



Be a Great Community Garden Neighbor

There are many reasons people choose to grow in community garden plots. Some people might have too much shade, others may have no land of their own, and still others may have too many hungry deer to be able to garden successfully where they live. And plenty of gardeners also choose to grow in a community garden setting in order to meet new people, seek advice from other gardeners, and gain exposure to new plant varieties and gardening methods.

The Ideal Garden

This is a good example of a garden plot that is in compliance with the Community Gardener Agreement. In other words? This is the kind of gardener anyone would want to have as a community garden neighbor!

Unobstructed, nicely weeded pathways—In addition to your garden plot, it is your responsibility to maintain the paths adjacent to your plot. That means keeping them free of weeds, plant debris, gardening tools, etc.

Weed-free garden—The more frequently you stop in to weed, the easier weeding will be. Dig them out while they're small—and before they have a chance to set seed—and you'll have a much more successful garden!

Regularly harvested produce—There is no produce left rotting on the ground. To help prevent and control disease, it's very important to stay on top of harvesting. Plan to visit regularly your plot regularly to pick what's ready. If you have too much of a good thing, donation coolers are available in the garden, so you can help feed others.

Plants properly staked—If you're growing especially tall or unwieldy plants, be sure to support them well with cages, fencing, or stakes. This way, your plants will be less likely to impinge on adjacent paths or other nearby garden beds, and you'll be in compliance with your Community Gardener Agreement.

Personally owned tools/equipment neatly stacked inside garden boundary—As with tall plants that may have a tendency to creep out of bounds, so, too, can your hoes, rakes, and any other implements you wish to leave with your plot. Be sure these remain well inside the boundaries of your garden, so other gardeners can still use the adjacent paths without tripping over your tools.

Garden number and boundary stakes—These should be present, weeded, and easily visible at all times.

Best Practices

Say Hi!—Get to know the gardeners around you. If you are a more experienced gardener, offer advice and help to those who are just starting out. And, if you're new to gardening, don't be afraid to ask those around you for help. That's one of the perks of a community garden, after all!

Keep It Neat—Visit your plot regularly to keep things clean, harvested, and weeded. If you remove any diseased plant matter or weeds with seed heads, bag these up, and throw them away, rather than placing them in the community garden compost areas.

Going somewhere?—Arrange to have someone look after your plot while you are away, and make sure your garden neighbors know who that person is.

If You See Something, Say Something—Notice a stranger taking produce from a neighbor's plot? Get a description of him or her and let the Community Garden Supervisor as soon as you can.

Check Your E-mail—The "Garden Beet" newsletter includes important notes about community garden hours, the availability of soil amendments, and much more. Don't miss out!

**Need some extra advice or have questions about your responsibilities as a community gardener?
Contact the Community Garden Supervisor at communitygardens@bloomington.in.gov.**