

Bridgman Public Library Community Garden Handbook 2017



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Registration, Policy & Fees

Anyone is eligible to apply for a community garden plot at the Bridgman Public Library Community Garden. Residents who live and/or work in Bridgman, Lake Charter Township, or Chikaming Township are given first consideration. The annual fee is \$10 per 4'x8' garden plot. There is no limit on the number plots per person. The fees are non-refundable. Additionally, gardeners are required to give five (5) hours of volunteer work for the upkeep of common areas. Unless otherwise requested, garden plots are for personal use only. Commercial endeavors may be considered upon request depending on availability of plots.

Transferability

Gardeners may not transfer, exchange or sublet their plot.

Plot Application & Registration

Community Garden plots will be awarded on a first come-first serve basis each year. Each returning gardener will be given the option to keep their existing plot for the following year provided all payment and maintenance requirements have been met. The requirements are cleaning the plot by November 1st and turning in a returning gardener application by March 1st with a plot fee.

The first name to appear at the end of the Gardener's Participation Agreement is considered the "Primary Gardener." This gardener agrees to be the designated contact for all correspondence regarding the garden plot and assumes full responsibility for the other gardeners on the application. It is the responsibility of the Primary Gardener to keep the Community Garden Coordinator notified of their current contact information, preferably an email address or phone number. The Primary Gardener is responsible for communicating all correspondence and information regarding their plot to all participants involved with their garden plot. The Primary Gardener is also responsible for fulfilling the maintenance, logging volunteer hours, and fee requirements for each of their garden plots. All gardeners on the application are collectively bound by the Participation Agreement. Any new gardener must be added to the Participant Agreement before being allowed to garden in the plot. This can be done by having the new gardener sign and submit a waiver form to the Community Garden Coordinator. Forms are available at the library front desk.

Communication

All gardeners should have a valid email address or phone number to receive messages and updates from the Community Garden Coordinator.

The main form of communication will be email. Gardeners can also stay up to date on the garden via Facebook at the Bridgman Public Library Community Garden page. General information about the Community Garden can be found on the BPL website under Community Garden.

It is the Gardener's responsibility to check for messages and stay in touch with updates and current events. Messages will be provided via email blasts, website notices, and Facebook postings. Unless specifically requested, phone calls will not be made to Community Garden participants to alert them of these messages and updates.

Hours

Bridgman Public Library Community Garden will be open from April 1 to November 1. The hours of operation are dawn to dusk seven days a week.

Parking

The entrance to the Community Garden is located on the south end of the Library's property and accessible from Toth Street. Please park in the spots closest to the garden.

Community Garden Etiquette

Use of Fertilizers & Pesticides

BPL Community Garden follows organic gardening principles. No chemical pesticides or fertilizers are allowed. For the health and safety of all participants, only organic products are to be used in the garden. Keep all organic pest-control products away from children and remove the products from the Community Garden after use.

Each Community Gardener accepts full responsibility for their plot(s) and any and all amendments it may or may not require. For example, if the soil Ph is low (or high) it is the Gardener's responsibility to make any and all adjustments required to bring the soil to desired levels for effective plant growth. BPL Community Garden does not accept responsibility for soil and overall garden plot conditions, including drainage and other related issues. A limited amount of soil amendments such as composted horse and cow manure, composted leaves, and mulch hay may be available at the outset of each season, but it is the Gardener's responsibility to appropriately apply them. Certified organic fertilizers may be used if pre-approved by the Garden Coordinator.

Use of Community Garden Equipment

Gardeners are responsible for bringing their own tools, watering cans and other materials to the site. Watering hoses and a wheelbarrow are provided by the Community Garden and can be used by all participants to maintain your plots and transporting tools, flats of plants, seedlings, and other materials to plots. Gardeners are asked to be respectful and return all items to their designated areas when they are done using them. Additional supplemental tools may be available in the garden shed. A combination for the lock on the shed will be given to all community plot members. Gardeners are responsible for the security of any materials that they bring to the site. The Bridgman Public Library Community Garden takes no responsibility for lost or missing materials. The use of BPL Community Garden provided tools and equipment are at your own risk.

Prohibited Plants

Some plants are not allowed in the garden due to their habit of spreading out of control and becoming impossible to manage. No illegal plants, trees, cacti, castor beans or other poisonous plants are allowed. No invasive plants may be planted. If gardeners aren't sure about a plant, please check in with the Garden Coordinator. No mint, catnip, Jerusalem artichoke or comfrey is allowed, except in pots.

Gardeners are asked to be thoughtful while planting vines, corn, sunflowers and other tall plants so as not to shade or invade a neighbor's plot.

Watering

Conservation of water is important. The water supplied to the Community Garden is from the city, which means it is treated. The watering system is only to be used for watering plants and garden activities. The water is NOT for drinking! Three hoses are located in the center of the garden near each cluster of plots. Watering can be done by hand using watering cans or using the hose. When using the hose, gardeners are asked to be respectful of their neighbors and their plots. Watering from a hose is permissible, unattended watering and sprinklers are not allowed. To help prevent diseases that can be caused by direct plant watering, it is suggested to water the soil or dirt by the plants.

If a gardener needs assistance watering a bed for any reason or has any questions or problems regarding watering practices, they should contact the Garden Coordinator or the library at BPLcommunitygarden@bridgmanlibrary.com.

Structures

Structures may be erected only if they are pre-approved by the Garden Coordinator. Gardeners will be asked to remove all unauthorized structures. There is a 5-foot height restriction for trellises so as not to shade neighboring gardens. Materials made of PVC are not allowed in the garden, although similar products made of High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE) will be allowed due to its negligible ability to leach toxins. Lumber used in raised bed construction must be untreated. The use of chemically treated wood is not allowed. These products contain arsenic, hexavalent chromium, and other toxic substances, which can contaminate the soil and plants.

Composting

An area is provided for finished compost as well as for composting plant debris. Diseased and insect-infested plants should be put in weed refuse piles along with weeds. The composting area is for on-site composting only. No off-site materials are to be brought to the Bridgman Library Community Garden to prevent the possible spread of invasive plants, insects, and diseases. Kitchen/meat or dairy scraps should not be added to the plant refuse piles because they are likely to draw animals.

All gardening trash must be taken home. No trash of any kind should be left at the site.

Mulching

Biodegradable mulches such as compost, paper, leaves, and straw are permitted. Carpet mulch is not allowed. Wood chips can be used in paths only. Black plastic is allowed, but unless you plan to keep the plot for the following season, it must be removed at the end of the season. Limited quantities of topsoil, shredded leaves, manure, compost and other organic materials may be made available for gardeners' use.

Weeding

Gardeners are expected to keep their plots neat and productive through the consistent removal of weeds along with regular harvesting all season long. This is a courtesy to fellow gardeners. Weeds spread. If a plot is not in compliance with these basic expectations, the gardener will be notified via email and will have one week to bring the plot into compliance as stated in the notice. Gardeners must keep plot boundaries between neighbors weeded as well. Gardeners are responsible for maintaining all adjacent pathways bordering their plot(s) which includes the pathway between their garden plot and their neighbor's garden plot. Plot edges and fencing must be free of weeds.

Gardeners should communicate with the Garden Coordinator if there is a problem tending their plot. We wish to help gardeners overcome any hardships or shortcomings that are preventing them from successfully maintaining their plot.

NOTICE OF NON-COMPLIANCE: If a plot becomes excessively weedy a gardener will receive a first notice advising them to visit the garden for maintenance. If they have not followed up or contacted the Garden Coordinator within a week, they will receive a second notice (after one week from the first notice) and see a sign in their garden notifying them that the garden needs to be weeded immediately. The third notice (2 weeks after the first notice) will be the final notice at which point we take back the plot if we have not received any communication from the gardener. Repeated non-compliance will result in forfeiture of the garden plot, and all plot fees will be non-refundable. They also forfeit all future opportunities to hold a plot at BPL Community Garden.

Surplus Produce

The community garden has a goal to support local food pantries and neighbors in need. If gardeners wish to contribute to this cause, they may place any unspoiled produce in the basket labeled Donate located outside the garden shed on the south end of the garden.

Behavior

Gardeners are asked to be kind and not bring anything into the garden that will compromise the safety or enjoyment of other gardeners such as radios, BBQs or pets unless it is a service animal.

Gardeners are asked to be courteous, polite and respectful to neighbors and Community Garden volunteers. Inappropriate behavior will be grounds for expulsion from the garden. No alcohol or illegal substances are allowed on Library property. Entering or taking from an unauthorized plot, even those that appear untended, will be grounds for expulsion from the garden. Disputes between gardeners that cannot be resolved will be referred to the Garden Coordinator. Smoking and chewing tobacco are prohibited within the Community Garden. Discrimination towards others will also not be tolerated.

Visitors & Children

All participating gardeners agree to supervise guests or children accompanying them in the Community Garden and agree to be responsible and liable for their conduct. It is expected that children will stay close to the adult supervising

them. All guests and children are expected to follow the rules and guidelines of the Community Garden. Anyone under the age of 16 is considered a child. If a gardener encounters an issue with another participating community gardener at any time, they should contact the Garden Coordinator immediately. We encourage all gardeners to communicate with one another, but we would like disputes to be mediated through the Garden coordinator for a quick and calm resolution.

Safety & Security

All garden gates are to remain closed AT ALL TIMES to prevent animals from entering. The Bridgman Public Library Community Garden makes no claim regarding the safety of the consumption of food grown on the property. Participants will hold BPL Community Garden harmless for any and all illnesses that may arise out of consuming food produced on BPL Community Garden property.

Wildlife

BPL Community Garden will do everything within its control to manage wildlife to help prevent damage to garden plots, but BPL Community Garden makes no claim or guarantee against such damage from occurring. It is each gardener's responsibility to protect his/her plots as needed, provided such action meets BPL Community Garden's organic approach, and it does not affect the surrounding neighbors.

Fall Cleanup

Please note that a seasonally well maintained and thoroughly cleaned garden plot is required to be invited to return as a gardener each season. During fall cleanup, all plants and weeds must be removed and disposed of properly in the garden compost pile. Unless a gardener plans to keep their current plot for another gardening season, they need to completely clean up the plot by removing all stakes, trellis, netting, fencing, tomato cages, watering cans, plant materials and other personal items. Gardeners should inform the Garden Coordinator via email when they have finished their gardening season. If a gardener is keeping their plot for another year, perennial plants should be neatly pruned back, annual plants pulled and composted, and all structures removed for winter.

Need Help

www.migarden.msu.edu – A website maintained by the University of Michigan Extension that has information on gardening in Michigan. The site includes information on which plants grow best in certain conditions and how to identify and handle plant problems.

Lawn & Garden Hotline

1-888-678-3464, select option 1

Monday through Friday 9:00 am – 12:00 pm, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

The Michigan State University Extension Lawn and Garden Hotline is answered by Master Gardeners from around the state.