

Stoddart Avenue Community Garden

Rules of Conduct

In order to participate in the Stoddart Avenue Community Garden (the “Garden”), you must agree to comply with the following rules:

1. Be a good neighbor.
2. Do not create any extra expense or work for the Garden Manager.

Anyone who violates these rules will be expelled from the Garden and forfeit their plot. The Garden Manager is the ultimate interpreter and judge of all disputes and compliance with these rules. While she is generally reasonable, flexible and fair, she does not guarantee reason or fairness when the temperature is above 90 degrees or she is hungry or sleep deprived. Technical and occasional lapses may be overlooked in exchange for chocolate ice cream.

Because some people might find these simple rules a little vague, here are some guidelines and other food for thought based on imagined and actual experiences in other community gardens. Please take them in the jovial spirit with which they are intended.

1) Please stay on the Garden paths or your own garden plot and do not walk on someone else’s plot (or let your guests, children or your dogs wander onto someone else’s plot). None of our gardeners should have to worry about their garden plot soil being compacted or their tender bean or corn shoots being trampled by their inconsiderate neighbors or others. This also means that your garden should not grow into your neighbor’s plot. (If your plants grow into your neighbor’s plot, your neighbor is completely justified in pulling it or eating it at his or her discretion. Wars have started based on less than errant tomatoes and overgrown zucchinis).

2) Please keep the weeds in your plot and adjacent path under control. Rampant weeds are unsightly for the neighborhood and a nuisance to your fellow gardeners who don’t want your weeds encroaching into their plots or spreading their seeds. Luckily, weeds are only likely to be a significant problem during the rainy season.

3) Please do not use any herbicides, Preen or other weed killers in the Garden. Despite the greatest of care, even the slightest breeze could spread some of the weed killer to your neighbor’s plot and kill their prized tomatoes or eggplants. This means that all weeds will have to be pulled by hand or demolished by tools of plant destruction (like a hoe). Poison (for rodents) is also discouraged, but careful use of EPA-approved or organic insecticides is permitted (as long as you don’t kill too many bees or other beneficial insects like praying mantises). *Remember, bees are a gardener’s best friend.*

4) **Please do not litter.** Take your trash with you. Feel free to bring a trash bag with you to haul refuse away when you leave for the day. Tidy gardeners get brownie points and may receive unexpected goodies courtesy of the magic Garden Gnome.

5) **Please do not engage in any criminal or unlawful behavior or otherwise make a nuisance of yourself to other gardeners or the neighbors.** This includes your family and guests as well. Guns and lethal weapons are banned from the Garden. Profanity and anger are highly inappropriate in the absence of personal injury. Gardeners should remember that young children and my aging ears are highly sensitive to swear words and angry threats. Violators of this guideline risk, among other things, having their face and the embarrassing story posted all over the internet. If you have no shame, other methods of dissuasion shall be pursued.

6) **Please do not hurt yourself or anyone else.** Gardening can be dangerous. There are sharp tools, repetitive motions, heavy lifting, unexpected storms and wilting heat. Bring water to hydrate yourself. If marauding gangs of thugs, lightning, tornados or packs of vicious dogs unexpectedly visit the Garden, please put off gardening until another time and quickly return to a safe place. Night-time gardening is highly discouraged and likely to result in squashed plants. Report any theft, vandalism, and unusual activities to the Garden Manager and police.

7) **Please clean up your plot and remove anything you want to keep by October 31.** Any items and non-perennial plants left in the Garden on Halloween will either become the Garden Manager's personal property or be donated to Rumpke. For that matter, you probably should not leave anything in the Garden which you cannot live without. Because the Garden is free, there is no budget item to pay for Blackwater or other security guards to keep out vandals, raccoons, terrorists or space aliens.

8) Gardeners should begin planting in their plot before May 20 and keep it planted or maintained until the Fall Clean Up date or the plot will be reassigned to the next name on the wait list or tilled in after 14 days. If a gardener must abandon his or her plot for any reason (or be absent for more than 10 days), the gardener should notify the Garden Manager so that the ripe produce may be harvested and donated to a food pantry or shelter and/or the plot reassigned to the next name on the wait list (as applicable).

9) A community garden only works if everyone shares in the effort. **All gardeners are expected to attend the April 10-11 work days to mark out the plots and paths and to spread mulch on the paths and along the outside of the fence.** No plots will be assigned until the Garden has been set out. The rain date will be the third weekend in April. Gardeners are also required to volunteer for regular garden chores during the growing season (like watering the community plot, mowing the grass, weeding the paths and flower beds, picking up litter, etc.).

10) Community tools must be returned to the shed when not in use.