Plot Maintenance** – the plot must be maintained to the satisfaction of the Parks Community Development Coordinator.
- **Plants are Not for Sale** – produce or flowers grown in the Community Garden cannot be sold as per City of Brampton Park Lands By-law 161-83.
- **Plot Assignment** – the Parks Community Development Coordinator will determine the plot assignments in conjunction with the Community Garden Coordinator.
- **Holidays/Absenteeism** – if a gardener is going to be away for more than two (2) weeks, he/she must make arrangements to have an alternate gardener tend to the plot or notify the Community Garden Coordinator so that alternate arrangements can be made.
- **Reassignment of Plots** – if a plot is not used or if it is unattended for more than two (2) weeks it will be reassigned to another gardener by the Community Garden Coordinator.



- **Overall Maintenance** – the Community Garden Group must maintain the pathways adjacent to their plot(s), keeping them weed and garbage free. This includes normal watering, weeding and general care of the assigned plot. If you have a maintenance concern, please contact the Community Garden Coordinator. No tools or personal property shall be left unattended.
- **Fall Cleanup** – the Community Garden Group is required to clear their plots at the end of the season; no later than October 31.
- **Composting** – the Community Garden Group is encouraged to establish and maintain a composting area. Compost bins must be well maintained to prevent animal accessibility and infestation. Compost items must be in pieces no longer than 15 centimetres (6 inches) and placed in the correct bin. Only organic matter may be placed into the compost. All trellis and staking materials must be removed before placing an item in the compost.
- **Garbage** – the Community Garden Group must ensure the disposal of all litter.
- **Fencing** – the installation of any type of fencing, boards or other materials around your individual plot is strictly prohibited.
- **Insecticides and Herbicides** – the use of insecticides and herbicides is strictly prohibited. Only compost and composted manures may be used for soil conditioning and fertilization.
- **Water** – the water supply is limited; it is to be used sparingly. It is an expectation that the practice of Waterless Wednesdays is adhered to.
- **Music/Radio** – loud music is strictly prohibited. Gardeners are to use head phones and be conscious and courteous of other gardeners and park users.
- **Pets** – all pets must be kept on a leash. Pet owners are required to remove pet droppings. Pet droppings are not to be composted, as this is a health hazard for humans.
- **Prohibited Plants** – illegal plants, trees, woody plants or perennials are strictly prohibited. Vegetables, grains, berries, fruits, beans, herbs and flowers are allowed.
- **Vandalism** – any acts of vandalism are to be reported immediately to the Community Garden Coordinator. The City of Brampton is not responsible for any loss or theft of personal property
- **Smoking** – smoking is strictly prohibited in or around the Community Garden.

These rules may be amended from time to time by the City of Brampton, without notice.

City of Brampton will conduct weekly inspections of Community Garden areas. Plots found to be weed infested will be closed immediately. In the event of non-compliance with the above rules, the Parks Community Development Coordinator will be notified and will issue a verbal or written notice to the Community Garden Coordinator and a notice will be posted in the Community Garden. If at the end of a two (2) week period the problem has not been resolved, the plot will be reassigned or closed and gardening privileges will be revoked.





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