



Health Science Center Community Garden Guidelines - 2021

Mission and Purpose

The mission of the HSC Community Garden is to enhance university and community engagement, promote sustainable food production, and educate on health and nutrition, environmental stewardship, and gardening techniques.

The Health Science Center is committed to create solutions for a healthier community, and the purpose of the community garden is to support the overall mission and vision of the university. Specifically the garden's purposes are:

- **Health and Nutrition** – The garden provides opportunities for our employees and students to participate in activities that promote health through good nutrition and physical activity.
- **Education** – The community garden offers both hands-on and classroom settings for educating our campus on health and nutrition, environmental stewardship, and gardening.
- **Community Engagement** – By donating a portion of the yield, we are building community relations and serving our local community.
- **Team Building** – The garden creates an environment for people to interact and work alongside others they may not normally engage with. This enhances a sense of community on campus through team building and working towards a common goal.
- **Environmental Stewardship** – The garden incorporates environmentally sustainable gardening practices and supports our university's overall sustainability goals.

General Information

The HSC Community Garden is located at 3621 W 7th St. Fort Worth, TX 76107. The garden consists of thirty five 4'x12' plots, and each plot is gardened by individuals or groups of HSC employees and students and members of the community. There are compost bins on site along with a tool shed. The university provides the land and water use for the garden, and routine garden expenses such as tools, plants, and soil, are purchased with funds collected annually by the gardeners or are donated to the garden by local businesses and organizations. The garden was initially funded through donations, and approved funds from the Sustainable Campus Fee, a student fee managed by The Office of Sustainability.

Registration Information

Plot Gardeners: HSC employees and students as well as people in our community may be plot gardeners meaning they have gardening privileges for a particular plot in the garden. Plots are assigned on a first come, first serve basis. If all plots are occupied, prospective gardeners' names will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which they were received. To be added to the waiting list, email sustainability@unthsc.edu. Current gardeners in good standing and who have completed at least 6 hours of community volunteer time may retain their assigned plot and remain a gardener the following year by signing the agreement and making the annual financial contribution during registration. A plot may be shared by a group or organization affiliated with the university. A person may only own one plot unless the second plot is with a group or organization.

Registration Process: Gardeners may choose seasonal or year-round gardenership of a plot. Time frames and dues are January 1st through June 30th or July 1st through December 31st for seasonal plots, at \$25 per six-month period; or January 1st through December for a year-round plot at \$35. However, if a plot is available, a person may become a gardener of a plot any time during the year. Contributions are non-refundable and due at the time of registration. Registration begins November 1st prior to the start of the planting year. Current gardeners must re-register before December 15th in order to retain their plot otherwise the plot will be available for a new plot gardener. All gardeners are required to sign the Community Garden Agreement acknowledging that they understand the commitment and expectations of maintaining a plot. Communication to plot gardeners will be conducted through email. All new gardeners must meet with the garden coordinator, sustainability coordinator, or other garden representative prior to managing a plot in order to be assigned a plot, get answers to questions, be given a tour of the garden, etc.



Loss of Garden Plot Privilege: If a plot does not meet the standards specified in the Rules & Regulations Section (see below), an email will be sent notifying them. The plot gardener then has one week to bring the plot up to standard. If after a week the plot is still not up to standard, the plot gardener will receive another email warning him or her to remedy the problem within three days. If after the final warning period the issues described in the emails have not been remedied, then the gardener will have to forfeit the plot. The plot will then be available for use by a new plot gardener.

If at any time, a plot gardener decides to discontinue use of the plot, he or she must notify the Garden Coordinator or Sustainability Coordinator as soon as possible so the plot may be reassigned.

Rules & Regulations

Plot Maintenance

1. Garden hours are sunrise to sunset. No special parking will be provided for the garden, so you must adhere to university parking policies.
2. To fulfill the purpose of encouraging environmental stewardship, the use of synthetic fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides, or fungicides is prohibited (see Appendix for list of acceptable materials). The only exception is during persistent infestations, as determined by the Garden Steering Committee. If a synthetic product is to be used, it will be applied only by a certified applicator from Facilities Management. Any plot found using products not on the list or without special permission will be notified by email to discontinue use immediately. If the violation continues, the plot will again be emailed, and the plot gardener will have to forfeit the plot. The plot will then be available for use by a new plot gardener.
3. A portion of the harvest must be donated to a local food bank to fulfill the purpose of community service and engagement. A donation amount of 25% is encouraged. On set Harvest Days (as communicated to all gardeners), volunteers will harvest from the plots and the weight of the harvest will be recorded. If no Harvest Day is scheduled, gardeners are to harvest from their plot to prevent spoilage and place items in the shelves attached to the tool shed that is free for anyone to take.
4. Gardeners may only harvest from their plot unless given permission by the other plot gardener or on official donation harvest days.
5. It is the plot gardener's responsibility to find a caretaker for the plot in the event that he or she is unable to attend to the plot for longer than two weeks. This includes holidays, vacations, summer, and winter breaks.
6. Plots must be planted no later than April 7th and winterized by December 15th unless a winter garden is planted. Winterizing plots means crops are harvested and dead vegetation is removed. Plots are to be attended regularly by the gardener during the year and kept tidy at all times.
7. Plot gardeners are required to keep plots in a planted, productive state or mulched and free of debris, weeds, invasive vegetation, etc. Weeds and other invasive vegetation must be controlled and checked regularly by the gardener.
8. No permanent structure may be built in or around plots. Do not nail or screw structures, signs, etc. into the boards unless given permission by garden coordinator, sustainability coordinator, or steering committee.
9. Gardeners are permitted to grow only within their designated garden plot. Pots or planters are not permitted around the perimeter of the garden plot.

_____ Please initial to show that you have read and agree with this section.

Overall Garden Maintenance

1. In order to keep the entire garden maintained and to encourage community, volunteer work will be required from each plot over the course of the year. * Gardeners should plan to work at least half an hour each month (6 hours each year) in general maintenance of the garden separate from any work on the plot itself. The volunteer time must be recorded by the last day of each month in the log located in the notebook in the tool shed. If a plot has not contributed to the general maintenance of the garden and not recorded the volunteer time, a notification will be sent to the contact person(s) of the plot. **If after 3 months no volunteer time has been logged for a plot, the plot will be forfeited and turned over to the next person on the waiting list.** The volunteer work may be any general garden maintenance including but not limited to pulling weeds from the paths, mulching paths, picking up trash, sweeping the shed, etc. Please see the full list including strenuous and nonstrenuous activities posted in the tool shed.
2. Common garden areas such as walkways, space between the plots, the tool shed, compost bins, and the area around the garden must be kept free of trash, pots, debris, etc. Plot gardeners are expected to contribute to the tidiness of these areas. Place trash and compost in the appropriate container.
3. Water and hoses are supplied by the university at the site, and gardeners must stay on site during watering. Timers are prohibited. The hoses may be left attached.
4. Common-use tools are available for use by all plot gardeners. They are stored in the tool shed, and each plot gardener will be given a combination to the lock. Gardeners must put all tools and equipment back in the shed and lock it prior to leaving the garden.
5. Compost bins are provided to the right of the tool shed, and they are maintained by a dedicated group of volunteers. When clearing out vegetation from plots, gardeners are to cut pieces in 4" pieces or less and place in Bin 1. If the gardener is not able to cut to the appropriate size, they are to place the vegetation in the dumpster located at the back of the garden. Compost that is ready for use will be the bin to the right of bin 3, and any gardener can use it.
6. If there are any concerns about the garden, call 817-735-2451 or email sustainability@unthsc.edu.
7. All persons in the garden are to adhere to all university policies.

_____Please initial to show that you have read and agree with this section.

Garden Management

The HSC Community Garden site is provided by the university. It is managed by the Garden Steering Committee and overseen by the Office of Sustainability through Facilities Management. The committee is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the garden and its activities are fulfilling its mission and purposes.
- Provides guidance on issues and opportunities.
- Decisions regarding plot maintenance and current and future community garden activities.
- Communication with the plot gardeners.
- Supervision and maintenance of the garden space.
- Setting forth the garden's policies, procedures, and rules.

The committee is overseen by the Office of Sustainability staff (including the Community Garden Administrative Associate) and consists of HSC volunteers as well as two community representatives who serve on the committee for one year terms from September 1st to August 31st. The community representative(s) must be a plot gardener with our garden. A change can be made to the guidelines if a majority of the committee members agree on the change.



All Members:

- Conduct routine inspections of the plots and garden space, and monitor the garden for signs of theft and/or vandalism.
- Note any noncompliance by plot gardeners and notify the garden coordinator(s).
- Address plot gardener concerns in a timely manner.
- Maintain abandoned, empty, or seized plots until a new plot gardener is assigned.

Community Garden Administrative Associate:

- Organizes and presides over Garden Steering Committee Meetings.
- Directs the committee to conduct garden information meetings, mandatory gardener meetings, work days, etc.
- Communicates directly with gardeners about issues, concerns, general questions, etc.
- Sends out weekly updates to all the gardeners.
- Works closely with the sustainability coordinator within Facilities Management to manage the garden.
- Plans, organizes and leads Planting Day and Work Days.
- Organizes both classroom and on-site educational opportunities related to the garden and its mission and purposes.

Appendix

1. Acceptable Fertilizers, Pesticides, Fungicides List: Only items on this list may be used. This list is not an exhaustive list of organic options. If a plot gardener has a product that is questionable, he or she can get special permission for use by the committee.

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| • Organic herbicides, fungicides, and insecticides | • Greensand |
| • Compost and compost teas | • Sphagnum peat moss |
| • Biodegradable detergents | • Calcium limestone flour |
| • Seaweed meal or liquid | • Iron (chelated 10%) |
| • Alfalfa meal | • Epsom salt |
| • Phosphate rock | • Fish meal and fish oils |
| • Blood meal | • Vegetable oils |
| • Bone meal | • Biodegradable soaps |
| | • Thuricide |

**Guidelines are subject to change temporarily based on current events that directly impact the garden program and its participants.*

I have read the HSC Community Garden Guidelines including the Rules & Regulations. By signing, I acknowledge that I understand, accept, and agree to follow the terms and conditions outlined.

Signature _____

Date _____