

City of Alexandria
Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
Community Garden Plot Policies: 2014 Gardening Season
(Fiscal Years 2014-2015)

The City of Alexandria provides the opportunity for Community Gardens on City property through the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities. This document details the terms and conditions for use of a community garden plot. Gardeners are expected to comply with all laws and City Park rules and regulations, including those herein, at all times, as well as interacting with cooperation and courtesy toward other Gardeners. Any questions or concerns about the following terms and conditions should be directed to the City Representative whose contact information is provided at the end of this document. Organic gardening practices are required; please visit the following website: www.chinquapingardens.org for information.

1. Assignment of Garden Plots. Gardeners who utilize their plots in accordance with the City's Garden Plot Terms and Conditions will, under most circumstances, be invited back the following year to utilize the same plot. However, the City retains the right to reassign plots, realign the layout of the Garden area (including individual plots), eliminate plots, revise this policy, or otherwise make changes to the Community Garden and its operation in order to meet the City's needs for space utilization, policy changes, or programming.

City residents will be given preference over non-residents with regard to the assignment of garden plots, in light of the large number of residents on the Waiting List. Except for current non-resident Gardeners who have held plot rental permits as non-residents continuously for five (5) or more years, non-residents (including those who have obtained plot rental permits in the past) must wait until all residents who had plots last year or who are on the Waiting List have been given the opportunity to obtain a permit before non-residents will be invited to do so. Non-residents may request to be placed on the Waiting List, in accordance with section #3 below. Those non-residents who meet the continuous five (5) year standard (i.e., they have held a plot rental permit as a non-resident continuously for five (5) or more years) may continue to request and receive annual permits in the future if they comply with all other guidelines and remain in good standing.

It is the responsibility of each Gardener to respond within the stated timeframe and in the manner prescribed in the invitation to obtain their plot rental permit for the following year. It is also the responsibility of each Gardener to fully comply with the Terms and Conditions described herein in order to qualify to be invited to continue to utilize their assigned plot. Only one (1) garden plot may be requested or assigned per household.

For the 2014 gardening season only:

1. Non-resident Gardeners who otherwise would not qualify to receive a permit because they do not meet the continuous five (5) year standard (as described above) will be allowed to receive a permit only for 2014 (if they choose to request it).
2. The status of current non-resident Gardeners who held plot rental permits in previous years as residents will be considered only with respect to their current period of non-residency. Any non-resident who does not meet the five (5) year standard (as described

above) will be allowed to receive a permit only for 2014 (if they choose to request it) regardless of the length of any previous period during which they may have held a plot rental permit as a resident.

3. Gardeners from households which have utilized more than one (1) plot in previous years will be allowed to retain the same plots for 2014 (if they choose to request them).

These exemptions for the 2014 gardening season are to enable Gardeners to remove any perennial plants, bulbs, or other materials from the garden. In all cases, all gardening must be completed and all materials must be removed from the garden by November 30, 2014.

2. Assignment Process. Prior to each gardening season, the City will issue invitations to those Gardeners who meet all of the qualifications for renewal. Gardeners must ensure that the City's Representative is provided with their current mailing address, physical (residence) address, e-mail address, and phone number. The City is not responsible for invitations that are not delivered due to incorrect or out-of-date contact information. Deadlines for response and payment of rental fees will be announced in the invitation. Immediately following the response deadline, plots that are not assigned will be made available to others on the Waiting List. City of Alexandria residents will be given priority in all respects with regard to the assignment of garden plots, as outlined in section #1 above. Additionally, garden plots may be forfeited by failure to comply with the current year's Garden Plot Terms and Conditions. Forfeited plots will be re-assigned without reimbursement.

3. Waiting List. All persons interested in obtaining a garden plot rental permit must fill out an official application form provided by the City. A new application form must be filled out each year. Following the registration period each spring, forms will be made available to all persons on the Waiting List who did not receive a rental plot permit for that year. Along with other information, **the applicant's permanent residence address must be provided, in order to determine resident/non-resident status.** If no plots are available for assignment, the applicant will be placed on the Waiting List, which will be maintained sequentially in order of application submittal. The Waiting List will be utilized to make plot assignments when plots become available. City residents will be given preference on the Waiting List. Plots will be offered to non-residents only when there are no City residents on the list who wish to obtain a plot permit.

4. Registration and Gardening Season. Registration and the establishment of rental permit fees are subject to the provisions of the City of Alexandria's Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Policy, which has been approved by City Council. Rental fees are subject to change annually by the City. For the 2014 gardening season, the Rental Fees listed below were adopted by City Council during the annual budget adoption process:

- Resident: Full Plot \$55
- Resident: Half Plot \$28
- Non-resident: Full Plot \$75
- Non-resident: Half Plot \$35

The renewal process usually begins during January. Issuance of new rental permits and assignment of available plots usually occurs in March. The official gardening season runs from March 1 through November 30. In typical years, the water for the gardens will be turned on by April 15 and turned off November 15. These dates may vary in years with extreme weather circumstances or due to other factors.

5. Boundaries. Full-size plots are approximately 15 x 20 feet. Half-size plots are approximately 10 x 15 feet. Gardeners shall not expand the limits of their plot beyond these size limits. The City reserves the right to modify the size, shape, and total area of any plot in any Community Garden. Gardeners must not allow plants to grow beyond their plot boundaries, or taller than 72 inches. Do not block paths with any plants or other materials, from underfoot to overhead, which might impede travel in any way.

6. Appearance. The Community Garden is public parkland. The garden must be kept clean and reasonably free from weeds and other unsightly debris. Each Gardener is responsible not only for maintaining the appearance of his/her plot, but also for keeping the paths on all sides of the plot well groomed and free of weeds (growing or pulled), stakes, rocks, tools, or other materials. Weeds taller than 12 inches in the plots are a violation of City Code. When pulling weeds, shake off all soil, so as not to lose the topsoil of your garden. Storage of any materials or waste on the paths is not permitted.

7. Management and Monitoring of all Community Garden Plots. Gardeners who have obtained plot rental permits are encouraged to form an Advisory Board for each Community Garden location in order to cooperatively manage the Community Garden with the City. This cooperative management should include a written agreement between the Advisory Board and the City in order to spell out the duties and responsibilities of each. Management of the City's Community Garden Plot Program should include a self-policing component by the Gardeners themselves. Each Gardener may be called upon to serve on a monitoring team session during the gardening season. The City will also periodically monitor all garden plots to ensure proper utilization and compliance with Regulations, and may take action as described in #8 below.

8. Plot Monitoring/Lack of Activity/Violations at the Chinquapin Community Garden.

The appearance of all plots and the level of activity associated with each plot will be monitored periodically both by volunteer Gardeners and by the City. Monitoring sessions by volunteer Gardeners are usually held on Saturday mornings. An Advisory Board Member will serve as monitoring team leader. All Gardeners should submit a volunteer form to the Advisory Board.

For all plots that do not show evidence of active gardening and care by May 1 (except for extraordinary weather circumstances), or which do not comply with the appearance standards or other regulations established by the City for the Community Garden, the permit holder will be notified of their violation by the City at the contact address they have provided. Failure to comply with the corrective measures and timeframes specified in the notice of violation will subject the Gardener to loss of the plot without reimbursement.

Gardeners who are unable to maintain their plots should release them **in writing** to the City for the remainder of the growing season, or be responsible for providing a substitute Gardener to maintain the plot for that season. Any plot that is not maintained in accordance with these Regulations or is otherwise determined by the City to be abandoned will be re-assigned without reimbursement. A lack of response by the Gardener to any notice of violation, including violations regarding the appearance or utilization of the plot, will result in the loss of the plot without reimbursement. The City reserves the right to re-assign a plot at any time.

9. Trash. Place garden refuse into the trash cans or in bags beside the trash cans. Any discarded rocks should not be put in trash cans, but should be placed in the designated area located near the

City compost demonstration area, which is along the roadway on the lower level of the garden plots.

10. Animals. Animals (except seeing-eye dogs and service dogs) are prohibited in garden plot areas. All animals (including seeing-eye dogs and service dogs) are required by law to be leashed. Owners/handlers must pick up after their animals.

11. Timely Harvest/Rodents/Mosquitoes. Crops must be harvested as they mature; do not leave tomatoes or any other produce to rot on the ground. Rodents are attracted to produce. All Gardeners must take steps to prevent rodent infestation, and avoid the need to call in a pest exterminator. Our goal is to avoid chemical treatments and to keep down costs. Eliminate conditions favorable to rodents and mosquitoes by making sure that faucets are turned off completely, standing water is avoided, watering cans are empty, and compostable kitchen scraps (no meat or dairy) are buried at least a foot deep. Rodents need water, food, and shelter to survive; therefore only rodent-resistant compost enclosures will be permitted. Contact the City Representative listed at the end of these Regulations for more information.

12. Prohibited Activities.

- a. The use of chemical pesticides (including fungicides, herbicides (weed killers), and insecticides) is prohibited. Only natural organic practices and organic fertilizers may be used.
- b. The use of tobacco products including cigarettes, cigars, pipes, and chewing tobacco is prohibited in the garden area. The mosaic virus disease common to tobacco can infect tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants, and can spread to plants in other gardens.
- c. Illegal drug-producing plants are prohibited. The offending Gardener is subject to prosecution under the law, and the plot will be re-assigned without reimbursement.
- d. No plant or plant-supporting structure may be taller than 72 inches above the ground or extend beyond the limits of the garden plot at any time. Plants must be maintained/pruned/cut back to remain within these limits. The planting of large shrubs or trees is discouraged.
- e. No unsightly, tattered, garish, or obtrusive materials may be installed or suspended in the vicinity of any garden plot. This includes cans on wires, reflectors, twirling pie plates, pinwheels, or any similar type of item. The community garden is public parkland and must be maintained in a manner that presents a positive aesthetic appearance and appeal.
- f. The use of carpeting, press-board, pressure-treated wood, or other similar harmful materials on path or plots is prohibited; these materials provide cover for rodents and present a hazard to other Gardeners navigating the paths. Carpeting, press board and pressure-treated wood also often contain hazardous chemicals that may leach into the soil as they deteriorate.
- g. Avoid leaving personal property in the garden. Tools, roto-tillers, etc. pose a safety hazard and invite theft.
- h. Running water or sprinklers should not be left unattended.

13. Trellises and Fencing. Trellises, plant-support structures, fencing, etc., should be constructed of light-weight, non-permanent materials. Any fencing built shall be at least one

foot inside the boundary of the plot on all sides. No structure or plants shall be taller than seventy-two (72) inches. Any variation from these standards must be approved by the City in writing. See #16 below for requirements associated with removal of these items at the end of the gardening season.

14. Vandalism/Damage/Theft. Report incidents of vandalism, tampering with plots without permission, produce theft, or any other property destruction immediately to the Alexandria Police Dept. Be sure to include a description of any person(s) and/or vehicle, and the license plate number, when possible. In addition, report the incident to the City Representative listed at the end of these Regulations.

15. Liability. By obtaining a plot rental permit within a City of Alexandria community garden, Gardeners agree to hold harmless the City of Alexandria, and the Chinquapin Organic Gardens Advisory Board, for any and all liability which may be attributed to the Gardener, or an authorized third party, as a result of utilizing a City garden plot.

16. End of Season Clean-up. The gardening season officially ends November 30. Dead plants, remains of crops, and all other debris must be cleaned up and removed. Stakes, tomato cages, trellises, fencing, etc., must be removed from the ground. Gardeners are encouraged to take these materials home. Gardeners who expect to return the following year may leave stakes and fencing materials, provided they are neatly stacked together in the center of the plot and away from paths. If approval is obtained from the City Representative in writing, trellises needed for support of certain perennial plants, and cold frames, may be left in place. Rodent-resistant compost enclosures may also remain on the plots of Gardeners who expect to return the following year. Hoses must be neatly coiled and removed from the paths.

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