

2023 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 (for traditional members) as well as volunteering for group work when needed. The garden follows organic practices. If you have any questions, please email the current Garden Coordinator, Allison Tang at allisontang@princeton.edu.

Registration, Fees & Placement

Applications and Registration

All Lakeside residents and their families are eligible to apply for a plot in the Lakeside Community Garden, provided they anticipate residing at Lakeside for the entirety of the summer (through at least the end of August). Registration occurs early in the spring. During the first phase of registration, current gardeners in good standing will be offered the first chance at renewing their spot from the previous year. In order to renew, gardeners must have met all of the requirements of the previous year (see below). During the second phase of registration, vacant plots will be made available to new gardeners. Plots will again be drawn by lottery if there is an excess of new, interested gardeners.

Although all Lakeside residents are encouraged to participate in the cultivation of their household's plot, the plot must formally be assigned to a Princeton University student, since the University's Concur system is used to return the refundable portion of the deposit at the end of each season. Exceptions may be made to this under extenuating circumstances, please contact the current garden coordinator if you feel this applies to you.

Fees

Each gardener must pay an annual fee. For traditional members (with a plot) the annual fee is \$20, and \$10 of the fee is a deposit, to be refunded at the end of season if a gardener has consistently followed garden rules throughout the season and cleaned up their plot in the fall. The remaining \$10 of the fee is a permanent payment into the community garden's treasury fund. This fund is held in a University chart string account, and is to be used for tools, supplies, or improvements at the suggestion of the community and the Coordinator's discretion. Any gardener may inquire about the balance of this account at any time and receive an accounting from the Garden Coordinator.

Gardeners will be supplied with instructions on how to use the University's Concur system to request their deposit refund at season's end. Each gardener has up to one week after the fall cleanup deadline to submit their refund request, after which time all outstanding deposits are forfeit, and subsequent refund requests will not be honored.

Transferability

If you are unable to fulfill your obligations and would like to give up your plot, please contact the Garden Coordinator. The \$10 deposit will be forfeited, if your plot is returned in good, clean condition (see below) and you have followed all requirements, you will remain in good standing with the garden, and eligible to return to the garden. Any plots that become available will be

given to those on the waitlist (if there is one), or offered to current gardeners on a first-come first-served 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 entire 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 Garden. Each plot must also have a “secondary gardener” who will be contacted if the Coordinator cannot establish contact with 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 this applies to you. Weeding sign-up schedule forthcoming.
- 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. If you are ever the last person in the garden, please make sure the shed is locked before leaving.

Use of Community Garden Equipment and Gardening Shed

All garden participants can use the tools in the shed, 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 paid to the community garden each year will be used to purchase new equipment as needed. The garden also possesses some equipment (cages, stakes, pots, etc.) which is stored in the shed, and may be claimed for use on a first-come, first-served basis every year. Individually-owned equipment may be stored in the shed, but must be labeled with the owner's name. Any equipment so labeled is not available for communal use.

Garden Hoses

The water supplied to the Community Garden is from a nearby building. Gardeners are responsible for turning off the water at the building after each watering.

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 longer than two weeks, gardeners must give the Garden Coordinator the contact information of someone who will be maintaining the plot in the gardener's absence.

Behavior

- Please close and latch all gates after entering or exiting.
- Do not remove garden produce or any materials from another plot without explicit approval of the plot owner or the Garden Coordinator.
- Do not walk on garden plots.
- Please supervise children at all times.

If there are any gardening disputes and/or issues, contact the Garden Coordinator. If the Coordinator does not address the issue to your satisfaction, contact the chair of the Lakeside Committee and Lakeside Management.

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 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. Be advised that during heat waves, droughts, unexpected frosts, etc., additional upkeep may be required.
- You will be notified first if there is any issue with your plot, but if you prove unwilling or unable to address the issue, 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. If no response is received within one week of the email being sent, the negligent gardener forfeits their deposit, and the plot reverts to control of the Coordinator, to be assigned to waitlisted or current gardeners as appropriate.
 - 2nd notice: if the negligent gardener responds to the Coordinator within one week, but the problem has not been resolved within one week of the original email being sent, a 2nd email will be sent.
 - If, two weeks after the original email was sent, the plot in question is still not in compliance, the negligent gardener forfeits their deposit, and the plot reverts to control of the Coordinator, to be assigned to waitlisted or current gardeners as appropriate. All equipment (cages, stakes, pots, etc.) located in a confiscated plot will be confiscated as well, and will become common property of the garden.
 - Any gardener whose neglected plot is confiscated as described above will be declared ineligible to hold a plot in the garden for the remainder of the current

year and for the entirety of the following year. Repeat offenders will be declared permanently ineligible.

- In addition to keeping plots weed-free, mature produce should be harvested in a timely manner. If rotting food is an ongoing issue in any plot, the negligent gardener will receive an email from the Garden Coordinator to encourage compliance; if the problem has not been fixed within one week after the email was sent, other gardeners will be permitted to harvest any and all produce from the neglected plot for the remainder of the year, or until such time as the negligent gardener demonstrates commitment to properly maintaining their plot.

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.

Outlawed Plants

Some plants are not allowed in the garden due to their invasive habits or potential for negatively impacting the garden community. The following plants are forbidden:

- Invasive plants
- Trees, large shrubs, or cacti
- Illegal plants
- Poisonous plants

Mint, catnip, lemon balm, and comfrey are only allowed to be planted in non-decomposable pots and may not be planted directly in the soil.

Be thoughtful when planting vines, corn, sunflowers, and other tall plants so as not to shade or invade a neighbor's plot. If shade becomes a problem, the Garden Coordinator may address complaints by removing the offending plants and/or growing supports.

Watering

Early morning is the best time of day to water, since low sun and high humidity allow more water to be absorbed into the soil before evaporation. 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. No sprinklers or other freelanced alterations to the watering system are 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 each spring.

Compost

There is a compost bin located next to the garden shed, intended for the use of Lakeside community gardeners only. Gardeners are welcome to remove compost from the bin and apply it to their plot on a first-come, first-served basis. Some guidelines for using the bin:

- Deposited compostable items should be small. (No whole pineapples.)
- Please fill one side at a time. Look for the active side.
- After depositing compostable items, please spin the composter at least twice.

Do compost:

- fruit/vegetable kitchen scraps
- coffee grounds
- tea leaves
- eggshells
- shredded leaves
- small weeds (preferably without flowers)

Do NOT compost:

- whole items (chop them up first)
- computer paper
- meat
- dairy
- pet waste
- large/flowering weeds
- plates, cutlery, or cups that claim to be compostable

Fall Cleanup

A well-maintained and thoroughly cleaned garden plot is required in order to get the \$10 refund for the garden fee and to return as a gardener in the following season. The garden coordinator will schedule a deadline, to be no earlier than the end of October, by which all gardeners must have completed their fall cleanup responsibilities.

These responsibilities are: 1) Clean up your plot by removing all weeds, vines, stems, roots, and other organic debris, as well as all cages, pots, trellises and other growing supports and accessory structures. Pots, cages, stakes, etc. may be stored in the garden shed. (But you must label them with your name!) 2) Pitch in as needed to help tidy up common areas of the garden and reclaim any abandoned plots.

Any items left in the garden past the cleanup deadline will become property of the garden, and will be available for future gardeners to use on a first-come first-served basis.

Reiteration of responsibilities and penalties

When you take a plot in our community garden, keep in mind that you also take on some responsibilities, and that these span roughly 6 months of the year. The responsibilities are relatively modest, however, and should not deter you from gardening at Lakeside. Setting aside two hours every week is generally sufficient to maintain even a large plot.

You are required to:

- 1) Constantly keep your plot free from weeds and overgrowth, from first planting in the spring to final cleanup in the fall
- 2) Harvest your produce throughout the year, and not let it drop and rot
- 3) Complete fall cleanup before the deadline

Any gardener neglecting responsibilities 1) and 2) will be emailed by the Garden Coordinator to encourage compliance. If no return communication is made within one week of the email being sent, or if the problem has not been fixed within two weeks of the email being sent, the negligent gardener will forfeit their refundable deposit and be declared ineligible to hold a plot in the garden for the remainder of the current year, and for the entirety of the following year. Repeat offenders will be declared permanently ineligible. Accommodation may be given if the resident can show that a significant emergency caused their plot's prolonged neglect.

Any gardener failing to complete responsibility 3) will, at the passage of the deadline, automatically forfeit their \$10 refundable deposit, and be declared ineligible to hold a plot in the following year. In addition, all equipment (cages, stakes, pots, etc.) located in a confiscated plot will be confiscated as well, and will become common property of the garden. Accommodation may be given if the resident can show that a significant emergency caused them to miss the deadline despite reasonable advance notice.

If any resident feels their gardening privileges have been unfairly restricted, they may appeal the Garden Coordinator's decision to a panel composed of the seven other members of the Lakeside Committee (the entire committee except for the Garden Coordinator). This panel will review written statements from the resident and from the Garden Coordinator, and their majority vote will either uphold the restriction in question, or strike it down.