



MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY GARDEN

Guidelines, Responsibilities and Rules of Conduct

The Township of Middletown, Department of Public Works (“DPW”) is the governing authority at the Middletown Township Community Garden (“MCG”). Upon registration as a member of the MCG (“Member”), it mutually agreed that in consideration of a fee, the Member shall have use of a specific plot of ground, for one growing season, under the terms and considerations set forth below.

A. Annual Fees

Members are responsible for the annual rental of an MCG plot. Please note that all fees are non-refundable. There is a limit of two plots per household.

Annual fees are due at time of registration.

B. Operation

Access: Members shall be given a code to enter both the gate at the access road in Stevenson Park for vehicle access as well as to enter the gate at the garden itself. Members will not give the code to non-members of the garden.

The garden is located within Stevenson Park off West Front Street. Pull into the park, drive over the bridge, then up the hill to the first parking lot where there will be a locked gate in front of you. Use the code given to unlock then drive down the access road. The garden is located on the left with parking available.

Please make sure the gates for both the garden and the access road are locked when you leave unless someone else is present in the garden.

Season: Growing season in the state of New Jersey is defined as running from April 15th through November 15th. Members must be actively gardening no later than June 1st or will forfeit the use of the plot without a refund of the registration fee.

Hours: MCG hours are from dawn to dusk. Use of loud equipment is limited to the hours of 9:00 AM through 5:00 PM.

Gardening Method: Only organic gardening methods may be practiced. There shall be no use of synthetic chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, or rodenticides. No pressure-treated wood of any kind is to be used in the garden.

Facebook page: While all housekeeping will be shared with gardeners via email, and although it is not a requirement, we ask that members utilize the Facebook page for all other communication and information. The Facebook page is meant to be a helpful tool for gardeners to learn, share, and help each other and grow our sense of community!

Waitlist: A waitlist will be maintained for all plot requests including additional space for current members and new membership requests. **All requests must be made in writing via email to communitygarden@middletownnj.org.** The list will be maintained by the order in which the request was made and requests will be fulfilled in that order.

C. General Responsibilities

Volunteer Hours: In addition to maintaining one's plot, each member agrees to contribute 5 (five) hours annually to participate in tasks as appropriate to the general maintenance and overall operation of the MCG throughout the season. A list of approved volunteer opportunities will be provided to the members at the beginning and throughout the growing season.

Disposal of trash: The MCG shall operate on a carry-in/carry-out system and each individual member is responsible for the removal of any trash he/she produces on-site.

Composting: As part of a complete organic gardening cycle, organic material from garden plots will be composted at the town's recycling center. At this time we are legally unable to build a compost pile on site.

The DPW will provide bins to collect plant material for composting and bring them to the recycling center.

- Only organic matter should be placed in the bins
- Shake off dirt from roots
- Break down large woody stalks (i.e. broccoli, corn, sunflower, brambles) into small pieces
- DO NOT place trash in the compost
- DO NOT place rocks in the compost

Composting is permitted within your plot using compost tumblers, corrals, a simple pile etc. Please keep a neat and tidy appearance and monitor regularly for foul odors and rodent activity and address these issues accordingly.

Apiary: Our honey bee hives are maintained by local beekeepers and are a vital part of pollinating the garden. The hives, equipment and honey are the property of the beekeepers and are not for public garden use. DO NOT approach the bee hives.

Water: Spigots are located in the center of the paths as well as near the front gate. The DPW has provided hoses and hose sprayers for garden use. Watering cans may also be used to cart water to an individual plot.

The following rules must be followed when using hoses:

- Hoses can be used any day and any time.
- If others are present in the garden, please limit your usage to 20 minutes to allow others to also use the hoses.
- Hoses must be coiled neatly upon completion of use.
- Hoses may not cut across plots or walkways. Please be mindful of tripping hazards and other members' crops.
- Please do not leave the water on unattended. When finished gardening for the day, please roll up the hose and return tools to the shed before leaving the garden.

Pathways and Common Areas: All pathways and common areas must be kept clear of gardening equipment, debris, etc.

Garden Shed: The garden shed is used to store MCG provided supplies, tools and equipment only. Do not store personal items in the shed.

Meetings: New members are invited to attend an orientation and end of season meeting to learn more about the garden and to have their questions answered. .

D. Rules of Conduct

Behavior: At all times while on the MCG grounds, the member agrees to be respectful of other members. The DPW reserves the right to revoke or deny membership privileges, without refund of membership fees, at its sole discretion for any of the following

- for a breach of the rules and regulations
- engaging in conduct, which is abusive, illegal, and disruptive or pose a threat to the safety of others
- abuse or misuse any Township owned or operated equipment or facilities

It is asked that courtesy be shown when using cell phones in the garden so as not to infringe on the tranquility of other members. Smoking is prohibited.

Speed Limit: Please drive with extreme caution as you enter and exit the garden. Be wary of children. Be courteous to residents in neighboring homes. A speed limit of 5 mph is to be observed at all times.

Trespassing: Under no circumstances may one member enter another member's plot unless granted specific permission. This includes, but is not limited to, the borrowing of equipment, removal of plants, removal of harvest and watering of plants.

Visitors, guests and children: The member agrees to accompany and supervise all visitors, guests and children at all times and to be responsible for the conduct of these parties. The MCG will not be held responsible for any injuries sustained by any visitor, guest or child.

Pets: Only service animals are allowed on-site.

Health and Safety: Please be mindful of detrimental seasonal conditions including heat, sun exposure, and warm weather pests such as mosquitos and ticks. Safety measures should be taken at all times.

Water from spigots **is not** suitable for drinking. Please bring drinking water with you to the garden.

Inquiries: All requests or suggestions for services, assistance, events or information, including those regarding plot relocation, are to be directed to the DPW at communitygarden@middletownnj.org. All events must be approved by the DPW.

Disputes: Any problems, complaints or issues arising through the use of the MCG should be brought to the attention of the DPW at communitygarden@middletownnj.org.

E. Use and Care of Your Plot

Maintenance of Plot: Membership and the continued right to use the MCG are contingent upon the member's continued maintenance of his or her individual plot. Members shall keep his/her plot free of overripe, rotting and spoiled fruit and vegetables. Similarly, members will remove all dead plants from his/her plot. Members shall keep his/her plot free of all weeds. Routine inspection of plots will be done on a monthly basis by the DPW. Members not in accordance with the above will first be issued a reminder notice. Upon third reminder notice, members may risk forfeiture of plot.

Weeding: In addition to weeding his or her individual plot, each member is responsible for the care of the shared pathway as well as the main pathway in front of their plot. Members not in accordance will be issued a reminder notice. Upon third reminder notice, members may risk forfeiture of plot.

Garden Helpers: Each member is permitted two helpers to assist them with their plots. The garden helpers are required to follow all of the rules and code of conduct in this document and assist with weeding and clearing the area around their plot. We ask that all garden helpers are part of the MCG email list and Facebook communication channels so we can all be on the same page. MCG Facebook link will be provided to you once registered.

Impermissible Plants: Members shall not plant any illegal plants, poisonous plants, trees or plants that spread through underground runners, canes or other such means. Some examples are bamboo and morning glory (flower or weed). Members shall not plant mint.

If a member is in doubt as to whether a specific plant is allowed or has a question, he/she will ask the DPW at communitygarden@middletownnj.org. The DPW has the authority to require the removal of any plant at any time for any reason.

Height Restriction: Members are limited to a 6 ft. height restriction on any structures within their garden to prevent shading other garden beds.

Personal Belongings: Members may add trellises, planters, decorations and other personal items to enhance their garden space. Lost or damaged personal belongings are not the responsibility of the DPW and the member must remove all personal items when membership is terminated or if instructed to do so by the DPW.

Winterizing: Although your membership permits you to use your plot space for a full calendar year, you will be asked to announce to the DPW your intentions to renew or terminate your membership for each upcoming season by the third week of October by emailing communitygarden@middletownnj.org.

Winterize your plot(s) accordingly by November 15th as follows:

- Members who intend to **renew membership** in the following season must clear plot(s)/pathway(s) of all dead plant and weed matter, secure all personal belongs, and remove of all trash. Addition of organic matter such as leaves or compost is encouraged. Renewing members keep their same plot assignment year to year, unless a request is made to the MCG Committee to relocate or increase/decrease plot size. Every effort will be made to accommodate requests, however, there is no guarantee.
- Members who intend to **terminate membership** will be required to follow the guidelines outlined in section F of this document and approved by the DPW. Please refer to the section below on Termination of Membership for additional details.

F. Termination of Membership

The Member or the DPW can terminate membership at any time. It is the member's responsibility to gather personal belongings, to clear the plot of all debris and plant growth and dispose of it appropriately, and to leave the plot in a usable state for the next member. Members are given two weeks from termination of membership to meet this requirement if membership is terminated prematurely; otherwise, members are given until November 15th of the current growing season to meet this requirement. If these requirements are not performed, then the member is not permitted to reinstate membership in the future. The DPW is not responsible for any personal belongings left behind.

G. Additional Advisories

Additional rules and responsibilities may be implemented at the discretion of the DPW who will enforce said rules and responsibilities.

Failure to comply with any terms outlined in the Middletown Township Community Garden Guidelines, Responsibilities and Rules of Conduct will result in forfeiture of gardening privileges.

No exceptions. No refunds.