



## COMMUNITY GARDEN MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Community garden landowners require Denver Urban Gardens (DUG) to ensure that garden participants keep their garden sites clean, attractive and orderly at all times – especially during the winter. The garden must have a year-round unified and tidy appearance to landowners, city officials and the general non-gardening public. To this end, DUG established the following requirements of all participants. The benefits of a well-maintained garden are at minimum three-fold:

1. the use agreement for the garden remains in good standing with the landowner,
2. owners, neighbors and non-gardeners enjoy and recognize the community garden as a community asset, and
3. your community garden will harbor fewer pests and weeds and will be healthier from season to season.

DUG serves as the use agreement holder, insurer, authorized 501(c)3 corporation and primary representative for community garden participants with city officials. DUG secures funding for community garden improvements, training and site insurance. In turn, DUG is required to report to funding agencies and foundations as to the status and benefit of their contributions. DUG also must report on your behalf as to the status of your community garden to neighbors and city agencies, such as Property Inspection Services, Assets Management, Office of Economic Development, Parks and Recreation and Public School Districts.

It's important to recognize that all gardeners have a significant role and responsibility regarding the sustainability of the community garden. Participation in a community garden is a privilege, and all gardeners are expected to do their fair share of work beyond maintaining their individual plot. Your effort to properly clean and maintain your community garden allows DUG to dedicate our resources on extending this opportunity to others by building new community gardens. In addition, we are always working to install improvements at existing community garden sites. While it is the responsibility of the community gardeners to ensure compliance with the maintenance guidelines, DUG is committed to assisting gardeners with clean-up when a garden is out of compliance with these guidelines and is in jeopardy of losing its use agreement.

By following the “Community Garden Maintenance Guidelines”, you contribute to DUG’s ongoing efforts to ensure that community gardening continues citywide. Please remember that your community garden can be either a positive or negative example of a community garden project, affecting the ability for DUG to secure space in other neighborhoods for new community gardens.

### **Participant Requirements**

1. Garden plot: Each plot must be kept clear of weeds, spent plants, debris and trash. Each fall, turn compost and organic material into the soil and cover it with a layer of mulch to regulate soil temperature and retain moisture throughout the winter. This makes a garden plot look cared for to the passer-by. Any perennials in your plot must appear well kept. In addition, you are responsible to maintain the area immediately adjacent to your plot including paths, compost bins, trash collection areas, fences and the community garden’s other common spaces.

2. Vertical structures: Structures to encourage vertical growing, including arbors, trellis, tree branch frames, fence sections and cages are only allowed during the growing season if they are functional, orderly, safe and attractive. Vertical structures used for growing must appear in good condition and contribute to the community garden’s overall visual continuity. All growing structures must be disassembled and removed during the off-season. Any permanent structures in the community garden will be allowed to remain if they are in good condition and attractive from the street.

Denver Urban Gardens does not permit the construction or existence of permanent shelter structures within individual or shared community garden plots, including personal sheds, storage, or shade units. Individually

constructed shelter structures present safety concerns and are antithetical to Denver Urban Gardens' community based approach. If there is a need for additional community storage space, please contact DUG and we will assess the possibility of installing additional shared storage space in the garden.

Based on our use agreements with landowners, DUG is required to approve all new (non-seasonal) structures prior to construction.

3. "Off-season" storage: The following items are not authorized to be left standing during the off-season and must be disassembled and stored in the garden shed or removed from the site when not in use:

- chairs and individual benches
- shoes, clothes (shed only)
- sticks, steel "T" posts
- buckets, plastic containers
- wire cages, fencing
- plastic plant pots, tools
- wheel barrows, wagons
- pipe, hoses and nozzles
- piles of brick and stone
- water containers
- bags of compost or leaves
- non-permanent garden art

4. Compost bins: Individual compost bins are discouraged as they distract from the visual continuity of the community garden. We do, however, encourage using and maintaining community compost bins. All material used in compost bins must be chopped in one- to two-inch pieces before being added. Please do not add diseased plant material to the compost bins. Plastic bags of spent plants, grass clippings and leaves are not allowed to be stored in your community garden at any time. To "passers-by" they appear to be bags of trash. Unopened bags of topsoil, compost or manure are not to be stored in your community garden. Chop and spread these materials in your plot immediately, allowing for decomposition and integration with your existing soil. Consider trench or pit composting techniques.

If there is need for an additional community compost bin or compost training in your community garden, please contact DUG. We will assist with the purchase or construction of new or additional community compost bins, as desired and as funds are available.

5. Plot boundaries: Interior "boundary fences" around individual plots are discouraged; they are difficult to weed and can quickly make the overall garden unsightly. The preferred boundary is a weed-free edge between your plot and the adjacent path or neighbor. With steering committee approval, you may edge your plot with a low-profile (less than 12" high) edging material, which is in good condition and well kept. We discourage the use of "scrap" materials, such as broken bricks and concrete, small fragments of sandstone or pavers, scraps of wood, metal or plastic edger and white wire fencing. We also discourage the use of pressure-treated landscape timbers and wood; 2" x 6" or 2" x 8" cedar planks are an excellent non-toxic alternative for plot edging. Ideally, the garden steering committee, with input from all gardeners, selects a preferred material for all gardeners to use, thus contributing to the overall visual continuity of the community garden.

6. The community garden is a "community" responsibility. Everyone must take responsibility for maintaining the common areas of the community garden, such as:

- compost bins and tool shed
- trees, flower beds and lawn
- entries, pathways and courtyards
- trash containment areas
- street fronts and sidewalks