

Highland Community Garden

GUIDELINES 2025

Please read the Guidelines carefully. They can help make gardening at HCG an enjoyable and safe experience for everyone. Plot holders who ignore the guidelines risk forfeiting their plot.

1 Applying for a Garden Plot

- Apply for a plot by sending an email request to hcgardenexec9@gmail.com
- The Garden Exec will review all applications and assign plots at their discretion.
- If no plot is available at the time of application, the applicant's name will go on a waiting list. The Garden Exec will contact them when a plot becomes available.

2 Allocation of Garden Plots

- Returning plot holders in good standing will be offered the plot they used last year.
- Returning plot holders should complete the [HCG Renewal Form](#).
- The maximum number of plots a plot holder can rent is two.
- Plot holders who wish to give up their plot should contact a member of the Garden Exec by **January 15th**.
- Plots are allocated to the person or persons named in the HCG Registration Form. Plots are not transferable without the permission of the Garden Exec.

3 Forfeiture of Garden Plots

A plot may be forfeited and reassigned if:

- the plot has not been cleared and prepared for planting by April 15th.
- the plot is not being effectively weeded and appropriately cultivated through planting of herbs, vegetables and small fruit and flowers during the growing season, as detailed in the [Guidelines](#) section [Maintenance of Individual Plots](#).
- the plot has not been satisfactorily cleaned up at the end of the season as detailed in the [Guidelines](#) section [Maintenance of Individual Plots](#).

In this event, the following procedures will apply:

- April 1st – June 15th. Plot holders will be contacted by email and given seven days' notice to resolve the situation.
- June 15th – end of season. Plot holders will be contacted by email and given ten days' notice to resolve the situation.
- If the situation is not resolved or satisfactory arrangements are not agreed upon by the end of the notice period, the plot holder will forfeit the plot *and* the Maintenance Fee. The plot will be reassigned and the plot holder will not be assigned a plot the following season.

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4 Fees

Plot renewal is not complete until all fees are paid, as set out below.

Plot rental fees

Plots 1 – 4	\$40
Plots 5 – 12	\$35
Plots 13 –28	\$30
Plots 29 and higher	\$35
<i>Except:</i>	
Plots 43, 48, 49, 50	\$30
Plot 55	\$25
Half Plots	\$20
Raised beds	\$20

Plot Fees should be paid in an e-transfer to **hcgarden9@gmail.com** with *your name and plot number(s) in the message*. This payment is not refundable.

Fees should be paid by February 28, 2025

Maintenance and Volunteer fees. If you are *renewing* your plot, *you have already paid* these fees and do not need to pay them again this year. They are held in trust in the HCG bank account.

Maintenance fee \$25

This fee will be refunded when the plot is given up. However, the amount will be forfeited if the plot holder fails to adequately maintain their plot or abandons it without clean-up as detailed in the **HCG Guidelines**.

Volunteer fee \$50

This fee will be refunded when the plot is given up. However, the amount will be forfeited if the plot holder fails to complete the required volunteer work to maintain the communal areas of the garden, as detailed in the **HCG Guidelines**.

Volunteer Days (not yet determined, we will email out as soon as possible)

Volunteer Day is not only about fulfilling your volunteer obligations. It is a time to meet and work with other gardeners who we might not get to see when attending our plots. Volunteer Day helps build feelings of community in the garden.

Gardeners are expected to contribute a minimum of three hours per season to maintain the garden's communal areas. Please make sure your attendance is recorded by the Exec Committee at the Volunteer Day. If you are unable to come on either date, you will be assigned other jobs in the garden. Please bring the waiver with you on the Volunteer Day you attend.

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Compost

Compost is available at the site for \$5 per wheelbarrow load. Payable by e-transfer to hcgarden9@gmail.com

5 Maintenance of individual plots

Each plot holder is responsible for the maintenance of their own plot and surrounding pathways. Plot holders are advised to attend to their plot at least once a week during the growing season.

Planting & cultivating

- Grow herbs, flowers, vegetables and small fruits.
- Grow organically and cultivate sustainable, organic gardening practices.
- Improve soil every season by using manure, compost and mulch.
- Place tall plants (such as sunflowers or corn) and grow houses so they do not shade other plots.
- Make supports for climbing plants as unobtrusive as possible.
- Harvest vegetable and flowers only from your own garden.

Weeding

- Weed and clean plot boundaries
- Weed and mulch one half of the pathway between your plot and neighboring plots using the supplied mulch.
- Weed perennial and invasive weeds, such as morning glory, dandelion, creeping buttercup and quack grass early in the season, then regularly throughout the growing season.
- Pull weeds *with their roots*, rather than simply hoeing the tops.
- Control weeds from April 1st onwards, even if plots are not planted with crops until May.

Plot maintenance

- Keep pathways around the plot clear of plants, refuse, sticks, rocks and other obstructions.
- Edge the plot with rocks or other natural materials rather than, for example, treated wood.
- Keep fencing discreet, avoiding bright colours.
- Dispose of compostable garden waste and diseased plants (e.g. blight-infected tomatoes or potatoes) in the designated compost area.
- Arrange for the plot to be watered and maintained during planned absences of ten days or more.
- Inform the Garden Exec of dates of planned absences and the name and contact details of the person(s) temporarily maintaining the plot.
- Clean and clear plot(s) at the end of the growing season. Only perennial flowers, herbs and winter vegetables may remain. The deadline for plot clean-up is Nov 15th.

Restrictions

- Do not use non-organic herbicides (weed killers) or pesticides.
- Do not allow weeds, vines, visitors or pets to encroach on neighbours' plots.
- Do not plant trees or large permanent shrubs that might shade or encroach on other plots.
- Do not use carpet or other non-biodegradable material as mulch.

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- Do not grow marijuana plants. Although it is now legal to grow a limited number of marijuana plants per person, it is not legal to grow them in spaces where they are visible to the public.

6 Maintenance of common use areas

All plot holders have a responsibility to maintain common use areas of the garden.

- Each plot holder is required to volunteer a minimum of three hours each season to maintain common use areas.
- Complete three voluntary work hours for a refund of the Volunteer Fee.
- Failing to complete three voluntary work hours will forfeit the Volunteer Fee and may forfeit the right to be reassigned a plot the following year.
- The Garden Exec will designate volunteer work days in May and June.

Tools

All plot holders have a responsibility to keep the tool shed secure and tidy.

- Each plot holder will be given the access code for the tool shed.
- Tools marked HCG (Highland Community Garden) are for common use.
- Clean tools after use. Return them to the shed. Make sure the shed is securely locked.
- If you store your own tools in the shed, keep them clean and clearly labeled.
- Do not use more than your share of storage space in the shed.

7 Water

All plot holders have a responsibility to use water wisely.

- The shut-off for the garden's water is located inside the garden shed.
- Turn off the water using the shut-off in the shed if you are the last person to leave the garden. If other plot holders are in the garden, discuss and agree who will turn off the water.
- Report any leaks, such as water oozing up out of the ground or from the hose bib, to the Garden Exec as soon as possible.
- Turn off the water at the hose bib when you have finished watering.
- Water quickly, then turn off your hose bib. Water pressure is reduced when more than two people are using the hoses.
- Do not leave running hoses unattended.

Conserving Water

- Water deeply but not often, unless you are nurturing new transplants. During the dry season, watering once or twice a week is enough.
- Target water at the roots of your plants, rather than generally spraying the surface.
- Use the water barrels that are located throughout the garden whenever possible. Refill your nearest barrel if it is more than half empty.
- Mulch around plants with biodegradable materials such as compost, leaves or straw and by hilling up dirt around the stems of your plants.

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8 General Conduct in the Garden

The garden should be a safe place for plot holders, children and the community.

- Keep the gate closed at all times, and lock the gate after leaving on evenings and weekends.
- Children are welcome in the garden but must be accompanied by an adult and supervised at all times. Please teach your children to respect garden plots and to conserve water.
- Keep pets on a leash unless they are trained to stay with their owner.
- Be aware of poisonous elements in the garden – rhubarb leaves, potato and tomato leaves, lupin and foxglove, for example. It is the responsibility of individual plot holders to ensure their children and pets do not ingest these items.
- Avoid bringing anything on the site that might compromise the safety of others.
- Avoid leaving tripping hazards in the pathways. Make sure the sharp edges of hoes and the tines of rakes are pointing down when you are not using them.
- Do not remove any plants or equipment from another plot holder's plot without the plot holder's permission, or from common areas without approval of the Garden Exec.

9 Communication

Good and positive communication is needed to make gardening at Highland Community Garden a safe and enjoyable for everyone.

- Stay up to date with garden news, announcements and information by visiting the [Highland Community Garden website](#). You can also check the bulletin board beside the shed door, and post messages and garden-related information for other plot holders.
- Bring any concerns, questions or unresolved conflicts with other plot holders to one of the Garden Exec members.
- Attend our harvest dinner, usually held in late August. It is a time to close the gardening year, celebrate our successes and communicate items of interest.
- Report thefts to a member of the Garden Exec. Neighbours are welcome to enjoy a walk through the garden. However, if you see people behaving suspiciously or engaging in vandalism, you might ask politely; "Do you have a garden plot here?" or "Is this your plot? Our prime concern, though, is for your personal safety, so use your judgement before confronting anyone. Report any such incidents to the Garden Exec.

10 Unharvested produce

Every year, a substantial amount of produce remains unharvested by plot holders.

- The Garden Exec reserves the right to pick unharvested produce from any plot if it looks like it will otherwise go to waste. Any such produce will be donated to the Food Bank.
- Inform a member of the Garden Exec if you have surplus produce you would like to share with others.

Happy Gardening! We are glad you've chosen to become part of Highland Community Garden.