Gardeners Guidelines and Expectations 2027

River Valley Area Community Gardens, Inc.

The Board of Directors of River Valley Area Community Gardens (RVACG) wants you to have a great and successful gardening experience. The Board shall work with gardeners to provide educational opportunities to learn organic and sustainable gardening techniques and practices as well as the fundamentals of gardening. Gardening is an experiment and a learning experience that may yield mistakes and successes. Many of our Gardeners are seasoned veterans with lots of experience and knowledge. Doug Rouse, John Ingham and Emily Martorano are especially knowledgeable about vegetable gardening. Please notify a Board member if you have questions.

Registration and Garden Plots: The registration process for all gardeners begins with completing the application form and is complete when the plot rental fees are paid and a plot number is assigned. All plots are rented for a gardening year which runs from October 15 of the current year through October 14 of the coming year. Gardeners who wish to continue their gardening experience in the coming year need to complete an application form by October 1st of the current gardening year. Gardeners Guidelines are reviewed annually, and gardener input is encouraged.

Permissions and Acknowledgements:

Media and Publicity: Photographs, interviews, video recordings, other visual or auditory recordings or any other medium with a Gardener's picture or voice may be posted on the internet or on social media to publicize the Gardens and its programs. The gardener has the right to opt out of this.

Awareness of Risk: The gardener understands that participating in the garden has a risk of injury, damage to personal property or death.

Assumption of Risk and Waiver & Release of Claims: The gardener agrees to assume the risk of harm even if the potential harm is caused by someone else. The gardener also agrees to waive any right to sue or attempt to collect money from the landowner, sponsor, their board members, employees, volunteers, or anyone acting on their behalf for any losses or damages resulting from death, injury, or property damage to the gardener, anyone else, or any property, that occurs while the gardener is in the garden.

Medical Care Waiver: The gardener gives up any right to sue or otherwise attempt to collect money from the RVACG or the Village of Spring Green arising out of any first aid, treatment, or medical service, including the lack of such or timing of such, given in connection with participation in the garden. The gardener is not covered by or eligible for any insurance, health care, workers' compensation, or any other benefits maintained by the aforementioned parties.

Indemnification: The gardener is responsible for any damages or losses suffered by the sponsor or landowner that are caused by the gardener.

PROVISIONS

- *Mulch*: Straw or marsh hay is provided to gardeners. The equivalent of four small bales is suggested for a 20 x20 ft. plot area.
- *Manure*: Dairy, horse or alpaca manure is provided for gardener's use at the south end of the gardens.
- *Compost*: There is a compost pile for weeds and garden refuse located at the south end of the gardens.
- *Tools and Equipment*: Garden tools and fertilizer are located in in the green shed. Larger equipment is in the tan shed. Return all tools and equipment after use. Equipment should not leave the property.
- *Sheds*: Both the small and large sheds are kept locked. Gardeners will receive the code to unlock the sheds upon registration. Close and lock the shed doors after use.
- *Irrigation*: Irrigation ports are available by section of plots. The Gardens will provide one hose and one nozzle per irrigation post. Gardeners may provide their own hoses and watering equipment. Drip irrigation installation is permitted. Doug Rouse is available for consultation on installing drip irrigation systems.
- *Community Crops*: Gardeners may partake in community fruits and vegetables in season i.e. strawberries, raspberries, rhubarb, cherries and apples. Please pick moderately to share with other gardeners.

RESTRICTIONS

- *Prohibited Commercial Gardening*: RVACG is a non-commercial community garden. Each plot must be used for the cultivation of vegetables, flowers, fruit, or herbs for personal use only. ***Gardeners may not sell produce***. Excess produce may be shared with area food pantries, friends, school kitchens, nursing homes or placed in the kiosk on Westmor Street.
- *Non-organic Pesticides/Fertilizers*: RVACG practices organic gardening and sustainability techniques. Acceptable natural fertilizers include compost, composted manure, green manure, leaf mold, and worm castings. Commercial fertilizers, pesticides or other soil amendments must be approved by the National Organic Program, which is administered by the US Department of Agriculture. Look for these labels:

- *Mulch:* Wood chips, carpet and stone mulch are prohibited. Newspapers are welcome, but ***avoid using the glossy sheets***. Any cardboard used should have the ***tape removed***. The tape is not biodegradable. Straw/hay mulch is provided.
- *Non-permitted Plants*: Plants that are not permitted in plots are fruit trees, mulberry trees, grapes, raspberry shrubs, gooseberry, currant, elderberry, etc. Due to their aggressive behavior, mint, oregano and other spreading herbs should be kept in pots.

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GARDEN PLOT MAINTENANCE

- *Weeds*: Spring Green Village ordinance 300.6 states that all weeds and grasses are to be ***kept under 6 inches***. A list of noxious weeds designated by the Village of Spring Green is posted in the green shed. Weeds should be placed into the designated location for composting, or each gardener may keep a compost pile in their plot. Gardeners whose weeds are out of control will be contacted. The gardener will have two weeks to get weeds under control. If the gardener does not get weeds under control in that time, the gardener will be contacted a second time and given one week to get weeds under control. Failure to do so may result in the plot being mowed. Any viable produce will be left for harvest. The gardener may be asked to reduce the size of the plot until they demonstrate that they can keep the weeds in their plot under control.
- *Pathways and Plot Boundaries*: All pathways are to be kept clear of tools, hoses, garden equipment, weed piles and other obstacles. Gardeners should plant within their plot boundaries. When planting, ***allow one foot on all boundaries*** for walking, plant overgrowth, and mowing.
- *Tall Plants and Trellises*: Tall plants such as sweet corn, sunflowers or any plants on trellises should be placed where they will not shade neighboring plots. Trellises must be sturdy and reinforced so they do not fall into a neighbors' plot.
- *Fences*: Gardeners may fence their plots. Gardeners who install fences accept the responsibility of keeping weeds in the fence row under control.
- *Garbage*: Please do not litter. Any garbage or recyclable waste should be placed into the appropriate receptacles. Plastic seedling packs or pots and starter trays are recyclable and are given to the RVHS Ag Department. Please place them in the designated tote in the green shed. All non-organic mulch such as plastic or fabric sheets must be removed by Closing Day if the plot is to be tilled in the fall or spring.
- *Dogs* are to be kept on a leash and out of the garden plots. All waste is to be picked up.

GARDENER EXPECTATIONS

- *Communication:* Email is the primary means of garden communications. Check this regularly. Check SPAM folders.
- *Volunteer* Hours: Gardeners are expected to contribute 2 hours per month as their abilities allow. This may include work days, task force committees, mentoring, helping with the Busy Bees program, working fundraisers, serving on committees, serving on the Board of Directors, tending the garden of someone who is ill/on vacation.
  - *Work Days*: These are designated days in the spring and fall to prepare the gardens for the next season.
  - *Task Force Committees*: These are specialized teams to facilitate garden volunteerism by group or individually. These include Food Pantry, Fruit/Flowers, Grounds/Equipment, Fundraising and Youth Gardening. Each task force may have subcommittees.
- *Prohibited Activities*: The RVACG is located on land owned by the Village of Spring Green. Village ordinances prohibit target shooting and open fires. The RVACG prohibits operation of powered equipment while under the influence of intoxicating substances.
- *Parking:* Parking is available along both Westmor Street and Locust Drive. Driving to plots should only be done if the gardener has a physical limitation, or if delivering items to a plot or harvesting from their plot.
- *Abandoned Plots*: Plots are considered abandoned if they have not been tended in four weeks. Gardeners who are unable to care for their plot/s due to vacation, illness, or some other event shall be responsible for finding someone to care for their plot until they return. They may contact the superintendent for assistance.
- *Plot Forfeitures and Transfers*: If a gardener gives up the plot before the end of the season, the gardener must contact the superintendent or the registrar. Refunds may be given until May 1st.
- *Be respectful* of your fellow community gardeners. Each Gardener has a different gardening point of view. Discuss issues respectfully and bring any disputes or concerns to the Board of Directors where appropriate. Enter the plot of another gardener only when invited or permission is given.