M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks Conditions of Use for Community Gardens
2014

Administrative Rules
1. M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks plots are rented “as is” (current condition). Montgomery Parks does not perform annual tilling.
2. Plots are not transferable, and fees will not be refunded or pro-rated. Plots that are given up or are revoked for cause will be returned to Parks for re-assignment.
3. **Gardeners must maintain a current email address and phone number on file with Parks.**
   Contact changes should be sent to the Community Garden Coordinator, patricia.lynch@montgomeryparks.org.
4. To receive important information and updates, **gardeners are expected to become members of the Yahoo electronic list** specific to the garden where they rent a plot. If gardeners do not have an email address, they must make arrangements to check the website on a regular basis. Your garden specific Yahoo list address will be sent with the confirmation of the plot rental and will include directions for joining the list.

Gardening Rules
5. **All Gardeners (new and returning) are required to attend an annual Spring Garden Meeting.** This 2-hour meeting will be held in March and will introduce the volunteer garden liaisons for each garden, and provide an opportunity for new and returning gardeners to meet one another. The garden liaison/s will review the garden rules and procedures, discuss water availability, cistern filling, lock operation, garden email and other communication issues, and answer questions. Criteria and schedule for garden inspections will also be reviewed.
6. **All gardens are subject to regular inspections.** Failure to abide by any of the rules set out in the Conditions of Use will result in the loss of your plot. If a garden plot is not in compliance with the Conditions of Use, notifications will be sent by email. A follow-up inspection will be performed 2 weeks after the email notice. If the plot is still not in compliance, it will be revoked and returned to Parks for re-assignment. All fees will be forfeited.
7. **Gardeners are required to help with community garden chores by contributing 8 hours of Community Garden service each year.** Chores that meet the requirement include community work days, filling the water tanks, weeding and chipping common areas, fence lines, and paths, keeping the garden trash-free, organizing garden events, etc. Garden Liaisons are authorized to identify tasks that meet the service hour requirement. Please consult them to learn how you can help maintain the garden and meet the service requirement.
8. Wood chips provided by Parks will be delivered to each garden. Volunteer garden liaisons will request supplies on behalf of the community gardens. Compost is provided by Parks when it is available, and is not a regular service of the program.
9. Gardeners are required to work in their plots at least once every week. Each gardener is responsible for weeding, cultivating, and watering, and must arrange for someone to maintain the garden plot if they are away or are not able to perform maintenance tasks every week.

10. By April 1, gardeners must begin work on their plots including weeding, soil amendment, and cultivation. By June 1, gardeners must have planted seeds, seedlings, or transplants in their plots. By November 15, gardeners must remove dead plants and summer garden debris from plots.

11. **Organic practices** are required in all parts of the community garden. Garden pests and plant diseases can be especially serious in the community garden. Only organic methods such as handpicking bugs, using row covers, and applying pesticides labeled as OMRI-approved or organic can be used in the community garden. The garden liaison volunteer(s) in each garden, or the Community Garden Coordinator can help you locate information about controlling pests, and treating and/or removing diseased plants.

12. **To reduce weeds and pests**, improve the soil, and maintain the garden’s appearance, mulch is strongly recommended. Gardeners are encouraged to use materials such as aged compost, composted manure, leaves, straw, burlap, weed cloth, layers of newspaper, or plastic (away from lawn areas) to protect the soil and reduce weeds. Carpet, stone, and sod mulch are not allowed.

13. Gardeners are encouraged to **plant fall and winter crops** if they wish. If not, they should take steps to protect the soil by planting cover crops or covering their plots with barriers to reduce winter weeds. Acceptable barriers include: newspaper (non-shiny parts) covered with mulch/compost, burlap bags, weed cloth, plastic covering or tarps.

14. **Invasive plants** are not allowed in the garden. Information about invasive plants in Maryland can be found at [http://www.hgic.umd.edu/content/generalinformation.cfm](http://www.hgic.umd.edu/content/generalinformation.cfm). **Aggressive plants** like mint, lemon balm, and similar plants must be grown in containers, and must not be allowed to establish themselves in the ground.

15. **Tall plants such as corn, sunflowers, and Jerusalem artichokes should only be planted in areas of your plot that will not shade neighboring plots. Plants that do not meet this standard will be removed.**

16. If application of chemicals is necessary in or around the garden, Montgomery Parks is responsible for notifying gardeners **at least 48 hours in advance**. Chemicals will be applied in accordance with Maryland Department of Agriculture guidelines by certified/registered applicators and, for health and safety reasons, may result in the temporary closure of the entire garden.

17. **Water conservation** must be practiced at all times. Please concentrate on watering roots rather than other parts of the plants. Gardeners must be present when watering. Do NOT leave water running unattended. Watering by hose connection to the water tanks is limited to 15 minutes at a time, especially when others are waiting to water.

18. Open containers of water are not allowed for health-related reasons. If you wish to store water in your plot, containers **must be kept covered**.
Fencing, Stakes, and Structure Rules

19. **Plot markers** must be upright and visible at all times. Gardeners shall not relocate any plot markers. Plot markers are not to be used as fencing material, plant structures, or watering can holders. Please remember all plot sizes are approximate and variation in size and shape from plot to plot within each garden is normal. Encroachment into paths or other garden plots is not permitted.

20. No structures of any kind may be built without written approval by Montgomery Parks. The deer fence may not be used as a trellis or plant support. Any plants attached to the deer fence will be removed immediately. Structure requests should be directed the Garden Coordinator, patricia.lynch@montgomeryparks.org.

21. **Fences** up to 3 feet high may be installed in your garden inside the plot boundaries. The materials must be neutral in color (black, grey, green, silver are okay, red, yellow, orange are not), and must not create tripping or other safety hazards. Parks reserves the right to remove fences that are unsightly or negatively affect gardeners or other plots. Removal will be at the gardener’s expense. Requests for higher fences should be sent to the Community Garden Coordinator, and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Getting Along and Courtesy in the Gardens

22. **Pets are not allowed** within the community garden fence.

23. **Littering and dumping** are forbidden. Community Gardens are trash free, carry-in and carry-out facilities. **Only plant waste** is allowed in the compost areas. All trash must be removed from the site and disposed of by the members of the garden.

24. Gardeners are not allowed **to trap animals** (ground hogs, raccoons, rabbits, etc.) in the Community Gardens at any time.

25. **All personal tools**, wheelbarrows, and hoses should be marked with the plot number and the plot holders initials. Gardeners are not permitted to borrow or move tools, wheel barrows, etc. without permission of the owner. All borrowed items must be returned in the same condition as borrowed or be replaced.

26. Children are welcome in the garden, but must be supervised by a responsible adult at all times.

27. The community gardens are alcohol and smoke-free areas. Loud radios and/or music are not allowed.

28. All general parks rules apply to the Community Gardens, see 
   http://www.montgomeryparks.org/rules/rules_regs_ch5.shtm

29. Conditions of Use and Garden Rules are subject to annual review and revision.

Revised: December 1, 2013