

**GENEVA PARK DISTRICT
COMMUNITY GARDENS RULES AND REGULATIONS**



I. PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

YOU ARE THE RESPONSIBLE PARTY FOR PLOT #_____.
(A MAP WILL BE PROVIDED)

The Geneva Park District provides gardeners the opportunity to participate in a community gardening experience through the Community Garden Plot program. One Hundred and Twenty Four garden plots will be available for rent for the 2012 growing season. Plots measure 20 feet by 30 feet. Gardening is permitted when the park is open, dawn to dusk.

The rules and regulations for the Garden Plot Program ensure that all participating gardeners have the opportunity for a positive gardening experience. Garden plot sites are an asset to the community. By following the rules and regulations, gardeners demonstrate their compliance to garden successfully in a community garden plot program. All gardeners agree to follow the rules and regulations of the Garden Plot Program.

1. Agreement and fee: \$45 residents/ \$60 non-residents

Submit your completed, signed *Community Gardens Garden Plot Agreement* by March 1. Fees will be due by March 23. Notification of plot assignment will occur immediately after the lottery drawing.

2. Contact information

All official communication is through the listed plot holder. Make sure the Geneva Park District always has your current address, phone number and (if possible) email address. Use the Website email link or call 630-232-4542 to provide updates. The preferred method of communication will be via email.

3. Transferability

You may not transfer or sublet your plot. Resident gardeners will get right of first refusal for priority of the following gardening season.

4. Leaseholder requirements

You agree to be bound by any requirement not named here that the Geneva Park District imposes as a condition for continued use of the garden space, including undergoing a criminal background check. I understand to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the Geneva Park District, City of Geneva and the Kane County Forest Preserve District and their officers, agents and employees, against all suits, actions, or claims of any character brought because of any injury or damage received or sustained by any person, persons, or property arising out of or resulting from any asserted negligent act, error, or omission by the plot holder or other gardeners on the plot.

5. Planting/cleanup deadlines

Clean up and prep of your plot must be completed by the following deadlines. Your plot must be clean, fully prepared, and at least half planted by June 15. Any unplanted plot failing to meet these conditions is considered abandoned and will be reassigned immediately, with no refund provided. If your plot is not fully planted by June 27, the unplanted portion may be used by the Geneva Park District, and you may be assigned to a smaller plot the following year. Remove all plants and temporary structures by the October 31 fall cleanup deadline. The Geneva Park District will till the soil once per year in the fall.

6. Expected conduct

To retain your gardening privileges and plot, you agree to:

1. Act in a manner considerate of the rights, needs, and safety of other gardeners and the community at large and with courtesy toward others.
2. Actively garden, maintain, and use your entire plot. You may grow food in the rental garden plots for personal consumption. Food may not be grown for commercial purposes.
3. Remove weeds promptly and harvest produce in a timely manner. Keep all plants within your plot boundaries. A rule violation may be given if a plot is excessively weedy, or is filled with debris or overripe produce. Any plot with numerous weeds or that remains unharvested or obviously untended for 3 weeks will be presumed abandoned and is subject to immediate forfeiture without refund.
4. Maintain your half of the path around your plot regularly. Paths must be kept free of rocks, weeds, and all obstacles, including encroaching or overhanging plants (e.g. Raspberries). The Geneva Park District reserves the right to remove any objectionable items. Do not block public paths. The Geneva Park District will maintain public paths with regular mowing.
5. Keep your plot free of perennials, trees and shrubs. If an adjacent plot's gardener complains of excessive shading by anything on your plot, you must come to an agreement or remove it.
6. Respect public property. Keep rocks inside your plot's border or remove them from the grounds. Never dump debris or garden materials anywhere else within the Community Garden. Do not use motorized vehicles in the garden area.
7. Do not enter other plots except with permission or allow unsupervised children to enter any plots.
8. Pets are not allowed in the Community Gardens at any time.

II. ELIGIBILITY

The following criteria establish eligibility for having a garden plot:

1. Geneva Park District Residents receive priority registration.
2. Gardeners must sign and return rental contracts with payment by the date on the contract.
3. Gardeners may have only one garden plot per household.
4. Food must be grown for personal consumption, not for commercial purposes.
5. Gardeners must agree to comply with rules identified in Section III for the duration of the rental agreement.

III. RULES

Below are the rules that govern the program. These rules ensure that the plots are gardened, the area is safe, and the policies and laws of the Geneva Park District, and all applicable local and state laws are followed.

When gardeners receive the contract each year, they will acknowledge that they have read, signed and understood the Rules and Regulations of the Community Gardens.

1. All gardening activities must be contained within the plot boundaries as marked by the Geneva Park District Staff.
2. Prepare your entire plot for gardening and begin planting by June 15. Complete fall clean-up by October 31. Removal of dead plants and securing plant supports are typical clean-up activities. Perennials, trees and shrubs are not allowed.
3. Fences must have mesh fence materials and may be no taller than 6 feet, but can have a single strand wire or string above the fence. The total height of the fence and strand of string or wire is not to exceed 8 feet. Please use black or green mesh fencing, if fencing is used. No orange fencing allowed. All structures must be removed by October 31.
4. Simple, non-permanent structures, such as trellises, raised beds and deck box containers are permitted. Neither solid walls nor roofs are permitted. Deck boxes must not exceed 2 feet by 3 feet. All structures must be removed by October 31.
5. Poured concrete may not be used to anchor fence posts or other structures.
6. Gardeners may not dig channels or create berms outside of their plots. Gardeners may be asked by Geneva Park District staff to remove objectionable items.
7. Mulches such as stone, carpet and artificial turf are not permitted.
8. No woody plants are allowed. All vines must be kept shorter than 6 feet to prevent shade in neighboring plots. Trees of any sort are not allowed. If a gardener's plant or roots extend

and/or creates shade in a neighboring plot, the gardener may be asked by the Geneva Park District Staff to remove or relocate the plant.

9. If you must use a pesticide outside of the organic plots, you MUST follow these rules.
 - a) Please investigate safe, non-chemical methods first.
 - b) **READ THE LABEL.** Weed killer is not allowed. It is against federal law to use a pesticide on a pest or crop that is not listed on the label.
 - c) **NO** restricted pesticide (pesticides requiring a permit for use) is permitted under any circumstances, even if the person is a licensed pesticide applicator. Use pesticides labeled safe for food crops.
 - d) Research the problem pest and the regulations for managing it in the University of Illinois Pests and Diseases Guide. <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/state/hort9.html>
 - e) Mix and apply the pesticide according to the label. Increasing the dose or frequency may harm your crop or other people.
 - f) 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 locked storage bins.
 - g) Flamers or torches for weed control are **NOT** permitted due to the risk of fire and personal safety.
10. According to state and local game regulations, it is illegal to bait, trap, or transport any animals across property lines.
11. Place all trash and garden waste in the specially marked bins provided. **DO NOT** dump plants or trash anywhere outside of your plot, or in surrounding park or wooded areas. It is illegal to dump on any public property.
12. Gardeners may not store excess lumber, fencing mesh or other materials not needed for gardening at their plots for aesthetic and safety reasons.
13. Garden plots are to be maintained throughout the season with active planting, harvesting and weeding.
 - a) Fences are to be kept in good condition: gates on hinges; posts upright; replace severely rusted wire that could cause scratches or puncture wounds.
 - b) Keep weeds under control.
 - c) Keep weeds off fences and weed 6 inches on the outside of the non-shared fence(s) (i.e., remove weeds from the fence to where the ground crew mows).
14. Do not block off-road garden paths and aisle ways with structures, equipment, and debris. Gardeners who are not in compliance with these rules will:
 - a) Receive a notice by mail, email and/or phone from the Geneva Park District Staff;
 - b) Have 7 calendar days to correct the problem upon receipt of the notice; and,
 - c) If the problem(s) is/are not corrected or addressed within the allotted time frame, the garden plot may be reclaimed and reassigned.
 - d) No refund will be issued.

IV. REGULATIONS

These regulations are designed to make gardening enjoyable and successful for you and your garden plot neighbors. For more gardening information, visit the Watch Your Garden Grow, at the University of Illinois Extension website <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/>

1. Existing Plot Condition

- a) All plots are rented in their existing condition.
- b) The Geneva Park District will till all garden plots once a year in the fall, as close to October 31 as weather allows.

2. Fences

Fences with mesh fencing material up to 6 feet tall are permitted, but not required. The gardener supplies the materials and labor. Fence posts may be wood or metal, and may be up 8 feet tall and up to 4 inches wide. Posts must be placed deep enough into the soil to securely anchor the post.

- a) NO poured concrete may be used. Metal fence posts with a flange at the base are highly recommended.
- b) The maximum fence height is 6 feet. Fencing materials must be open mesh for all fences between plots. String or wire may be used above the fence to deter deer.
- c) Fences may be used as a trellis between plots only if BOTH garden plot renters agree. Fences on the outside edge may be used as a trellis for plants if the plants do not encroach or obstruct the path. We recommend separate trellises within the plot border. Plots not in compliance with the fencing and structure rules on June 15, 2012 will be reclaimed.

Please contact the Geneva Park District Staff with any fencing questions. The Geneva Park District staff has the right to make final judgment on any fencing issue.

3. Structures

The gardener supplies the materials and labor for non-permanent structures.

- a) Simple trellis structures are permitted if they do not shade other gardens. DO NOT use poured concrete for anchoring. Neither solid walls nor solid roofs are permitted.
- b) Row covers are permitted. Please anchor them to prevent blowing away, and store them when not in use.
- c) Deck boxes must not exceed 2 feet by 3 feet.

All structures must be removed by October 31.

4. Making Good Plant Choices

Gardeners may grow a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers. Choosing from among the wide range of plants for the garden is challenging and fun! The regulations below will help you make good choices for gardening in a community garden plot program. Talk to your gardening neighbors to share ideas for good plant choices for success.

- a) Asparagus, rhubarb, and many desirable flowers are permitted. Divide them as needed to manage their size. Take them with you when you leave the garden plot program.
- b) Herbaceous vines permitted. Seek neighbor's permission to grow on common fence.
- c) No plants on the Invasive Plant of the Chicago Region List may be grown, (<http://www.chicagobotanic.org/research/conservation/invasive/chicago/index.php>). Many of these are weeds surrounding the plots. Please control them as much as you can.
- d) Some desirable plants can be weedy, such as raspberries, blackberries, mints, morning glories, and fennel. Please keep these plants 1 foot or more away from plot boundaries. Grow plants like mint in pots to contain them. Remove and throw away seed heads before the seeds ripen. Take the plants with you when you leave the garden plot program.

5. Mulch

Using mulch in your garden plot has many benefits. As organic mulches break down, they add valuable nutrients to your soil. You will need less fertilizer. They also help conserve water.

- a) Organic mulches, such as compost, leaves, straw, and shredded bark are highly recommended to conserve water and add nutrients to the soil.
- b) Non-biodegradable mulches, such as stone, carpet and artificial turf, are prohibited. Plastic and porous weed blocker covers are permitted, but need to be secured to the ground to prevent them from blowing away.
- c) Composting plant materials is an excellent way to reduce trash and conserve nutrients. Do not compost food scraps (such as meat, oils, or fat), as these attract animals.
- d) Avoid fresh manure which may contain weed seeds, smells bad, and may have sanitary issues that could affect neighboring plots

6. Watering

The community garden plots will have water hydrants. Gardeners will need to carry water to their plot. We recommend using water conservation methods such as mulching and selecting plants that use less water. Earth-friendly and low-water gardening methods are encouraged.

- a) **Hoses are not allowed.**
- b) Please report water faucet problems to the Geneva Park District Staff.
- c) Standing water or excessive wet spots are breeding grounds for mosquitoes, which are a health hazard. Empty all containers and store them upside down.

7. Managing Pests

There are many potential pests in the garden, such as weeds, insects, fungi, small mammals, etc. Most can be controlled using good gardening practices. We ask all gardeners to try these actions first. Remember the garden plot community is like a crowded neighborhood. Your actions can affect everyone. Please use any pesticides very sparingly and only as a last resort. See the University of Illinois Extension site regarding pest management.

- a) Choose plant varieties that are appropriate for our area and are resistant to pests.
- b) Keep plants healthy by using compost for fertilizer and mulches to retain water. Overwatering can cause diseases to increase.
- c) Remove insects by hand, such as caterpillars and beetles.
- d) Clean up dead and diseased plants immediately.
- e) Get ideas from the Geneva Park District Staff, your fellow gardeners, bulletin boards, books and magazines, and the Internet to help you resolve your pest problems safely.

Small mammals, such as mice, voles, rabbits, squirrels and groundhogs can be a problem. Barrier methods, such as fencing below the soil line and netting, may help protect your crops.

V. ADMINISTRATION

1. Program Management

The Geneva Park District Garden Plot Program is managed by the Geneva Park District and staff can be reached at 630-232-4542.

2. Rental Procedures

- a) Garden Plots are rented on an annual basis from March 15 through October 31.
- b) Rental contracts will be available at the Geneva Park District and must be signed and returned with payment by March 1.
- c) Residents gardeners in good standing will be automatically mailed renewal contracts. At that time a gardener may request a trade to a different plot, if one is available.
- d) As a garden plot renter, the gardener and family members agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the program.

3. Inspections

- a) Geneva Park District staff will send written notices to gardeners who are not in compliance with the rules or interfere with neighbors, or whose plots are not used appropriately.
- b) Geneva Park District staff will contact the garden plot renter to address problems.
- c) Gardeners who fail to address a rules violation within 7 calendar days, or within an alternative timeframe specified by the Geneva Park District Staff, risk losing their garden plot rental.

4. Plot Return Policy

- a) Gardeners may return their plots at any time by contacting the Geneva Park District Staff at 630-232-4542.
- b) 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 Geneva Park District Staff.
- c) Fees are not returned or prorated if a garden plot is returned early or if it is reclaimed.

5. Waitlist

Gardening is popular, and when applicable we maintain a waitlist of potential new garden plot renters.

- a) New gardeners may enter the list by completing the Community Gardens Garden Plot Agreement found on the website, <http://www.genevaparks.org/community-garden> or calling 630-232-4542, when applicable. Turn in the completed agreement at the Geneva Community Center.

- b) Names remain on the waitlist from year to year, if no plot is offered.
- c) If the offered plot is refused, the person may re-enter at the end of the waitlist.
- d) Renters whose plots are reclaimed or not renewed may re-enter at the end of the waitlist.

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. Geneva Park District 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 Geneva Police Department at 630-232-4736.

Be a good community garden member and enjoy the benefits of gardening in the Garden Plot Program. If you have any questions, please contact the Geneva Park District Staff at 630-232-4542.