

Stoddart Avenue Community Garden

Rules of Conduct

In order to participate in the Stoddart Avenue Community Garden (the “Garden”), you must agree to comply with the following rules:

1. Be a good neighbor.
2. Do not create any extra expense, problems, annoyance or work for the Garden Manager.

Anyone who violates these rules will be expelled from the Garden and forfeit all produce. The Garden Manager is the ultimate interpreter and judge of all disputes and compliance with the rules. While she is generally reasonable, flexible and fair, she does not guarantee reason or fairness when the temperature is above 90 degrees or she is hungry or sleep deprived. Technical and occasional lapses may be overlooked in exchange for chocolate ice cream.

Because some people might find these simple rules a little vague, here are some guidelines and other food for thought based on imagined and actual experiences. Please take them in the jovial spirit with which they are intended.

1) Please stay on the Garden paths or your own garden plot and do not walk on someone else's plot (or let your guests, children or your dogs wander onto someone else's plot). None of our gardeners should have to worry about their garden plot soil being compacted or their tender bean or onion shoots being trampled by their inconsiderate neighbors or others. This also means that your garden should not grow into your neighbor's plot. (If your plants grow into your neighbor's plot, your neighbor is completely justified in pulling it or eating it at his or her discretion. Wars have started based on less than errant tomatoes and overgrown zucchinis).

2) Please keep the weeds and squash bugs in your plot under control. Rampant weeds and marauding squash bugs are unsightly for the neighborhood and a nuisance to your fellow gardeners who don't want your weeds invading their plots or spreading their seeds or bugs devouring their squash. Luckily, weeds are only a significant problem during the rainy season. When your weeds reach ten inches in height, you should expect a gruff reminder from the Garden Manager. Crush the bugs or dispose of an infested plant away from the Garden to spare the rest of us from nightmares.

3) Please do not use any herbicides, Preen or other weed killers in the Garden. Despite the greatest of care, even the slightest breeze could spread some of the weed killer to your neighbor's plot and kill their prized tomatoes or eggplants. This means that all weeds will have to be pulled by hand or demolished by tools of mass plant destruction (like a hoe). Poison (for rodents and bugs) is also discouraged, but careful use of EPA-approved or organic insecticides is permitted (as long as you don't kill too many bees or other beneficial insects like praying mantises and lady bugs). *Remember, bees are a gardener's best friend and mantises eat aphids and grasshoppers.*

4) Please do not litter. Tidy gardeners get brownie points and may receive unexpected goodies courtesy of the magic Garden Gnome. It's not just a rumor.

5) Please do not engage in any criminal or unlawful behavior or otherwise make a nuisance of yourself to other gardeners or the neighbors. This includes your family and guests as well. Guns and lethal weapons are banned from the Garden. The City prohibits alcohol (a/k/a booze) and nocturnal/night-time visits at the Garden. Profanity and anger is highly inappropriate in the absence of personal injury. Gardeners should remember that young children and aging ears are highly sensitive to swear words and angry threats. Violators of this guideline risk, among other things, having their face and the embarrassing story posted all over the internet. If you have no shame, other methods of dissuasion shall be pursued.

6) Please do not hurt yourself or anyone else. Gardening can be dangerous. There are sharp tools, repetitive motions, heavy lifting, unexpected storms and wilting heat. Bring water to hydrate yourself and maybe even a chair for rest breaks. If marauding gangs of thugs, dragons, lightening, tornados or packs of vicious dogs unexpectedly visit the neighborhood or the Garden, please put off gardening until another day or hour and quickly return to a safe place. Do not be a hero, remember the Alamo or imitate Charles Bronson. On the other hand, the Garden is not for Chicken Littles who always think the sky is falling. In short, failing to be prudent in protecting yourself or suffering from frequent bouts of paranoia could lead to the Garden Manager having sleepless nights.

7) Please clean up your plot and remove anything you want to keep by October 31, 2017. Any items left in the Garden on October 31 will either become the Garden Manager's personal property or be donated to Rumpke. For that matter, you probably should not leave anything in the Garden which you cannot live without. Because the Garden is cheap, there is no budget item to pay for Blackwater or other security guards to keep out vandals, raccoons, terrorists, zombies or space aliens. Each gardener is free to bribe the City's fine police force (out of your own funds) or to build your own scarecrow to keep out aggressive birds and possums. *(However, while creative scarecrows are encouraged, please do not create an eyesore for the neighbors.)*

8) Please make every effort to keep the shed tidy, lock up the Garden and shed and turn off spickets when you are finished for the day, and perform your assigned chores on time so that the Garden remains an attractive spot in the neighborhood. The Garden only functions properly if we all share in the work to open, close and maintain it for the season.