



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
National Capital Area – Region I
Rock Creek Park
3545 Williamsburg Lane, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008-1207

2021 Guidelines for Gardeners Community Gardens Rock Creek Park

COMMUNITY GARDEN OVERVIEW

- A. Gardeners should follow all Centers for Disease Control, National Park Service, and District of Columbia rules, regulation, policy, law, and guidance on COVID-19 prevention measures. This may include wearing cloth face coverings, disinfection and/or one-person use of all equipment, use of hand sanitizer and/or handwashing, and/or other measures as needed. Gardeners should consult <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/> to keep updated and aware of all DC Public Health recommendations.
- B. The United States government shall not be held liable for loss, damage, or liability arising from the use of park land for gardening.
- C. Gardeners are subject to the laws, regulations, and policies of the National Park Service and Rock Creek Park.
- D. Gardeners will comply with any and all instructions from representatives of the National Park Service and the United States Park Police.
- E. The National Park Service issues yearly Special Use Permits to authorize Community Garden Associations to manage community gardens in Rock Creek Park.
- F. Community Garden Associations will write bylaws or similar regulations to govern each community garden's management and operation. These bylaws/regulations do not supersede federal laws/policies or the conditions of the Special Use Permit.
- G. Community Garden Associations have the authority to collect fees, but those fees must specifically go towards operational costs (e.g. purchasing materials for the gardens). No Community Garden Association Manager, Board Member, or Gardener may receive any monetary compensation for their time or involvement.
- H. Garden produce is only for household use, educational purposes, or charity. Any business or commercial activity by Gardeners is prohibited. Specifically, the sale of plants, vegetables, fruits, or flowers grown on National Park Service land is a

violation of federal law (36 CFR § 5.3 “Business operations.”) and grounds for not only removal of any Gardener but also potential federal prosecution.

- I. Similarly, Gardeners are prohibited from entering into any sort of commercial sharecropping agreement with a third party in which a gardener keeps a certain percentage of produce while giving the rest to the third party for later sale.
- J. Activities within the Community Garden may only occur during daylight hours.
- K. All accidents or damage of any kind on park land, directly or indirectly caused, witnessed, or otherwise learned of, must be immediately reported to the Rock Creek Park Permit Specialist at 202-895-6013. This includes injuries to people, plants and animals.

COMMUNITY GARDEN OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

- A. A Gardener’s household may not hold more than one plot throughout the 10 garden system of community gardens administered by Rock Creek Park, only one garden plot may be assigned to each household.
- B. Gardening is only permitted within assigned plots. Cutting of vegetation, digging, planting, dumping of waste, or any other gardening activities are not allowed on park land outside of the boundaries of the Community Garden.
- C. All garden tools and materials must be stored so as not to create a public hazard, visual intrusion, or habitat for rodents.
- D. Garden walkways must be maintained by the Gardeners in an orderly and weed-free condition.
- E. Gardeners are required to maintain their individual garden plots in an orderly and weed-free condition.
- F. At the end of the garden season, all plots will be cleared of dead plants as well as any tools or other debris.
- G. Community Gardens will be regularly inspected by National Park Service staff. Any gardens out of compliance will be required to take corrective actions.
- H. Gardeners’ personal vehicles must be parked in designated public parking areas. Vehicles may not be parked on grass, trails, or closed roadways.
- I. Should Gardeners find any relics or historic objects, either within or outside the boundaries of the community garden, they must immediately contact the Rock Creek Park Permit Specialist at 202-895-6013. All such objects are federal property and shall immediately be surrendered to the National Park Service.
- J. Removal of natural materials from park land is prohibited without prior written

authorization from the Rock Creek Park Superintendent.

- K. Existing trees may not be removed or trimmed. If an existing tree or tree limb poses a threat to safety or property, Gardeners should report these concerns to the Garden Manager, who will contact NPS staff to request its removal.
- L. Garden and plot fencing must use standard fencing materials and be uniform in height. Example of acceptable materials for fencing include wood poles, wood railings, metal poles specifically designed for fencing, and galvanized wire fencing. Fencing may not include materials such as ropes, hoses, plywood boards, signs, or sheets of plastic. Fences must be maintained at all times in good condition and may not contain any safety hazards.
- M. Raised garden beds with borders of untreated wooden boards, flexible metal, or plastic edging are permitted. The use of bricks, logs, tree sections, timbers, and other heavy materials are prohibited.
- N. The only structures allowed in individual garden plots are bean poles or similar structures that support growing vegetables. No structure, including those used for growing vine crops, may be taller than eight feet. Buildings, wooden decks, paver patios or other similar structures without a direct purpose of supporting plants are prohibited inside individual garden plots.

COMMUNITY GARDEN PRACTICES

- A. Garden plots shall primarily be used as vegetable gardens. However, up to 25 percent of each garden plot can be planted with native flowers as companion plantings to attract pollinators and other beneficial insects.
- B. Perennials, trees, shrubs, and woody-stemmed plants (including rose bushes) are not allowed to be planted without written authorization from the Rock Creek Park Superintendent.
- C. Gardeners are required to use organic gardening methods. These methods may include making soil improvements by adding NPS-approved compost, purchasing seeds and plants that are healthy and disease resistant, companion planting for insect control, and NPS-approved mulch for weed control.
- D. Monoculture (growing just a single plant in a garden plot) is contrary to good organic gardening practices and is discouraged. Intercropping (growing two or more vegetables in a garden plot during the same growing season) and Crop Rotation (growing different vegetables in the same place the next season) are both encouraged because these practices prevent the buildup and spread of harmful insects and plant disease organisms.
- E. In their respective bylaws, Garden Associations have the authority to set policies to limit or prohibit monoculture practices. This may include setting maximum percentages for

the majority planting or other requirements to promote intercropping.

- F. The use of pesticides, herbicides, rodenticides, inorganic fertilizers, and inorganic soil amendments is prohibited on federal park land.
- G. Gardeners may compost suitable material produced in the garden. Any externally sourced compost, including materials brought from home, may not be used without prior approval of National Park Service staff. Any such compost must be organic and meet established processing standards to prevent the introduction of weed seeds or pesticides.
- H. Gardeners are responsible for removing from the park all waste or trash they produce. No fires or burning are allowed on park land.