



# FCPA Community Garden Plot Rental Program

## Hogge Park Garden Plots

### Hogge Gardens Rules and Commitment 2024

The Fairfax County Park Authority's **Community Garden Plot Rental Program** operates in eleven host parks throughout the County. Residents participating in the program enjoy nature, plant flowers, grow fruits and vegetables for food, and get exercise from the practice of gardening. The Hogge Park Garden Plot Rules and Commitment provide the gardeners, their families, and the entire gardening community with basic principles for a successful garden plot program.

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#### I. Purpose of the Program

The Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) provides Fairfax County residents the opportunity to participate in a community gardening experience through the Community Garden Plot Rental Program. Over 700 garden plots are rented on an annual basis. Gardening is permitted during the contract period whenever the host park is open, generally from dawn to dusk each day.

The rules and guidelines for the Garden Plot Program ensure that all participating gardeners have the opportunity for a positive gardening experience, that garden plot sites are an asset to the community, and that all plots are used in a productive manner. All gardeners must agree to follow the rules and guidelines of the Garden Plot Program.

Hogge Park's 34 rental garden plots are situated within a decorative fence that encloses raised beds in a communal setting. Gardeners are therefore required to sign a Community Commitment that guides their interactions with others in the shared garden space.

The single-season rental term at Hogge Park is designed to give gardeners a hands-on opportunity to learn new garden principles and practices, with educational support that will help gardeners start new community gardens at nearby faith communities, community centers, local organizations, and at home.

# Annual Garden Plot Schedule

## Hogge Park Community Rental Gardens

- **In January of each year, gardeners from the registration list will be sent a plot offer by email.**
  - We must receive a response to the plot offer within the designated timeframe.
  - If there is no timely response, the name is removed from the registration list and the plot is offered to the next gardener.
- **February 15 - Signed contracts with the payment and signed Community Commitment are due.**
  - If assigned to a garden plot, a contract will be sent by US Mail.
  - Sending contracts by US Mail functions as a check for Fairfax County residency, which is a requirement for participation in the Garden Plot Program.
  - Instructions for payment appear at the bottom of the contract document.
- **March 15 (approximately) – Opening Day (Date TBD each season)**
  - Garden access is finalized.
  - Educational opportunities will be available.
- **April 1 through November 15 – Your garden must be “active” throughout the rental period, which means:**
  - Plots must be at least 2/3 planted.
  - Weeds and waste kept under control at all times - and disposed of according to the rules.
  - Crops harvested when ready.
  - Dead and spent plants removed.
  - Rotate crops.
  - Gardeners have access to their plots from dawn to dusk.
- **April 1 through November 15 – Plot Inspections**
  - Plots are inspected year-round to check for compliance and activity.
  - Plot inspections are generally unannounced.
  - Plots that are inactive or weedy are subject to reclaim with no refund of rental fees.
- **November 15 – Last day to have access to the plots**
  - Dispose of all plant material and other items such as trellises
  - Apply leaf mulch and/or plant a cover crop.
  - Remove all personal items from the premises.

**Leases Expire and Gardens are closed on November 15.**

**Remove all personal items prior to November 15.**

## II. Gardener Eligibility

The following criteria establish eligibility for renting a garden plot at Hogge Park:

1. Must be a resident of Fairfax County. \*
2. May have only one garden plot per household or organization.
3. Must register with an active, working email address (garden business is largely conducted by email).
4. Must sign and return rental contracts with payment by the due date on the contract.
5. Must grow crops for non-commercial purposes only.
6. Must agree to comply with the Rules and Guidelines for the duration of the rental agreement.
7. Must agree to comply with the Community Commitment.

\*A Fairfax County-based organization may rent one plot per season using the organization's address. Members of the organization may register for their own plot using the address of their residence.

## III. Rules

Because the garden plots are located on public park land, all federal, state, and local regulations and ordinances apply to activities carried on in the plots and in the host park. These rules ensure that the plots are used for their intended purpose, that the area is safe, and that policies and laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Fairfax County, and the Fairfax County Park Authority are followed (*Source: Fairfax County Park Authority Regulations: [Fairfax County Administrative Policy-Regulations.pdf](#)*).

By signing the Garden Plot Rental Contract, gardeners acknowledge that they have read and understand the following rules. Each tenant is responsible for the behavior and activities of anyone working in the plot (family, friends, contractors, etc.) – all must follow the Garden Plot Rules.

1. Garden Waste Disposal
  - a) Take all trash and plant debris to your home, or to a citizen trash collection location, such as the I-95 or I-66 Citizens' Recycling and Disposal Facilities.  
**DO NOT place garden produce, plants, weeds, or trash anywhere in the surrounding park, or in wooded areas. Any of these acts is considered dumping.** It is illegal to dump anywhere on Commonwealth of Virginia and Fairfax County property. (Source: Code of Virginia: [§ 33.2-802. Dumping trash; penalty \(virginia.gov\)](#)). Anyone determined to be dumping on park land may be expelled from the Garden Plot Program with as little as 48 hours to vacate their plot. Violators are not afforded two weeks' notice for this or other illegal activities. See also: #15 Rule Violations, below.
2. Garden Plot Assignment - Garden only in the plot assigned to you by the Garden Plot Coordinator.
3. Structures

Simple, non-permanent structures, such as trellises and tomato cages, are allowed. The gardener supplies the materials and labor. The following criteria apply to all structures:

  - a) Simple trellis structures (under 6 ft.) are permitted if they do not shade other gardens.
  - b) Neither solid walls nor solid roofs are permitted on structures, including trellises.

- c) Row covers are permitted. Anchor them securely against the wind. Remove them from the site when not in use.
  - d) Greenhouse-type structures are not permitted.
  - e) **DO NOT use poured concrete, asphalt, or permanent anchors for any structure.**
  - f) Do not attach anchors or supports to the wooden raised beds using screws, nails, or any other device (See Rule #14).
4. Watering and Hoses – Wrap up the shared hose(s) and be sure to turn off the water when finished.
5. Man-made ground covers such as weed blocker, plastic tarp, carpet, and artificial turf are prohibited.
6. Open, standing water is not permitted in plots at any time or in any form because it fosters the development of mosquitoes. Store equipment in the shed or tip items such as a wheelbarrow to avoid water collection.
7. Use chemical controls as a last resort. If you must use a pesticide or herbicide, you MUST follow these rules:
  - a) READ THE LABEL. It is against federal law to use a pesticide or herbicide for a purpose that is not listed on the label.
  - b) NO restricted pesticide (pesticides requiring a permit for use) is permitted under any circumstances, even if the person is a licensed pesticide applicator.
  - c) Research the problem pest and the guidelines for managing it in the Integrated Pest Management Guide, [Integrated Pest Management for Vegetable Gardens](#)
  - d) For further questions about using chemical pesticides, contact your local Virginia Cooperative Extension agent or the local Master Gardener Help desk at [Help Desk – Fairfax Gardening](#)
  - e) Mix and apply the chemical agent according to the label. Increasing the dose or frequency may harm your crop, you, and/or other people.
  - f) Prevent overspray onto another gardener’s crops or soil.
  - g) For everyone’s safety, NO commercial, chemical or organic pesticides and NO fertilizers may be stored anywhere in the garden plot at any time, including in the storage shed.
  - h) Flamers or torches for weed control are NOT permitted due to the risk of fire and personal safety ([Fairfax County Administrative/policy - regulations.pdf](#). §1.06).
8. No storage of hazardous chemicals (such as gasoline, pesticides, and herbicides) on site.
9. According to state and local game regulations, it is illegal to bait or trap or transport any animals across property lines. [Fairfax County Administrative/policy - regulations.pdf](#) §1.10).
10. Gardeners may not store lumber or other materials not currently used for gardening in the shed or anywhere on site.
11. Weeds must be kept under control throughout the contract period.
12. Plants you may not grow:
  - No marijuana or industrial hemp (i.e., no *Cannabis sativa*).

- No plants on the Virginia Invasive Plant List, <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/invspdflist>. Other invasive plants may be prohibited at the discretion of the Garden Plot Coordinator.
  - No perennial or woody plants.
13. Do not block the gates, parking area, any paved access, or aisle ways with structures, equipment, debris, or vehicles. Do not idle vehicles near the plots.
14. Defacing any item or structure in the garden area or in the surrounding park is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program with no refund of rental fees. Applying paint to the raised bed or attaching anything permanently (using screws or nails, for example) is prohibited.

#### 15. Rule Violations

- a) **Dumping and other activities that are in violation of federal, state, or local regulations may result in expulsion from the Garden Plot Program with as little as 48 hours' notice, and the appropriate authorities may be notified.** Dumping, for example, is a Misdemeanor offense, and is punishable by more than just a fine.
- b) Gardeners who are not in compliance with the Garden Plot Rules will:
- Receive a notice by email or phone from the Garden Plot Coordinator,
  - Have 14 calendar days to correct the problem upon receipt of the notice, and
  - If the problem(s) is/are not corrected or addressed within the allotted time frame, the garden plot may be reclaimed and reassigned.

Receiving more than one notice of non-compliance in a single season may result in the plot being reclaimed.

#### IV. Administration

##### 1. Program Management

The Fairfax County Garden Plot Program is managed by the Fairfax County Park Authority through the Community Horticulture Office at Green Spring Gardens. Patricia Dietly, the Garden Plot Coordinator, manages the day-to-day operations and can be reached at 703.642.5173. E-mail is the preferred way to contact the Garden Plot Coordinator: [FCPAGardenPlots@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:FCPAGardenPlots@fairfaxcounty.gov)

##### 2. Garden Plot Registration List and Offers to New Gardeners

Gardening is popular, and we maintain a registration list of potential new garden plot renters. Aspiring gardeners may enter the list by completing the form on the website:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring/plots>

- a) Fairfax County residents and Fairfax County-based organizations are eligible to rent a garden plot. Our rule is only one plot per household or organization.
- b) Preference is given to gardeners who live within walking distance of Hogge Park.
- c) Offers are sent by email. A working email address is required in order to rent a plot.
- d) When a potential gardener is offered a particular plot, he or she may accept or decline the offer. If the offer is declined or if no response is given within the allotted time for reply, the person is retired from the registration list. The time allotted to reply to an offer is usually about 5 calendar days, and usually includes a weekend.
- e) Persons who are retired from the registration list may re-apply and will thereby be relocated to the end of the list.

- f) Names remain on the list from year to year, until a plot is offered.
- g) Gardeners may not transfer a plot to another gardener. All plot assignments are made by the Garden Plot Coordinator to persons on the Registration List.

3. *Email*

- A working email address is required for gardeners in order to participate in the program. Plot offers are made by email. Notices of rules violations and timely garden news are also delivered by email.
- Email addresses and other contact information are not shared with other gardeners or with listserves or vendors.

4. *Inspections, Violations, and Remedies for Non-Compliance*

- a) The Garden Plot Coordinator will inspect plots at least three times per season and send email notices to gardeners whose plots are not in compliance with the rules. Most plot inspections are unannounced.
- b) Gardeners who fail to address a rules violation within 14 calendar days, or within an alternative timeframe specified by the Garden Plot Coordinator, risk having their garden plot reclaimed. No refunds are given for reclaimed plots.
- c) A violation notice may be sent to gardeners who interfere with neighbors, whose plots are not used appropriately, or who violate the Community Commitment. The definition of and the timeframe for compliance will be determined at the discretion of the Garden Plot Coordinator.
- d) Violations of federal, state, or local regulations may result in the immediate reclaim of the plot, with 48 hours' notice to remove all personal items. Appropriate authorities may be notified.
- e) If you would like help to resolve an issue with another gardener, you may contact the Garden Plot Coordinator for assistance at 703.642.5173 or [FCPAGardenPlots@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:FCPAGardenPlots@fairfaxcounty.gov).
- f) The Garden Plot Coordinator can put you in contact with other gardeners so you can coordinate projects like trading seeds.

5. *Plot Return Policy*

- a) Fees are not refunded or prorated if a garden plot is returned early or if it is reclaimed.
- b) Gardeners may return their plots at any time by contacting the Garden Plot Coordinator at 703.642.5173 or [FCPAGardenPlots@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:FCPAGardenPlots@fairfaxcounty.gov). Response time is faster for email inquiries.
- c) Garden plot renters may not give away or sublet their rented plot to other renters. All garden plot trades or plot rental terminations must be managed by the Garden Plot Coordinator.

6. *Safety*

- a) Renters garden at their own risk.
- b) Since all plot locations are in public parks, the public cannot be banned from these areas. FCPA assumes no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal property, plants or produce at the Garden Plots.

- c) Should you observe illegal activities, such as theft, alcohol use, malicious damage, etc., please contact the Fairfax County Police Department non-emergency number: 703-691-2131. You may file a report at the Fairfax County Police Department website: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/howdoi/communityreportingsystem>

Please be a responsible member of the Garden Plot community while enjoying the benefits of gardening in the Garden Plot Program. If you have any questions, please contact the Garden Plot Coordinator, Patricia Dietly, at [FCPAGardenPlots@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:FCPAGardenPlots@fairfaxcounty.gov) or 703.642.5173.



If accommodations or alternative formats are needed, please call 703-324-8563 at least 10 working days before event. TTY 703-803-3354

A Fairfax County, VA Publication December 2023

**For Hogge Park Gardeners, continue to the next page for the Community Commitment....**

## Hogge Park Gardens Community Commitment

1. I will follow all Garden Plot Rules (attached), which includes actively gardening throughout the season and keeping my garden weed-free at all times.
2. I will respond within five days to communications directed specifically to me, either by phone or by email. Failure to do so will be construed as abandonment of my plot, and the garden bed may be re-assigned to a new gardener from the registration list.
3. I will work only in my assigned garden space unless given permission by the other plot user(s).
4. I will not alter the appearance of the garden facility in any way. I will not attach any item permanently to the wooden garden beds (no screws, nails, etc.). I will not apply paint.
5. I will not disclose the gate code to anyone not authorized by me to tend my plot.
6. I will harvest only my own crops unless given permission by other plot user(s).
7. I will use pesticides only in accordance with directions on the label. I will not use pesticides in a manner that affects the crops or safety of other garden tenants.
8. I will not smoke, drink alcoholic beverages, bring pets into the garden, use amplified sound, nor leave children unsupervised within the gardening area.
9. I will return all shared items to the shed prior to leaving the garden after my work session. I will keep items in the shed neat and tidy. I will not leave tools or other personal items in my plot.
10. If I cause soil or other debris to fall into the pathways, I will sweep or otherwise remove it prior to leaving the garden after my work session.
11. I will help to keep the community garden clean and free of debris, including by removing weeds growing within 3 feet of my raised bed.