



Gateway to the Gorge

To plant a  
garden is to  
believe in  
tomorrow

# *City of Washougal* Downtown Community Garden





## Thank you!

We are so grateful to have such an amazing Park Board. This project would not have happened without their inspiration and help!



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## General Information

### Garden Program Eligibility

The Community Garden Program is open to Washougal Residents.

### Garden Plot Leases

Garden plot leases run January 1 to December 31, regardless of when the plot is leased. Plots must be renewed annually. Garden plot fees are due each year at the time of registration-plot fees are not prorated.

### Plot Sizes and Annual Fees

Plot Name	Size	Fee
Standard	8'x4'	\$17.00
Low income (\$20,000 gross income)	8'x4'	\$14.00
Senior Citizen (who is 65 or older)	8'x4'	\$14.00

Please note Gate Key is \$10 each.

### Refund Policy

Garden plot fees are *non-refundable*. If you need to relinquish your plot lease or are removed from the program during the season, fees are non-refundable.

Each year, garden program participants must complete required paperwork and attend an orientation meeting by April 1. If you are unable to complete these requirements your lease will be terminated, and plot fee(s) will be:

- Returned to your credit card.

### Multiple Garden Plot Registrations

Plots are generally limited to one plot per household. If there are unassigned plots after May 31, current gardeners may apply to lease additional plots. Priority is given to gardeners in good standing who have gardened at least one year. Plot fees are charged for all leased plots and are not pro-rated. Returning gardeners may renew second plots provided they are in good standing, have completed service hours, and maintained both plots to the required standard.

### Who Can Garden in Your Plot?

Plots may not be transferred, exchanged, or sublet. If you are unable to fulfill your obligations and would like to terminate your agreement, please contact the Parks staff.

Only those registered in the Community Garden Program and their immediate families may use garden plots. We encourage sharing, but all additional non-family-members must register and sign the required paperwork. Only one fee is charged per plot.

Guests must always be accompanied by registered gardeners.

## Registering in the Community Garden Program

### New Gardeners: Requesting a Garden Plot

To request a garden plot, please fill out and send in the **New Gardener Interest Form**, available online at <https://www.cityofwashougal.us/Facilities?clear=False>, or by calling the Park Coordinator at 360-835-2662 or 360-835-8501. You will be added to the garden waitlist. We begin assigning vacated and unrenewed garden plots to new gardeners beginning mid-February.

When a plot becomes available, you will be contacted by the Park Coordinator at which time you may reserve your plot and make payment. You may call at any time to check wait-list status and plot availability.

Following booking, you will be emailed a **Welcome Letter** with a summary of our garden policies and our **Community Gardens Participant Waiver and Release** form.

### After Your Plot is Leased:

- The **Washougal Community Garden Policy Agreement Program Participant Waiver and Release** will be emailed to you. Please save the form to your computer, electronically sign, save, then attach the electronically signed document to a return email within two weeks of receiving. You may also send via USPS to:

**Washougal-Community Garden**  
1701 C Street  
Washougal, WA 98671

You will also be required to sign our **Garden Policy Agreement** and **Code of Conduct** forms.

The deadline for payment, submitting paperwork, and attending an orientation is April 1. If you have not made special arrangements and these requirements have not been met by April 2 your lease will be canceled and your plot fee will be credited to you. Those leasing after April 1 have different deadlines.

### Returning Gardeners: Renewing your garden Plot

#### To Renew Your Current Plot:

By Phone: Park Coordinator at 360-835-2662 or 360-835-8501

To **change** your garden plot or garden, please send your request to the Park Coordinator as early in the year as possible. Your request will be added to the wait-list and placed during the renewal period if a space becomes available.

Garden plot renewals take place between mid-December and mid-February. During this time, returning gardeners may renew their current plots or change plots or gardens.

- You are eligible to renew (renewals are at the discretion of the Park Coordinator) if
- You are a City of Washougal resident.
- You were in the program during the previous season.

- You completed three service hours during the previous season.
- You received two or fewer warnings during the previous season.
- You cleaned up and mulched your plot by the end of the season deadline.

**After Your Plot is Leased:** The **Washougal Community Garden Policy Agreement Program Participant Waiver and Release** will be emailed to you. Please save the form to your computer, electronically sign, save, then attach the electronically signed document to a return email within two weeks of receiving. You may also send via USPS to:

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### **Garden Tool Sheds**

Gardener will have bulletin boards where work party and other relevant information is often posted. As a gardener, you are also encouraged to post items of community interest.

## **Community Garden Rules**

### **General**

- Gardening hours are from 6 am to 9 pm or dusk, whichever comes earlier. The use of power equipment is restricted to the hours of 9 am to 6 pm.
- Alcohol, smoking, vaping, and tobacco use is prohibited in all garden areas.
- Garden plots are privately leased. Do not enter any plot other than your own without express permission.
- Only harvest from your own plot unless you have explicit permission from the plot lease holder to harvest in another garden plot.
- All community garden tools, items, and infrastructure provided by Parks & Recreation are for community use on a first-come, first-served basis. Anyone using tools or installations may continue use for the length of time needed.
- Unless other restrictions apply, dogs must always be on a leash with one end of the leash attached to the dog and the other end attached to a human or something immovable. You are always responsible for your pet, and assume all responsibility for its actions, including any damage to persons or property.

- Children are welcome in our gardens but must always be accompanied by an adult. Children must be respectful of garden members and garden plot privacy. You are always responsible for supervising children in your care.
- If you would like to play music, please use a personal sound system with headphones so others may enjoy the quiet of the garden.

### Pesticides/Herbicides

Washougal's community garden is **organic**. The use of unapproved herbicides and pesticides, including Roundup, is strictly prohibited. *Anyone using synthetic herbicides or pesticides will be immediately removed from the program and not permitted to re-enroll at a later time.*

To find products approved for organic gardening, consult the OMRI Products Lists (Organic Materials Review Institute). If a product appears on this list, we will generally allow its use in the garden. However, even if a product is on this list, check with your Park Coordinator as some products may not be suitable for our garden environment even though they are generally approved for organic gardening practice.

The internet is an abundant source of advice and information on organic gardening and insect and pest control methods. Do not employ a practice without checking with your Park Coordinator. Not all practices described as "organic" are appropriate for a community garden setting and may even be harmful or have unintended consequences.

### Fertilizers

We do not have specific rules concerning fertilizers and their use.

We encourage all our gardeners to understand and care for their soils, to compost, and use organic amendments and fertilizers where appropriate. However, there are non-organically sourced slow-release fertilizers that are good sources of nutrition and which do not harm healthy soils.

### Prohibited Plants

For the health of the garden, and to comply with Federal, State, and local law(s), we have a few restrictions on what you can plant:

- No federally controlled plants, including cannabis.
- No tobacco.
- Trees are only allowed in pots which are raised off the ground sufficiently to keep roots from penetrating the soil.
- No cane fruits (i.e., raspberries, blackberries, marionberries, etc.) are allowed in the garden.
- Mint is only allowed in pots which are raised off the ground sufficiently to keep roots from penetrating the soil.

Other plants may be prohibited if they become a nuisance.

*Planting prohibited plants or failing to remove them, will result in your removal from the program or loss of the privilege to renew.*

## Animals in the Garden

Gardens are safe haven for a wide range of plant and animal life. All manner of burrowing, creeping, crawling, and flying creatures form part of the complicated web of life that is our garden. As partners in our garden endeavors, creatures in the garden are protected and must be treated with respect at all times, including nesting birds which are protected by Federal law in the “Migratory Bird Treaty Act.”

## Irrigation and Watering

- Water is an expensive and scarce resource. Rates are going up and excessive water use will unavoidably lead to plot fee increases, so please make water conservation a top priority.
- Water use is on a first come-first served basis. If someone is using a hose bib(s), wait until they are finished or use another bib. There are no usage time limits and hose outlets are not reserved for particular plots.
- No automatic watering systems are allowed. *You must be present on site to water.*
- **Nothing** is to be hung from irrigation towers, including hose hangers.
- Water must be turned off *completely* at the hose bib and valve.
- *Do not leave your hose attached to the hose bib when you leave.* The hose bibs are a community resource.
- Installation of irrigation drip systems which can be attached to the hose bib is allowed but may only be attached while you are on site.
- All hoses in tool sheds are for garden community use.
- Personal hoses are allowed but must only be stored in your plot, not left in pathways.
- Hose nozzles must always be used to assist in water conservation.

## Garden Vegetative Waste Disposal

Our garden sites do not have yard debris removal services. You are responsible for disposing of all garden waste from your plot and pathways. Here are some options:

- Take your waste home.
- Compost your vegetable waste in your plot.
- Use the onsite community composting system.

## Community Composting

Compost is an invaluable amendment in organic gardening. All vegetative waste produced in the garden and almost all weeds can be successfully composted to produce high-quality, nutritious amendments. All our gardens have some form of onsite community composting.

- Only vegetative waste (including *almost all weeds*) produced in the community your garden is allowed in the community compost pile. The following exceptions apply: coffee grounds (no filters), coffee chaff. *Absolutely NO home-generated, off-site waste is allowed.*
- Do NOT dump waste in front of compost piles.
- Do NOT use compost piles or bins when they are closed for maintenance.
- Avoid adding field thistle, bindweed, crabgrass, and mint to the compost bays.
- Always cover your fresh garden waste with high-carbon matter, such as leaves or rotted woodchips.

*You will be immediately removed from the program for dumping garden waste in community areas. You will not receive a plot fee refund. Dumping garden waste or debris anywhere outside of*



*designated compost bays/areas or containers will not be allowed. This includes dumping debris in front of compost bays.*

### **Tool Shed Use**

Washougal Community Garden has a tool shed where community tools, hoses, wheelbarrows, water keys and other miscellaneous garden items are stored. Please be aware of the following:

- Tool sheds must be kept locked.
- Do NOT share the tool shed lock combination with those not registered in the garden program.
- Everything stored in the tool sheds are for garden community use.
- Use of tool shed tools are at your own risk.
- Do NOT store personal items in tool sheds.
- Do NOT abandon unwanted items in tool sheds.
- Contact the Park Coordinator for garden equipment donation approval.

### **Your Service Hours Responsibility**

- You are required to complete three garden service hours each season a garden plot is leased, regardless of plot size. If a group of people share a garden plot, the group only owes three service hours.
- If you rent more than one plot, you will not owe additional service hours for that plot.
- The registered gardener, an immediate family member, and anyone registered as sharing a garden plot.
- You earn service hours at hosted work parties or by taking on approved special projects for an agreed-upon time. The Park Coordinator or representative must approve all projects and the time allotted. Projects must be completed and checked.
- If service events conflict with your schedule, you are still obligated to contribute. All gardeners are eligible to host work parties or lead special projects.
- To earn service hours, you must work in community areas of the garden. Working in your own plot or weeding your own pathways is not service time. If you work on your own plot during work parties, you will not earn service time.
- Service hours do not roll over from year-to-year.
- The final fall work party each year is the deadline for finishing your three service hours. To complete hours after this event, you must have special permission from your Park Coordinator. Your Park Coordinator is not obligated to accept any service projects or provide any opportunities after the deadline.

### **Counting Service Hours**

Our gardens are lively, active places from early spring to late fall. Weeds are always growing, compost bins get messy and so do the tool sheds. There are always projects to be done to keep our gardens in good order.

It is vital that you spread out your service hours throughout the season. Garden work parties are generally one hour long, so you can plan on attending.

### **Counting Service Hours Protocol**

- Plan to only have one person from your plot work at a time at any garden work party. We do not count the hours of more than one person per plot per event.
- It is fun to come in a group, so consider having your garden partner(s), family, and friends work on weeding and tending your own plot while you work.
- Extra people are always welcome to do community work at all work parties and enjoy the social atmosphere although their work does not count as service time.
- You can choose to split up covering the total time at a work party amongst a group:
  - ✓ Only one person at a time from the group can be doing service work.
  - ✓ You must let your garden party host know who is doing the service work for your plot at any given time.
  - ✓ You need to do all your service hours in your garden

### Earning Service hours at Work

Attending hosted work parties is the easiest way to earn service hours. The garden program offers three work parties each year in each garden. Consider carefully before choosing to miss these events. Any additional work parties must be offered by gardeners and there may be few opportunities.

It is up to you, the gardener, to look for ways to serve your hours. Do not rely on your Managers or other gardeners to make opportunities. If you cannot get to a scheduled work party, you have the option to schedule and host a work party of your own.

Coming out for announced service hours events early in the season will get your hours done quickly. We strongly advise everyone to complete at least four hours by mid-season so you do not find yourself unable to finish by the deadline.

### Earning Service hours at Work Parties

- All garden work parties have hosts. You must check in and check out with the work party host to get service hours credit at hosted work parties. You only get credit for the time you work.
- Do appropriate community work. We operate on the honor system.
- If you arrive late to an event when all the work is done, you will not receive service hours credit

### Garden Program Work Party.

- Organized by the Garden Program.
- Scheduled well in advance for easy planning.
- The only *guaranteed* work party opportunities.
- Hosted by your Park Coordinators.
- You can earn up to three service hours at the spring and fall work parties and up to three hours at the mid-season work party for a total of three hours.
- The spring and fall work parties are both offered on a consecutive Saturday and Sunday to accommodate as many people as possible.
- A full tool trailer and large debris bin is available on site.
- Great opportunity to meet other gardeners.

## Special Service Hours Projects

Garden work parties are not the only way to earn service hours. We have a variety of projects that can be done for service hours on your own time. Check with your Park Coordinator or service hours coordinator for a list of projects or suggest one of your own. Projects must be approved in advance. Projects must be completed to earn credit. Some special projects are season-long so you may do more than three service hours.

## Special Service Hours Project Examples

Following are examples of jobs and projects that may be available in your garden to earn service hours. Check with your Park Coordinator for more information:

### *Helping with Garden Management*

- Park Coordinator
- Service Hours Coordinator
- Data Entry Specialist
- Garden Plot/Pathway Inspector
- Garden Infrastructure Inspector
- Garden Facebook Page Administrator

### *General Projects*

- Take Charge of Garden Community Compost Projects
- Make Garden Signs as Needed
- Join the Harvest Brigade
- Join a Watering Brigade
- Host a Crop Swap
- Host a Potluck

## Maintaining a Working Garden

In order to keep your lease throughout the season, you need to be actively gardening. Expect to visit your plot several times a week to keep up with weeding and other activities.

### **Active Gardening Basics:**

- Plan a garden layout.
- Select appropriate plants.
- Soil preparation and care throughout the season.
- Planting, regular harvesting, and seasonal re-planting.
- Weeding, watering, and soil care throughout the season.
- Pathway weeding and clean up throughout the season.

## Caring for Your Plot and Pathways

- You are expected to maintain your garden plot for as long as you hold your lease. This includes cleaning up and mulching your plot at the end of the season.
- You are expected to keep the pathways around your plot well-weeded for as long as you hold your lease. This is a private responsibility and not a group activity.

- Everything you plant must remain within the perimeters of your plot and must be kept from encroaching on pathways or on neighboring plots.
- Do not plant tall vegetation which will shade neighbors' plots (i.e. plant sunflowers in center and not near plot borders).
- Pick all produce in a timely manner and avoid having rotten produce to attract pests.

*If you are unable to adequately attend to your pathways and plot, you may lose the privilege to renew in the coming season. Renewals are at the discretion of the Park Coordinator.*

## Managing Weeds

### Tips for Controlling Weeds in an Organic Gardening Environment:

- Weed regularly, at least several times per week. This is the most important control tool you have.
- We do not allow the use of any non-biodegradable sheeting, including plastic landscape fabric and black plastic bags for weed control or any other purpose in plots or pathways.
- Brown cardboard works very well for weed control but must be thickly covered with mulch, such as leaves or woodchips.
- Heavily mulch all areas where you are not planting.

## Composting in Your Garden Plot

We support both in-plot composting as well as community composting options.

### Personal Composting Rules and Options:

- You are encouraged to compost within your plot, but composters must be small and well-maintained. Check with your Park Coordinator before installing a composter.
- Composters within plots must be small. Check with your Park Coordinator.
- Must be kept in good order and not allowed to smell.
- Absolutely no meat or animal products in personal composters.
- Burying garden debris in beds and plot pathways is highly encouraged.
- Worm bins and in-ground worm buckets are good choices.

## Reminders and Warnings

We all get behind in doing our garden chores. In the summertime, weeds will grow just as exuberantly in our fertile gardens as do our fruits and vegetables. To keep organized and have well maintained gardens, we have a system of courtesy reminders and warnings directed at helping our gardeners keep up with plot and pathway care.

## Courtesy Reminders

Courtesy reminders are notes from your Park Coordinator to let you know your plot or pathways are in



need of weeding in order to keep them up to the level of maintenance expected in our gardens. These notes are meant to keep little problems from turning into big problems. Your managers do this as a courtesy to you because we can all get behind and a friendly reminder can help us get back on track.

**Please note the following:**

- Please respond courteously to your volunteer managers and other garden volunteers. Positive input from you fosters a spirit of community and shared responsibility.
- If you have already done the work between the time the situation was noted and the time a note went out to you, just let your manager know.
- If you need help for any reason, please ask! We can arrange work parties or get you help.
- Communicate your plans for completing tasks with your manager quickly to keep problems from escalating.
- The number of reminders for a given issue is at the discretion of the manager.
- If you fail to respond to your manager, you will receive a warning from the Park Coordinator.

**Warnings**

**Warnings are issued by the Park Coordinator:**

- Each gardener is allowed two warnings per season.
- When you receive a warning, communicate with your Park Coordinator and manager in a timely manner to work out plans to address issues.
- If you receive a third warning in a season, you may be removed mid-season and you will lose the privilege of renewing in the coming year. Your plot fee(s) will not be refunded.

**Abandoned Plots Policy**

If for any reason during the garden season you find you cannot keep up with the maintenance of your plot and pathways, please let your Park Coordinator or the Park Coordinator know your situation and plans at your very earliest convenience.

**You will have several options, depending on your situation:**

- If you are a new gardener and feel overwhelmed, we can help connect you with a more experienced gardener to mentor you.
- If you lease a plot that was poorly cared for in the past, you can request to host a work party to get your plot weeded and mulched.
- If you have an emergency situation and want to continue to garden, but need help for a limited time, your management team can help connect you with other gardeners to arrange for maintenance until you return.

If a plot is left unattended for more than one week following a warning or communication from the garden Park Coordinator, and you do not respond in any way, your lease may be canceled. Your plot fee(s) will not be refunded.

**Leaving the Garden Program**

If you need to leave the garden program, please let your Manager or the Park Coordinator know as soon

as possible. We do not officially take on a plot's care until we know you have withdrawn, or we determine it has been abandoned.

### **Renewing Eligibility**

**You will not be eligible to re-join the garden program at a future date if:**

- You have been removed from the garden program for violating the Code of Conduct.
- You used herbicides/pesticides/substances not approved for organic gardening.
- You planted and/or did not remove upon request any prohibited plants.

**If you have been removed from the program for any of the following reasons, rejoining the garden program in the future will be at the discretion of the Park Coordinator:**

- You received a third formal warning regarding your plot or pathway upkeep and did not make arrangements with your manager and/or Park Coordinator to leave your plot in good condition.
- You were not able to complete your three service hours and did not communicate with your manager or Park Coordinator



## Goals

- to provide the opportunity for local residents to grow food and ornamental crops, and enjoy the exercise, relaxation, and educational benefits of gardening;
- to teach stewardship by promoting sustainability, natural gardening, and wise use of land; and
- to encourage social interaction between community gardeners through the shared tasks of maintaining a community garden.





## Benefits of Gardening

Gardening is one of the most popular recreational activities in America, providing an opportunity for socializing, relaxation, exercise, and often access to a wider variety of nutritious and healthy foods than might otherwise be available.

The City of Washougal recognizes community gardening as an activity that contributes to the health and well-being of the wider community as well. Community gardens bring together people from many cultures, generations, and walks of life and provides the opportunity for socializing and education and fosters environmental awareness and a connection to the environment and the practices of organic gardening and sustainability.

