

## **City of St. John's: Requirement, guidelines, and best-practices for community gardens on city-land during Covid-19**

Community gardens are healthy community assets that support peoples' access to healthy foods, build community and social connections, and support overall wellness. The City of St. John's recognizes the important role that community gardens have in helping people become more food secure and stretch their food dollars.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, it is important for community garden committees, volunteers, and gardeners to understand and know how to operate their gardens safely. This means changing how we organize our gardens based on new public health guidelines. The Covid-19 Pandemic is continuously evolving, so we encourage all gardens to stay up to date on new public health regulations and monitor the following resources to keep everyone safe.

[Government of NL – Covid-19](#)

[Government of NL – Public Health Orders](#)

[Government of NL – Life with Covid-19 Alert Level System](#)

To protect the health and safety of everyone, while still recognizing the important role that community gardens have in our neighbourhoods, the City of St. John's has created this guide of requirements, guidelines, and best-practice information. **These requirements and guidelines apply to community gardens that operate in city parks, and on city-land.** If a garden committee does not have capacity to follow these requirements and guidelines, then they must not open until public health orders have been lifted. **Safety is the number one priority.**

### **Community garden requirements and guidelines for safe gardening:**

- Community garden committees must comply with [Government of NL – Public Health Orders](#) – these public health orders apply to all public spaces, including parks and community gardens.
- Community garden committees must tape off, or remove if possible, any public benches and/or picnic tables in the vicinity of the community garden.
- Community garden committees are expected to create a garden access plan that tracks garden use by their gardeners and make the plan available to all gardeners.
  - This plan should enforce the provincial Public Health Guidelines for 'physical distancing' (Stage 4: Maximum 10 people, and a minimum of 2 metres between gardeners at all times; Stage 3: Maximum 20 people, and a minimum of 2 metres between gardeners at all times).

- Consider creating an online sign-up sheet that allocates time slots for gardeners to be in the garden (Or connect with gardeners via phone if they have difficulty using or do not have access to a computer/internet)
  - This includes communicating that when gardeners observe that the garden is at capacity, that they refrain from entering the space until the limit allows.
- If required, schedule gardeners on when they can safely tend to their plot.
- Describe how the community garden committee will monitor the use of the garden.
- Provide handwashing supplies and require that gardeners wash their hands before and after leaving the community garden (or ask that gardeners bring handwashing/sanitizing supplies from home, for personal use only).
- Identify common touch points and include guidance, such as sanitizing common touch points after use, touching as few surfaces as possible, and wearing gloves. Follow guidelines for [cleaning and disinfecting public settings](#).
- Ask that gardeners bring their own gardening tools and equipment from home, when possible, and only use shared tools when required (use gloves and wash/sanitize after use). Tools from home should be brought home when gardeners leave – including use of personal watering cans.
- Gardeners are asked to dispose of all garbage, and when no garbage disposals are available, to take garbage and waste home when gardeners leave.
- Specify that the garden is not to be used for socializing and is to be used only for the purpose of gardening.
- Consider adapting, or creating, the code of conduct for gardeners and ask that they sign an agreement to abide by the garden committees' garden access plan and related Covid-19 Public Health Orders (like physical distancing and staying home if you are sick).
  - Any gardener that refuses to abide by the plan and Public Health Orders should be asked to leave until they can abide by the plan.
- Install signage at each entrance that includes:
  - Informing the public that the garden is for use for gardeners only and is closed to the public.
  - Ask anyone showing symptoms to not enter the garden space and to return home and isolate as per provincial public health orders.

### **Community garden best-practice information for Covid-19:**

There are a number of best-practice guides being released for safe gardening during Covid-19, including a guide developed by the St. John's Food Policy Council which should be reviewed for more information. Some considerations of note include:

- In-person meetings, gatherings or events, and work-days should not be held during the 2020 gardening season (unless the garden committee can safely do so abiding

by physical distancing) – registration, meetings, etc should be moved online (if possible) or postponed.

- Encourage gardeners to consider to “grow a row” to share with friends, family, or to donate to a local food bank or other local community organization or charity.
- Follow good hygiene to prevent Covid-19 by: washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth; cough and sneeze into your sleeve or elbow; practice physical distancing of two metres (6-8 feet), even if you have no symptoms; stay at home if you are sick; if you are showing signs of symptoms or have been out of the country, please stay at home and do not enter community gardens.
  - Include reminders and [other prevention resources](#) of good hygiene, such as [hand washing flyers](#), or what physical distancing (two metres) looks like, such as using markers.
- Communicate regularly with gardeners to remind them of safe gardening practices, organize monthly online meetings, connect on social media/by phone/or email, and share credible public health information (such as [myth-busting information about Covid-19](#)).
- Garden committees can seek way to prioritize new garden space for people who are facing food security challenges or other income related barriers to accessing food, whenever possible.
- For gardeners who choose to not garden this year, because of Covid-19, garden committees can give their plot to someone else, with clear communication with the previous and new gardeners that this is only temporary for the 2020 season.
  - This could be a good time to create space for equity-focused groups who have barriers accessing garden plots.

## City of St. John's Community Garden Use Waiver

### Waiver for community garden members

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (full name) confirm that I have read and understand the *"City of St. John's: Requirement, guidelines, and best-practices for community gardens on city-land during Covid-19"*. I agree to the requirements and guidelines, and I understand what my responsibilities are in order to keep a safe community garden environment. By signing this waiver, I will adhere to the guidelines and requirements.

Print Name:

Signature:

Date:

### Waiver for community garden managers/committees

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name of garden committee) confirm that we have read and understand the *"City of St. John's: Requirement, guidelines, and best-practices for community gardens on city-land during Covid-19"*. We agree to the requirements and guidelines, and we understand what our responsibilities are in order to keep a safe community garden environment.

By signing this waiver, we agree to adhere to the guidelines and requirements and to communicating these guidelines and requirements to all community garden members. We also confirm that all community gardeners at our garden are aware of the requirements, guidelines, and best-practices to keep a safe environment and agree to enforce these guidelines and requirements as part of our responsibilities as the garden committee.

Print Names:

Signatures:

Date:

**It is required that community garden committees return this, and an individually signed form for each gardener from their community garden. Upon completion, please share these forms with [healthycommunities@stjohns.ca](mailto:healthycommunities@stjohns.ca)**