

COMMUNITY GARDENS: RESPONSE TO TASK FORCE QUESTIONS

1. How do community gardens police themselves?

Each community garden typically has a set of policies or guidelines that each plot user must comply with.

Example: The Community Gardens of Tucson (the manager of 29 community gardens – most of which are in Tucson) requires plot users to sign an agreement. The following is an excerpt from their Plot User's Agreement:

“AS A COMMUNITY GARDENER I WILL:

1. Visit the garden during daylight hours only and assist with garden security by always shutting gates and locking locks. I will promptly report any security issues to the site coordinator.
2. Keep my garden fully planted throughout the year in order to use water efficiently.
3. Grow herbs, vegetables and flowers. Trees and shrubs cast shade and take up water in excess; mints are aggressive growers and grow to become nuisances. Any plant that spreads aggressively is not permitted; other examples are chamomile and nettles. Genetically modified organisms (GMO) are never permitted at the gardens.
4. Keep plants within the plot perimeter and harvest my produce or offer it to others so that it doesn't go to waste.
5. Work regularly to keep weeds and insects out of aisles and my garden plot.
6. Attend monthly work parties at the garden site and share the responsibility of keeping the common areas clean and tidy and by assisting with the composting process, remembering that my contribution to maintaining the site is in proportion to the number of plots I have. At schools, all gardeners are responsible for helping to maintain the plots gardened by the school.
7. Help with water conservation by quickly repairing drip irrigation leaks in my plot and minimizing hand watering. I will not modify or alter the irrigations system.
8. Work carefully and cautiously in the garden, knowing that wild animals, including snakes, will sometimes be in the garden. I know that confronting or killing wild animals is not supported by CGT.
9. NOT bring radios, boom-boxes, televisions, alcohol, tobacco or firearms to the garden.

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10. NOT disturb the property owner or other gardeners with excessive noise or in any other way.
11. NOT use conventional (non-organic) insecticides or weed killers/herbicides. Pre-emergent weed killers of any kind are not allowed in or near the garden beds.
12. NOT remove tools or equipment from the garden. I know that CGT is not responsible for any personal tools or equipment I bring to the garden.
13. NOT bring dogs or other animals within the planted areas at the gardens.
14. Pay a user fee of \$15.00 per month to be paid in advance on a 6-month basis. Fees are due January 1 and July 1. A late fee of \$5.00 will be charged 30 days after due date. When I discontinue my use of the plot I will make sure that the plot has been weeded, my plant debris has been chopped and put in the compost and everything removed (including posts, rebar, stakes, etc. that I may have pounded in the ground and I will pull them out, not break them off) and disposed of properly prior to my last paid day.

In consideration of the benefits derived from participating as a community gardener, I agree to assume all risks inherent in this activity and hereby release the Community Gardens of Tucson, its employees, volunteers, and the property owner and other gardeners from all liability and responsibility arising out of my participation in the Community Gardens Program. I understand that this agreement may be terminated at any time.”

The following is a link to the complete packet of materials that the Community Gardens of Tucson use: <http://www.communitygardensoftucson.org/NewMemPkt/NewMembPkt.pdf>

2. Are there any community gardens in town that presently allow the keeping of small farm animals?

Yes. The Pio Decimo and the Las Milpitas Community Gardens have chickens. Pio Decimo has eight chickens that are overseen primarily by one person, but other gardeners check on them as well. The chickens are checked on at least once each day. Las Milpitas is organized by the Food Bank and the chickens are managed and overseen as part of a project run by the Food Bank.

The Community Gardens of Tucson (CGT) do not allow animals to be kept, because (from Gina Chorover, Chair of the CGT Board):

- “1. Our gardens aren't that large and we really would not have any space for animals.
2. We don't own any of the land where our gardens are located so there are landowner issues.

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3. Gardeners aren't out there every day, and sometimes only once a week. Not sure who would take care of animals and make sure they survived and thrived. Who would pay for their feed, for example?
4. The board has enough work maintaining 29 gardens and we don't want any additional work or headaches.
5. No one has asked.”

3. When located on City property, is a contract or agreement with the City required?

Yes, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) is required. Attached is an example of an MOU for a community garden on City parkland.

4. Does the City require the managers of the community garden to have a one million dollar liability coverage like what is required of other outside groups using City-owned property.

The City’s Parks and Recreation Department does not require liability coverage when the community garden is on City parkland. Staff will contact the Real Estate Department to see if liability coverage is required on other types of City-owned property.

Incidentally, Gina Chorover, Chair of the Community Gardens of Tucson (CGT), said that CGT has a \$1 million liability policy.