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COMMUNITY GARDEN GUIDELINES

I. Mission

The Palo Alto Community Gardens are places where gardeners adhere to organic gardening principles, concepts, and practices with mutual respect for their gardening neighbors.

II. Participation in the Community Garden Program

Anyone 18 years or older and a Palo Alto Resident (proof of age and residency required). Interested residents can apply by emailing the Community Garden Coordinator to be placed on the current wait list(s).

III. Plot Assignment and Fees

A. Plot Assignment

1. One garden plot per resident. Proof of residency required
2. Available plots will be assigned based on a first served basis for the current waiting lists for Johnson, Eleanor, Rinconada, Ventura and Arastradero gardens. The wait list applicant will have 2 calendar days to respond or they will be removed from the waiting list.
3. A license to garden will be issued on a year-to-year basis from January 1 to December 31 to the Primary Gardener. The City may, at its discretion, renew the license with the Primary Gardener if they remain in good standing throughout the year. Special appointments may be required to determine eligibility prior to the beginning of the calendar year.
4. If a non-English speaking gardener, you must provide a contact name, email and phone number for interpretation purposes.
5. New Gardeners must begin gardening within two weeks of the date they are assigned their plot, or their license becomes void.
6. Gardeners may get on a transfer waiting list after acquiring a less desirable plot after being in good standing.
7. No Gardener may use a vacant plot or other area in the gardens without the prior written approval from the Community Garden Coordinator.
8. No garden plot shall be transferred, traded, divided, shared, or subleased, or otherwise changed from the original plot assigned and licensed to the signatory Gardener. If any change is desired, it must be made through the Community Garden Coordinator.

B. Fees

1. Fees are based on the adopted Municipal Fee schedule at the time of signing.
2. Annual Fees will only be prorated if acquiring a plot after the first quarter of the calendar year. Fees are non-refundable after 6 months of the calendar year.
3. A onetime refundable deposit based on the Municipal Fee schedule will be required upon signing. The deposit is refundable only if the garden plot is completely cleaned and weeded, including all personal items, garden structures and fencing removed. A time limit of no more than 7 calendar days will be provided for cleaning of the plot. In the event the plot is determined abandoned or neglected the deposit will be used to cover the cost of having the plot cleared, mulched, or tarped to retard weeds for the benefit of the next Gardener.

4. Any gardener who is 60 years of age or older is eligible to receive a 25% discount on the annual garden fee. The Gardener is responsible for informing the Community Gardener Coordinator that he or she is eligible to receive the discount and must provide proof of age.
5. Low income and/or disabled residents may apply for a fee reduction 25%-50% through the City's Fee Reduction Program. Applications are available at Lucie Stern Community Center or in the Enjoy! Catalog. **No combining discounts. Only one will be applied to annual garden fee.*
6. Full payment of the total annual garden fee is to be paid within 30 days from the due date. Checks payable to the City of Palo Alto or credit cards form supplied by City mailed to Attention Community Garden Coordinator, 3201 East Bayshore Road – Palo Alto, CA 94303. Paying with cash or any other form of payment is accepted at any Palo Alto Community Center.
7. A late fee of \$25 will be assessed if more than 30 days late from the due date. If more than 60 days late see # 8 under terminations.

IV. General Plot Responsibility

A. Maintenance

1. Plot maintenance is the sole responsibility of the Licensed Gardener.
2. Gardeners are responsible for the year-round maintenance of their garden plots and the surrounding pathways.
3. The entire plot must be cultivated, or areas not planted must be covered with a cover crop or weed suppressant to reduce weeds.
4. All Gardeners shall share the responsibility to keep the pathways/aisles between their assigned Plot and any other Plot free of weeds equally
5. Paths must be kept wide enough to accommodate full wheelbarrows.
6. Piles of pulled up weeds and plant trimmings should be removed from plots in three (3) weeks or less.
7. All plants, planters, planter boxes and trellis must be placed inside plot perimeter. Plants must not overhang into the walkway, neighbors plot, or any fence adjacent to playgrounds. Overgrown plants that block walkways are to be trimmed back.
8. Crops must be harvested and not left on the ground to rot. Use of the Free Produce Kiosk is highly encouraged if applicable at your garden site.
9. If no winter crop will be planted, Gardener must cover the plot with mulch, a cover-crop or cover with plastic guard and ensure weed maintenance. Any watering systems should be turned off when not in use.
10. The gardener is required to report any pest or disease problem they see at the garden to the Community Garden Coordinator.

B. Watering

1. No unattended and/or uncontrolled watering allowed. All gardeners are authorized to turn water off if it has been left unattended. Leaky water hoses must be replaced or repaired.
2. No timers are allowed unless approved by the Community Garden Coordinator. If a water spigot is shared between multiple gardeners a Y or T connection must be installed to allow for multiple gardeners use. Systems must be checked on a weekly basis. Any system found leaking will be shut off or removed.
3. Flood irrigation (using a garden hose at full volume let down the soil without any attachment to spread water) is prohibited.
4. No hoses or other items should block any pathways. Hoses should not be pulled across or placed on neighboring plots.

5. All PVC pipe used for potable water or irrigation must be appropriately NSF rated.
6. Stagnant water is not allowed. Ponds or similar must have mosquito fish or some form of mosquito preventative.

C. Structures, Trellises, Fencing and Garden Material

1. Natural materials such as unpainted wood, are recommended when developing garden plots. Any new garden structure, including a trellis, arbor, etc., which exceeds 3 feet in height must be pre-approved by the Community Garden Coordinator. Gardeners are encouraged to inquire about the use of specific structure materials before purchasing the materials. All Community Garden height guidelines are based on measurement from existing grade (i.e. pathways between garden plots).
2. All trellises and other structures must be functional, orderly, safe, and contribute to the community garden's overall visual continuity. All trellises and other structures must be in use for an appropriate gardening function for at least 3 months out of any 12-month period. Any trellis or structure not used for an appropriate gardening function for at least 3 months out of any 12-month period, as determined by the Community Garden Coordinator, must be immediately removed.
3. All trellises or other garden structures must not exceed 7 feet in height and must not cause shade on any neighboring plot.
4. A PVC trellis or other garden structure that is 3 feet or less in height is permitted. When PVC is permitted, neutral colors are required (e.g. green, brown, or gray, rather than white, and should be appropriately rated for outdoor use). Any new PVC trellis or structure exceeding 3 feet is not permitted. Any pre-existing PVC trellis or structure will be allowed but must be replaced with permitted material upon its deterioration, as determined by the Community Garden Coordinator.
5. No concrete footings are allowed when installing trellises, planter beds, or similar installations. Gardeners who violate this rule are required to immediately remove all concrete installed.
6. No Fences are allowed around individual plots in any garden locations. Any pre-existing individual plot fences will be allowed but must meet the following conditions:
 - a. Made from material that allows for plot visibility, no industrial fencing material allowed.
 - b. Does not shade neighbors plot
 - c. Be secured, safe, tidy, stable, and in good repair
 - d. Be safe, free of protruding nails, wood, aged broken parts, rusty, or other materials that could cause injury.
 - e. No gates shall be installed, and no water spigots enclosed in individual plots.
7. No chemically treated wood allowed.
8. Only organic products may be used for fertilizer and for weed control.
9. Any gardening debris (such as planter boxes, plant containers, fencing material) or personal items should be removed from the garden and not disposed of at the Community garden location, unless it qualifies for composting in the available Green Waste containers. No material should be disposed of next to Green Waste containers.

D. Plantings

1. Plot preparation for Spring Plantings should be started by April 1st.
2. Only vegetables, flowers, berries, and herbs may be grown in the plots. No produce from the plot may be sold for commercial profit.
3. Tall plants, such as corn, berries, and tall vines should be located so that they do not produce shade on adjacent plots, and do not extend into pathways.

4. Permanent plants such as roses are not to be over 5ft high.
5. Trees of any kind or bushes are not allowed, the exception would be that they are in containers and pruned so they are not more than 5 ft high.

V. Gardening Etiquette

1. Gardeners and their guests are expected to conduct themselves in a safe, respectful and courteous manner toward other gardeners and the public.
2. Gardeners who have issues with their fellow gardener should first try and resolve it together, if no resolution to the issue can be made, the gardener should contact the garden liaison for his/her help. The garden liaison will consult with the City Coordinator if she/he can't resolve it.
3. Children are to be supervised while in the garden.
4. Wheelbarrows should be returned to the appropriate designated areas for each garden and need to be emptied. All gardeners are expected to keep the area around the Green Waste bins clean. No full wheelbarrows, or other debris are to be left in this area.
5. Gardeners must not get their neighbors plants wet, as this can cause plant diseases.
6. Garden locations with road access must obey a 5-mph speed limit for the safety of gardeners and garden visitors.

VI. Gardener Expectations, Notices and Violations

A. Gardener Expectations

1. Gardeners are required to attend 4 hours a year towards cleanup of the common areas. Scheduled workdays will be assigned throughout the year and each gardener can attend any of the workdays to complete their 4 hours. You may bring family, friends, or hire someone to complete these 4 hours a year. In special circumstances you may contribute to the Gardens Account by donating \$35/hour if you are unable to physically participate in these workdays. The donations will be used to make purchases towards items needed in the garden or to hire someone for maintenance needs. *Gardeners who avoid doing their share of community garden work are subject to a written warning and loss of their garden plot.*
2. Gardeners are highly encouraged to attend an Informational Garden Meeting (dates to be determined).
3. Gardeners are required to notify the Community Garden Coordinator of any graffiti, theft, vandalism, rule violations. After 5pm or on weekends, gardeners should contact the non-emergency number at **650-329-2413**.
4. In the event of illness, the Gardener must notify the Community Garden Coordinator. The Gardener may be provided 4 weeks for recovery. If at the end of 4 weeks the plot has not been maintained the Community Garden Coordinator will determine whether the Gardener will have to give up the plot.
5. If the Gardener foresees being away from the garden longer than 2 weeks, they must make special arrangements to have their plot maintained while they are gone. The Community Garden Coordinator must be notified of this arrangement.
6. No dogs except service dogs are allowed within the fenced area of garden locations.
7. No BBQ's or patio furniture are allowed in the individual plots. A chair or bench for sitting purposes is allowed.
8. Garden Location hours:

Johnson, Eleanor, Rinconada, and Ventura hours: Monday – Sunday, Sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset

Arastradero Garden hours: Monday – Saturday, Sunrise to 30 minutes after Sunset.
Sunday – 1pm to 30 minutes after sunset.

The PACRC (church) may at time to time request no parking and limit garden activities on Special Days. Gardeners will be notified when this occurs.

B. Notices and Violations

Violation of any Community Garden Guideline will subject the gardener to a written warning. If a gardener receives a written notice of non-compliance, he/she will have thirty (30) days to correct the situation. Failure to remedy the situation within thirty (30) days will be cause for cancellation of the License Agreement. If the gardener receives a second written notice of non-compliance within the same calendar year, the gardener will have thirty (30) days to correct the situation. Again, failure to remedy the situation within thirty (30) days will terminate the License Agreement. If a gardener fails to maintain their garden according to established garden maintenance standards and receives a third notice within the same calendar year, the License Agreement will be revoked, and the plot will be assigned to the next applicant on the waiting list.

The Gardener will have 7 days to remove their personal items. Any items remaining in the plot will become the property of the City. Gardeners who are terminated will not receive a refund of their fees. The good faith judgment of the Community Garden Coordinator will be sufficient cause for enforcement of the Community Garden Guidelines, including revocation of the license to garden.

The following violations will be cause for immediate termination by the City.

1. *Theft of tools and equipment
2. Theft of produce and plants
3. *Vandalism of tools, equipment and City Property, including but not limited to animals.
4. *The use of foul language and offensive behavior including but not limited to threats, intimidation, violence, racial/ethnic slurs and sexual harassment.
5. *The use of alcoholic beverages and drugs of any kind in any area of the City’s Community Gardens.
6. The use of nonorganic pesticides and herbicides such as Roundup.
7. Receiving more than 4 written notices for the same violation within two program years.
8. Failure to pay registration fee within two months of due date.

**These violations will be reported to the Palo Alto Police Department*

Approved

Date

DocuSigned by:

Ed Shikada

5/12/2021

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Ed Shikada, City Manager