

Lakeside Community Garden Handbook

All current Lakeside residents and their families are eligible to apply for plots in the Lakeside Community Garden where they will be able to grow fresh delicious food and connect with nature and the community. Participation in the garden is contingent upon a gardener's continued maintenance of their plot as well as volunteering for group work when needed. Please keep in mind that the garden follows organic practices.

This handbook provides guidelines and rules to make sure that everyone has a positive gardening experience and so the garden can be maintained from year to year. If you have any questions, please email the current Garden Coordinator (Pooja Ramamurthi at pvr@princeton.edu).

For non-gardening Lakeside residents, we ask that you enjoy the garden from the fence boundary and only enter the garden accompanied by someone with a plot.

Registration, Fees & Placement

Applications and Registration

All Lakeside residents and their families are eligible to participate in the Lakeside Community Garden. During the initial application process, if there are an excess number of interested gardeners, we will hold a lottery where the chosen residents will each receive an approximately equal size plot. Interested gardeners who are not successful in the lottery will be on the Community Garden Wait List. Those on the waitlist will be notified if a spot becomes available in the garden.

Registration will occur in the spring. Current gardeners will only be able to renew if they have met all the requirements of the previous year (see below). Plots will again be drawn by lottery if there is an excess of new, interested gardeners.

Fees

Gardeners are responsible for the annual fee of \$20 for a plot. \$10 of that will be refunded at the end of season if a gardener has followed the requirements throughout the season and cleaned up their plot in the fall.

Pledge

Gardeners will be expected to sign a pledge ensuring that they will follow all the rules that are mentioned in the handbook once they are given a plot in the Lakeside Garden.

Transferability

If you are unable to fulfill your obligations and would like to give up your plot, please contact the Garden Coordinator. \$10 of the fee will be forfeited, but the other \$10 will be refunded if the plot is in good condition and the gardener has followed the requirements. Any plots that become available will be given to those on the waitlist (if there is one) or current gardeners will be offered to use the space on a first come first serve basis.

Gardener Rules & Responsibilities

Gardeners who fail to fulfill the below requirements will not be eligible to renew at Lakeside for one year and will forfeit their \$20 registration fee.

Participation Requirements:

- Each plot must have a “primary gardener” who will be the main point of contact for that plot. They will be in charge of maintaining a valid email address to receive any important message from the Community Garden. Each plot must also have a “secondary gardener” who will be contacted if we cannot get ahold of the primary gardener.
- All gardeners must attend an orientation at the beginning of the season. At this orientation you will pay your garden fee and get an overview of the garden rules.
- All gardeners must participate in at least one volunteer hour in the spring to help setup the garden and one volunteer hour in the fall to help clean up the garden. If you cannot make the designated times, then make sure to make the time up at another point. Email the Garden Coordinator if you are unsure what group work needs to be done in the garden. There may be times when work needs to be done during the summer, and each gardener is encouraged to do what he or she can to help at that time or make up the hour at another time.
- Agree to the Lakeside Community Garden regulations stated in this handbook.

Operation & Conduct

Access to the Garden

Each gardener will be given access to the garden and shed via a combination code or a physical key. If you are ever the last person in the garden, please make sure all gates and the shed are locked before leaving. It is each gardener’s responsibility to make sure that they only lend the code/their key to responsible individuals. If ever a lock goes missing, it will be replaced out of the community garden fund, so please leave them in place.

Use of Community Garden Equipment and Gardening Shed

ACC has provided the startup tools and equipment for the garden, as well as the garden shed. All garden participants can use these tools, as long as they maintain them by putting them away in the shed after use and locking the shed. Gardeners use these tools at their own risk. If tools need to be fixed or replaced, please contact the Garden Coordinator. The fees that are paid to the community garden each year will be used to purchase new equipment as needed. Tools in the garden shed must be put back in place where they are labelled, and the shed must be neat, tidy and organized. Any gardener found keeping the shed in disarray will be found in violation of the garden rules.

Garden Hoses

The water supplied to the Community Garden is from a nearby building. Gardeners will have to attach the hose and run it across the walking path (more details to follow later). Gardeners are responsible for putting the hoses back after use.

Gardener Absences

Gardeners are required to notify the Garden Coordinator if unable to maintain the plot for a period longer than two weeks or if they wish to give up their plot. Gardeners must make their own provisions for the maintenance of their plot during vacations and absences. For absences lasting longer than two weeks, please give the Garden Coordinator the contact information of anyone that will be maintaining the plot in the gardener's absence.

Behavior

- Please close all gates after entering or exiting and lock the gates if you are the last one in the garden.
- Do not remove garden produce or any materials from another plot without explicit approval of the plot owner.
- Remain on the wood-chipped paths. Do not cut through gardens.
- Always supervise guests or children.

If there are any gardening disputes and/or issues, please refer to the Garden Coordinator and then to Lakeside Management respectively.

Maintaining Your Plot

- Gardeners must use organic practices to prepare and improve their plots. **No chemical fertilizers or pesticides are allowed.**
- Gardeners are responsible for providing their own seeds or plants.
- Gardeners are responsible for the maintenance and regular upkeep of their plot. All plots are to be kept in a clean and neat manner for the entire season. Watering, weeding, harvesting and all other garden-related maintenance issues are the responsibility of each gardener. A minimum time commitment of at least two hours per week should be allowed for regular maintenance.
- You will be notified first if there is any issue with your plot, but Lakeside does reserve the right to conduct landscaping and maintenance on the Community Garden and individual plots.

Weed Ordinance

- Gardeners are expected to keep their plots neat and productive through the consistent removal of weeds. Plot boundaries between neighbors, pathways bordering plots (which include ½ of the pathway between plots), plot edges, and fencing must also be kept free of weeds.
- After the initial opening of the garden, if a plot is not in compliance with these basic expectations, the following will occur:

- 1st notice: the gardener will be notified via email and will have one week to bring the plot into compliance as stated in the notice.
- 2nd notice: the gardener will receive a 2nd email and will have an additional one week to bring the plot into compliance
- If not in compliance within those two weeks, the Garden Coordinator and Lakeside staff will have permission to assist with maintaining the plot and the \$20 fee will be forfeited. If no response is received from the gardener after that, the Garden Coordinator and Lakeside staff can reclaim the plot for other gardeners to use.
- In addition to keeping plots weed-free, mature produce should be harvested in a timely manner to prevent rotting, wasting food. If rotting food is an ongoing issue in your plot, you will receive a warning.

It is your responsibility to effectively communicate with the Garden Coordinator so that we can help you overcome any hardships or shortcomings that are preventing you from successfully maintaining your garden plot.

Outlaw Plants

Some plants are not allowed in the garden due to their invasive habits or potential for impacting adjacent garden plots.

- No invasive plants (including trees, shrubs, vines, or herbs) may be planted.
- No trees or large shrubs, cacti, illegal plants, or other poisonous plants are allowed.
- Mint, catnip, or comfrey are only allowed to be planted in pots and may not be planted directly in the soil.
- Be thoughtful when planting vines, corn, sunflower, and other tall plants so as not to shade or invade a neighbor's plot. If shade becomes a problem, you will be asked to remove your planting mid-season.

Watering

Please conserve water whenever possible. Monitor the weather and only water your plot when necessary. Test the moisture of the soil two inches below the surface to determine if water is necessary. A thick layer of organic mulch (straw, dried leaves, etc.) will reduce the need for frequent watering by conserving soil moisture. Sprinklers are not allowed.

Fertilizers and Pesticides

For the health and safety of all participants, only organic products are to be used in the garden. Non-organic pesticides, fungicides, herbicides, and fertilizers are prohibited, and their use will result in an expulsion from the garden. Keep all organic pest-control products away from children and remove all products from the Community Garden after use. Use all products according to their label; do not overuse. Even organic chemicals may be damaging to native insects and can become toxic in high doses.

Woodchips and Mulch

Biodegradable mulches such as straw, leaves and dried grass are permitted and encouraged. Princeton Facilities typically supplies the garden with a large supply of mulch and woodchips. Use the woodchips for paths and be conservative with the mulch as it is a shared resource for all.

Compost

There is a pile near the shed which has compost, and there is a compost tumbler. All extra waste should be put onto the compost pile. The compost from the compost pile can be used by the gardeners.

Fall Cleanup

Please note that a well-maintained and thoroughly cleaned garden plot is required to get the \$10 refund for the garden fee and to return as a gardener each season. Please remove all personal materials by the end of October. Any items remaining will become property of the garden and will be open for future gardeners to claim.

Remove all weeds and spent crops from garden beds. To help with the soil care, please apply any compost or layers of chopped leaves or clean straw over each garden bed. DO NOT leave any garden soil exposed over the winter. If desired, plant cover crops. If possible, gardeners that are eligible to return will be offered their same plot the next year.