

USEFUL INFORMATION FOR NEW GARDENERS Spring 2019

Welcome to the Newark Street Community Garden!

You have joined a very special place in the heart of Northwest DC. Whether you are a new gardener – and we've all been new gardeners at some time – or have the greenest thumb around, we hope your experience in our special community will be just that – special.

The NSCGA is a friendly place, and while none of us have all the answers to the many challenges we face as urban farmers, we trade success stories and other little secrets. If you have a question, ask a neighbor...it's a good way to meet fellow gardeners, and get some good tips. Look at other plots to get ideas about plot designs and what plants grow well. You can also post questions on our **NSCGA listserv** and we encourage you to sign up at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NewarkStreetCommunityGarden/join>.

We are a community garden, and as the garden season gets under way, it is important that you read and know the garden rules included in your membership packet; the rules (and other information) are also posted on our web site, www.newarkstcommunitygarden.org. Our rules are important and enable the garden to function effectively.

Here is some additional helpful information and reminders:

1. The Newark Street Community Garden is an **organic garden**, which means an absence of chemicals deemed harmful to our surroundings. Many products, especially those sold at American Plant in Bethesda, are geared for organic gardening. If in doubt, ask before you purchase a product such as fertilizers or sprays for plant diseases, harmful insects, etc. Send an e-mail to newarkstcommunitygarden@gmail.com and a member of the garden Board of Directors will respond. You can also post a query on the garden listserv (see above).

2. **Fencing**. Many gardeners fence in their plots to keep out deer and other animals. Some fencing has not been approved for use in the garden. This includes bright colored plastic construction fencing (usually bright green, blue or orange), and thin netting (which tends to trap birds). **Please see the chart in the green shed illustrating the type of fencing that can and cannot be used before you purchase your material.**

3. **Tools: Please clean all tools and return them to the appropriate place in the green shed after use, with the handle up.** Don't leave tools in your plot overnight so they are available to other gardeners. Returning tools to the shed also keeps them lasting longer and helps prevent them from being stolen.

If you're new to gardening and aren't familiar with what tools to use for what tasks, please ask. Tools break when used improperly.

Wheelbarrows go in the beige shed. The shed doors should be closed at all times; please lock both sheds when you leave the garden if there are no other gardeners around, or at sunset.

4. **Compost Bin**: Located in the back of the lower garden, to the left of the tennis courts. Signs indicate which part is ready for use. This is where to deposit many, though not all, of your weeds and plants. When the weeds decompose, you have an excellent soil nutrient. But remember, what goes into the compost eventually comes out. Please do not throw garbage, including stones, plastic bags, markers or containers, in the bins; cut up large stems and branches so they decay faster.

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Do not throw the following in the compost: wire grass, mint, rose stems, any diseased plant or leaves, and Jerusalem artichoke. Bag these items and take them with you to throw in your own trash; we have no receptacles for these weeds in the garden! We will gladly help you identify these or other weeds/plants. **Wiregrass** should be dug up as the long taproot is difficult to pull out by hand. **Mint** is very invasive, and spreads easily to other plots. If you want to grow it, plant it in a container in your plot. Make sure you dig up any mint growing in your paths.

5. **Hoses and water.** Please be sure to turn off the faucet when you are through watering, **coil the hose** so it doesn't tangle, and be sure it is not dripping in the plots next to the faucet. If you dig in your plot or your paths, **be careful not to go more than about six inches deep or you run the danger of hitting water pipes.**

6. **Weeds and Paths.** You must keep your plot and the paths surrounding it weeded throughout the garden season. Wood chips to maintain garden paths are delivered frequently, however, there is no schedule for delivery, and we don't usually know in advance when they will arrive. The chip pile is at the eastern garden entrance (nearest to the police station). It isn't a good idea to use wood chips as a mulch around your plants; keep them in paths inside and outside of your plot.

The Garden Rules Committee does periodic monitoring to make sure plots and surrounding paths are maintained. If you are going out of town for any length of time, let a board member know. Weeds grow fast and citations are issued when plots are not maintained, which can eventually result in a reassignment of a plot. If your plot needs watering while you're away, ask a garden neighbor; most will be willing to help in your absence.

Paths outside of your plot must be maintained by you and your neighboring gardeners who share them. Please be sure to keep paths weeded and add chips periodically throughout the season. Once will not be enough!

8. **Planting design** – Please be courteous to your neighbor when deciding what to plant where. Tall plants planted on the north side of your plot (nearest Newark Street) are likely to shade your neighbor's plot. Do not grow vines on fencing.

Dogs are not permitted anywhere in the garden area at any time. This means in the plots, in the garden paths, in the grassy open area between the plots and the wall, and the picnic area by the sheds. This is a DC Government law, and is enforced by the NSCGA! No exceptions or excuses are accepted!

10. Remember, we are a community garden, which means we must think "**communal**" e.g. sharing in many of our activities. There are more than 200 plots in the garden -- some 200 people sharing garden tools, wheelbarrows, wood chips and soil supplements that may be delivered throughout the season. Please don't be piggish, especially with wood chips and soil supplements, particularly when the supply is low. All gardeners need access to the same materials. The garden can only work effectively if we think about our neighbors.

Enjoy yourself and the fruits, veggies and flowers of your labor. Gardening is fun and rewarding. You'll soon see. Happy gardening!

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