



**Abbotsford Community Garden Agreement  
Supplement Guide**

[www.abbotsfordcommunitygarden.com](http://www.abbotsfordcommunitygarden.com)

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## Contact Information

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Website: [abbotsfordcommunitygarden.com](http://abbotsfordcommunitygarden.com)

## Welcome to the Abbotsford Community Garden Society

In addition to looking after individual garden plots, each member is responsible for helping to maintain the common areas. We have lawns; community shared plots of herbs, strawberries, squash, raspberries, and potatoes; a small orchard; and, perennial beds along the driveway and in front of the greenhouse. We also have to look after the maintenance of the greenhouse.

Collectively we take care of the land; maintain the fertility of the soil; maintain a balance and diversity of living organisms; and, ensure that the garden is available for future gardeners.

## Purpose of the Abbotsford Community Garden Society

The Abbotsford Community Garden Society (ACG) Constitution states our purpose as:

- a) To foster the principles behind community growth and development by offering an outdoor space for individuals and groups to develop and nurture their passions for gardening;
- b) To engage and educate members of the community on nutrition, environmental stewardship, agriculture, and passive recreation through seminars, reading materials and other resources;
- c) To provide a positive and complimentary environment where agriculture, wildlife, and passive recreation are brought together;
- d) To create a growing space for community interaction across all ages, cultures and incomes; and
- e) To provide members an opportunity to participate in the natural process of growing food, and thereby improving the local food supply.

## The Abbotsford Community Garden Society

The ACG is located at the corner of Delair Road and Angus Campbell Road and administered by the City of Abbotsford (City) Parks, Recreation and Culture. We are governed by City park rules and by the rules set out by the ACG. Examples of park rules that we must follow include:

- **Fires** are not permitted at the garden site, and,
- **Pets** are not allowed in the garden area.

The ACG works with the City to make the area a place of enjoyment now, and in the future, for the citizens of Abbotsford.

## Who Maintains the Gardens?

Tending the garden's common areas day-to-day, as well as long-term planning and development of the gardens, is done entirely by volunteer members. Central to the idea of a community garden is low fees made possible through member participation.

**When you become a member, you have both the opportunity and the obligation to be involved in garden activities. Participation is a requirement of all gardeners and is built into the annual plot and membership fees.**

## Membership

Garden members elect an executive committee annually to provide administration, organize the work of the gardens, and, arrange education sessions on organic gardening. General meetings are held annually between January and March.

## Plot Renewal

Members have the option to renew their plots from year to year, provided the plots have been maintained the previous season, the member is in good standing, and, the plot is renewed by the plot renewal deadline.

The deadline for membership and plot renewal with payment of fees is September 30<sup>th</sup>. Members who are unable to attend a membership renewal event must contact the treasurer **prior to** September 30<sup>th</sup>. Plots that have not been renewed by September 30<sup>th</sup> go into the pool of available plots to be rented at new member registration dates.

## *Community Garden Agreement*

Gardeners can officially garden at Abbotsford Community Garden after reading and signing the "Community Garden Agreement", and paying your annual fees.

## *Annual Fees*

Fees cover operating expenses of the gardens.

- Plot rental fees are **\$20.00** for each 10 x 20 foot plot and **\$10.00** for each 10 x 10 foot plot or raised bed.
- A minimum of **6 work in-kind hours** per year is required for each plot. Three hours **MUST** be completed before June 30 and the remaining 3 hours completed by September 30.
- New renters pay a "Clean up and Key" deposit of \$20.00 for each garden plot. This

money is forfeited if the garden plot is not cleaned up by September 30<sup>th</sup> and if the key is not returned.

### ***Incomplete Work-in-Kind***

Gardeners who do not participate in work in-kind described above will not be considered to be in good standing for membership renewal and will not be permitted to renew their plot.

## **What are the fees used for?**

Any monies raised by the ACG is used for the following:

- Operating costs,
- Replacement and repair of equipment (tillers, lawn mower, hoses, etc.), and,
- Community events.

## **Choosing a Plot**

Garden plots are assigned on a first come/first serve basis. Renting more than one plot will depend on availability. A maximum of two plots can be rented per member household.

## **Member Responsibilities**

- Keep the Society informed of any changes to your contact information.
- Work your plots by May 1st. At a minimum, weeds and cover crops must be cut down.
- Maintain your plots and provide weed control throughout the growing season.
- Arrange for someone to look after your plot(s) if you are away or unable to tend your plots.

## **Using the ACG Greenhouse**

### ***Growing bedding plants***

Members are allowed to grow a small number of bedding plants for their garden in the two south rooms of the greenhouse. The water is turned on around April 1<sup>st</sup> and turned off the last week in October.

### ***Washroom***

The only washroom on site is located in the greenhouse. Members need to take responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of this facility.

## Garden Tools

Some tools are provided by ACG. These have either been purchased by ACG or donated by merchants or by gardeners. Use tools in a safe manner and clean them before returning them to the greenhouse. Community tools are only to be used at the garden. They must be returned at the end of each day and are not to be taken home. If tools are not being used or cared for properly, garden members will have to start bringing their own as the ACG will discontinue purchasing them. Please leave a note if a tool is broken.

If you have your own garden tools, don't store them in the greenhouse unless you don't mind sharing them with other gardeners. Power equipment – all use is at your own risk.

## Parking

Parking is only permitted in the parking lot unless you are loading or unloading heavy or particularly large items; or, have physical limitations that prevent you access to your plot. We want to remain a safe environment and limiting the traffic and parked cars in the ACG will help to prevent accidents. Wheelbarrows are available to help transport materials to and from your vehicle.

## Your Garden Plot

### *Environment*

We are an *organic* garden. Herbicides, pesticides or chemical fertilizers cannot be applied anywhere unless they meet organic standards. If in doubt contact a member of the executive. Organic gardening works!

### *Planting*

Plots must be gardened (i.e., not left in grass). Plants must not shade neighboring plots, and must remain within plot boundaries. Any planting in common areas must be approved by the executive.

The Abbotsford Community Garden forbids the planting of the following invasive species:

- \*English Ivy (*Hedera helix*) and varieties
- \*Lamium (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon*) & varieties
- \*Policeman's Helmet (*Impatiens glandulifera*)
- \*Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)
- \*Morning glory (*Convolvulus sepium*)
- Goutweed (*Aegopodium podagraria*)
- Yellow flag Iris (*Iris pseudocarpus*)
- Periwinkle: Vinca (*Vinca major*, *Vinca minor*)
- Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*)

Blackberry (*Rubus discolor*, *Rubus laciniatus*)

\*denotes species we need to watch for.

**Trees are prohibited in garden plots.**

### **Plot Maintenance**

- You must keep your plot weeded and prevent plants from growing beyond the borders of your plot. Please prevent vegetation from attacking walkways and adjacent plots.
- Be respectful. Tall crops such as sunflowers and corn and structures should be planted to not shade another garden.
- Cover crops must be cut or dug under by May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Weeds and sod can be composted or buried on your plot. This will improve your soil fertility. If you are unable to bury this material, it can be added to the community compost area.
- Gardeners are responsible for weeding and trimming all edges of their plots. Weeds must not be allowed to go to seed. Neighborhood pathways must be kept clear of rocks, wire, wood, garbage, and tools.
- Maintain your plot throughout the year. Harvest your produce as it ripens. If you are unable to use your produce, please consider placing it in the provided food bank donation bin. Begin plot clean-up as you harvest and have your plot clear of debris by September 30<sup>th</sup>. Winter crops such as kale, leeks, garlic, Brussels sprouts, etc., can be left to mature.

The consequences of not maintaining your plot are outlined in the section on Guideline Enforcement.

### **Water**

- All plots have access to a hose. Bring a nozzle or watering wand if you wish. Gardeners need to be diligent in shutting the water off after their use (in the past, flooding has occurred due to the water not being shut off).
- Water for the gardens is pumped from a well located just east of the Barn. The greenhouse is connected to the City water system.
- Please do not use the water in the plot area to water the goats. The goats require municipal water from the greenhouse.

### **Mulches**

Mulches help to conserve soil moisture and we encourage their use. Acceptable mulch materials include grass clippings, straw, leaves, peat moss, manure, fir bark, and sawdust. Cardboard and newsprint are acceptable provided they are covered. *Do not* use western red cedar bark mulch, black plastic, hay or gravel.

### **Pathways in your plot**

Acceptable materials for covering pathways are landscape fabric (covered), fir sawdust,

leaves, bark mulch (not cedar), straw, concrete blocks, and stepping stones.

## Plot Structure Guidelines

Structures include pole bean and pea supports, trellises, arbors, plant/row covers, cold frames, fences, water barrels and raised bed borders.

### *Guiding Principles*

- *Be considerate of fellow gardeners.*
- Do not place a structure on your plot that will shade a neighbor.
- Structures must be aesthetically compatible with park and garden atmosphere.
- Structures must be sturdy and safe. Avoid sharp edges, protruding edges, glass, and *treated wood*.
- Permanent structures must be monitored year round and repaired as required.
- All structures in common areas must be pre-approved by the executive.

### *Restrictions*

- No treated lumber!
- No black plastic or plastic tarps (they become nesting areas for mice, voles, and slugs).
- No loose fitting netting (hazard for birds).
- Folding camp chairs are acceptable.

### *Storage of Construction Material*

- Materials should not be left on the plot.
- Materials cannot be stored in pathways or common areas.
- We have limited storage. Please take your structures and materials home for the winter.
- The greenhouse is cleaned out periodically, without notice. What appears to be garbage will be taken to the dump.

## Structures

### *Cold Frames*

- Maximum height 1.83 meter (6 feet).
- Maximum coverage 5 square meters (48 square feet) per plot.
- No glass and no treated wood.

### *Plant /Row Covers*

- Maximum height 1.83 meters (6 feet).
- Maximum area: 5 square meters (48 square feet) per plot.
- Must be structurally sound and anchored within the plot border.
- Clear plastic covers must be of a durable thickness (5 mil) that will be wind-proof and will

- not tear. Winter removal is recommended. Fabric row covers must be thoroughly secured.
- Row covers must be kept in good repair.

### ***Pole Bean and Pea Supports***

- No limit per plot for temporary seasonal supports, but must not exceed 1.83 meter (6 feet) high.

### ***Raspberries/Grapes***

- Must be planted a minimum of 2 feet from the plot border.
- Must be trellised and confined so that they don't grow into the pathway or neighbors' plots.
- Must be properly pruned within the boundaries of the plot and kept below 6 feet.

### ***Trellises / Arbors***

- Must be sturdily constructed and safely anchored.
- Maximum height 1.83 meters (6 feet from ground level to highest point).
- No treated lumber.

### ***Compost Boxes on Plots***

- Must be securely anchored.
- Plastic allowed. *No treated lumber.*
- Maximum size: 1 cubic meter.
- Must be located on Gardener's plot.
- If odor or the attraction of pests becomes a problem, the gardener may be asked to remove his compost box/bin.

### ***Water Barrels***

A number of water barrels are provided for anyone's use and are located in the common areas. If you are using these, it is your responsibility to refill it. If you wish to bring your own water barrel, the following applies:

- Maximum base height 10 cm (4 inches),
- Maximum 180 liter (45 gallon) container,
- Must be stable and securely covered (e.g., fitted screening and lid during mosquito season),
- Must be on a Gardener's plot, and,
- One barrel per plot.

### ***Fences***

- It must be located within the plot area and constructed in such a way that all supports are situated on the inside of the fence. This is done to make it easy to mow grass on the pathways.

- Non-injurious materials permitting movement of light and air will be considered. *No treated lumber.*
- Maximum height: 105 cm (42 inches).

## **Respecting Other's Garden Plots (those rented by someone else)**

- Stay out of other people's plots unless specifically invited.
- While you may view the success of other gardeners, refrain from stepping off the access paths and into other garden plots. Gardeners have their own methods of planting, which may be damaged in the process.
- Pick only the plants you are growing or have permission from the grower to pick.

## **Shared Community Garden Plots**

Several perennial sites have been established (herb garden, strawberry patch, raspberry patch, and orchard). Depending on availability, we annually seed a potato, squash, and pumpkin patch. These are joint or community ventures. You are allowed to join in the harvest from these areas as long as you complete your work in-kind hours. Only take enough to supply yourself with one meal.

## **Gardeners, Family, and Pets**

### ***Gardeners***

In the spirit of cooperation, all gardeners shall treat the garden, other gardeners, neighbors and visitors with respect and consideration. No stealing (harvesting from others' plots without authorization), verbal, or physical harassment is allowed.

### ***Children***

Children are welcome at the garden when accompanied and fully supervised by an adult. Teach children to stay on paths. Parents are encouraged to bring children to the garden and introduce them to the wonders of gardening.

### ***Dogs***

Are not permitted at the ACG.

## **Miscellaneous**

### ***Garden gates and locks***

The last gardener to leave the garden regardless of the time of day should securely close and lock both the greenhouse door and the perimeter fence gate. Be sure to check and make sure you are not locking someone in the garden or greenhouse.

## ***Disposal of Materials***

- Plot owners are responsible for removal and disposal of all unwanted gardening materials and lumber.
- No materials are to be disposed of in the common areas or adjacent to the community garden.

## **Guideline Enforcement**

Every effort will be made to help gardeners understand and follow the guidelines. If the guidelines are not followed your plots may be revoked. The disciplinary policy is as follows:

a) **You will receive one caution and one warning, then your plot may be terminated under the following situations:**

- Plots not worked by May 1<sup>st</sup>;
- Plots neglected causing the spread of weeds;
- Use of treated lumber;
- Use of materials or structures that do not meet the guidelines;
- Use of herbicides, insecticides and fungicides that are not approved for organic gardening; or,
- Parking inappropriately. Please see Parking on page 4.

b) **Your plot may be terminated immediately under the following situations:**

- Conducting any illegal activity;
- Bringing waste into the garden for disposal or compost;
- Stealing/damaging someone else's plot;
- Use of racial slurs;
- Threatening a member's safety; or,
- Use of the tractor or rototiller without permission.

Members will lose their plots without notice if they do not register for the upcoming year on time or do not document their work in-kind hours.

## **Goats**

Dr. Jane Pritchard heads up the goat project. Two goats from Dairy Pride join us for the summer until they are old enough to join the dairy herd. Meanwhile, they live at our garden and help by keeping the blackberry brambles under control.

Thanks go out to the team of volunteers who help with daily goat care. Dr. Pritchard will hold training for those who want to learn to help.

The goats should not be fed by anyone but the designated team members. It is also important that the goats are not given well water from the garden. Please only water goats

with municipal water from the greenhouse.

## Seed Starting Chart Guide

Abbotsford (avg.) Last Frost Date April 24<sup>th</sup>

First Frost Date October 18<sup>th</sup>

Frost Free Days 177 days

<b>Crop</b>	<b>Indoor Start Date</b>	<b>Weeks from Sowing</b>	<b>Safe to Set Out</b> (relative to frost free date)	<b>Set Out Date</b>
Basil		6	1 week after	
Beets *		- 6	2 weeks before	
Broccoli		- 6	2 weeks before	
Cabbage		- 6	4 weeks before	
Cauliflower		- 6	2 weeks before	
Collards		- 6	4 weeks before	
Corn *		- 4	1-2 weeks after	
Cucumber		- 4	1-2 weeks after	
Kale		- 6	4 weeks before	
Lettuce		- 5	3-4 weeks before	
Melons		- 4	2 weeks after	
Onions		- 8	4 weeks before	
Parsley		- 10	2-3 weeks before	
Peas *		- 4	6-8 weeks before	
Peppers		- 14	2 weeks after	
Pumpkins		- 4	2 weeks after	
Spinach		- 6	3-6 weeks before	
Squash		- 4	2 weeks after	
Swiss Chard		- 6	2 weeks before	
Tomatoes		- 8	1-2 weeks after	

\* Crops are usually direct-seeded outdoors, but may be started inside.

Source: Chart adapted from [organicgardening.com](http://organicgardening.com) January 2001

# A Beginner's Guide to Vegetable Gardening

<http://www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org/articles/5/>

*Author:* Tony Maniezzo, UBC's Food Garden Horticulturist

## ***Keep It Simple***

The biggest mistake made by beginning gardeners is starting too big. They are soon overwhelmed by the task, feeling discouraged and guilty. Vegetable gardening should be fun. If it becomes an onerous chore to water, weed, thin and pick, you will probably give up. We all live busy lives. When you start grumbling about going out to the garden after a day's work, the garden is going to suffer.

## ***Getting Started***

- Start small, gain confidence. A single raised bed 2m (6ft) by 3m (9ft) or 4m (12ft) is large enough. You can always add beds later as your confidence and skill grows. If you already have a large bed to begin with, consider dividing it up into smaller sections. Maybe plant some flowers or herbs to fill in the area? If your area is large, another idea is to plant squash or pumpkins – they cover a large area and help to reduce maintenance.
- Choose a site that gets at least 6 hours of sunlight per day
- Remove the sod from the site, shake off the soil and add the sod to your compost bin. It speeds up the composting if you rip up the sod into small pieces. If you don't have a compost bin, build one. You will be doing your garden a favor in the future. If there is buttercup in the sod pieces, do get rid of it.
- I recommend framing in the bed area and creating a raised bed. The soil will warm up sooner in the spring and help to keep weeds out of the bed. Use landscape ties or 2' x 10' boards. The really adventurous can build concrete forms. A 30-45 cm (12 to 18 inches) deep beds works well. Fill with topsoil.
- Feed the soil, not the plants.
- Add organic matter to a depth of approx. 10 to 15 cm (4 to 6 inches). This can be compost, animal or mushroom manure.
- Dig the organic matter into the top layer of soil. Let it sit for at least a couple of days before sowing or planting.

## ***Sowing Seed***

- Start sowing early in the season. At the Botanical Garden (located in Vancouver, British Columbia), I start in the first week of March.
- Remember, only grow what you and your family will eat. At this point in your gardening career, don't worry too much about trying to supply yourself with vegetables that will last all year. What you are trying to do is have small successes

that build into something greater over time.

- This guide, catalogues, gardening books, and the Internet can be used to help you plan what to grow at different times of the year
- In April, sow spinach, green onions, carrots, cabbage, lettuce and Swiss chard.
- In May, sow pole beans, turnips, bush beans and corn.
- In June, sow bush beans.
- In July, sow spinach, mustard greens, Swiss chard and rutabaga.
- In August, sow onions and radishes.
- In September, sow radishes, broad beans, Oriental greens, salad blends and arugula.

### ***Planting***

- Warm season vegetables, such as tomatoes, squashes and peppers, are best bought from a local nursery (at least until you become more skilled at sowing seeds and creating indoor growing space). These are best planted in late May and early June.
- Other vegetables can also be purchased from the nursery and planted earlier. In the early stages of gardening I recommend this to help with the success of your garden.
- Another time of year for planting is August. This is when your winter vegetables would go in. Unfortunately, nurseries don't seem to carry vegetables at this time of year so you would have to sow your own in July or purchase plants earlier and plant them.

### ***Weeding***

- Weeds rob moisture and nutrients from vegetable plants, therefore you are helping to increase harvests by eliminating competition. Weeds also block sunlight.
- Have a positive attitude toward the task. It provides exercise, helps make compost and produces better veggies.
- Hoe regularly, even when you don't see a lot of weeds. This helps to kill germinating seeds and cultivates the soil.
- Avoid walking on newly cultivated beds as the soil compaction helps weeds to germinate and destroys soil texture. Use boards for walking on if you must go into the beds.
- Make sure you get all the roots of perennial weeds. A tiny root of dandelion or buttercup will quickly regrow into a full size weed.

### ***Mulching***

- To help combat weeds, you can mulch between rows. Organic mulches are best. When they breakdown, they benefit the soil. Use straw, grass clippings or pine needles.
- Mulching also helps to conserve moisture and modify soil temperature.

- Black plastic can also be used. It works, but personally I think it's ugly.
- Mulches should be applied when soil is moist.

### **Watering**

- Deep regular watering is best. This allows for better root formation, plant stability and nutrient recovery.
- Seeds and transplants need to be kept moist. Watering every day may be required. For seeds that are planted deeper, such as beans, drying out is less of a problem.
- Best time to water is early morning.
- Do not wait for plants to show symptoms. Check soil regularly, grab a handful and squeeze it. If particles cling together, it is fine; but, if it feels dry and particles separate, it needs watering.
- Lack of moisture shows itself in different ways. Beets stop growing and become fibrous. Radishes grow hollow and stringy. Melons will not set fruit. Corn ears will not fill to the top. Leafy vegetables become bitter. Beans grow distorted. Tomatoes will show physical disorders such as blossom end rot. Squash wilt.

### **Pests and Diseases**

- Try not to get crazy about insects chewing on your plants. If you fret about every little thing, gardening will not be a fun activity. Remember, bugs need to eat too.
- Do not use pesticides – poisons are not fun. They often kill beneficial insects along with the unwanted ones.
- Practice companion planting, e.g., onions and garlic around carrots and other root crops.
- Attract beneficial insects by planting flowers around your vegetable plot. Fennel and dill both attract a beneficial wasp that preys on aphids.
- Become observant. Check for aphids and rub them out with your hand or blast them with the hose.
- Look for cabbage butterfly larvae under the leaves and pick them off. A few holes is not a problem, as it usually the outer leaves that are affected.
- Slugs can be trapped with beer or kept away from vulnerable plants with eggshells.

## **Some Final Thoughts**

These are the basics that should allow you to have a simple yet productive garden. With early success comes enthusiasm. The rest is up to you. Read books, talk to neighbors, use online forums, resources on the Internet, experiment and, above all, have fun. You will soon take the next step, trying new varieties and techniques for an even more rewarding experience – happy eating and enjoy!