

Ruby Hill Community Garden: 2016 Garden Guide



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Welcome to Ruby Hill Community Garden

A community garden means many things to many people. For some, a community garden is a place to grow food, flowers and herbs in the company of friends and neighbors. For others, it's a place to reconnect with nature or get physical exercise. While others use community gardens simply because they lack adequate space to have a garden at their house or apartment.

Regardless of why you are choosing to take part in our community garden, the activity comes with both responsibilities and rewards.

Responsibilities: Successful and vibrant community gardens rely on the dedication of each and every gardener to 1) **maintain his or her own plot(s)** and 2) **contribute to the upkeep and management of the entire garden.** Each and every gardener is required to give **2 hours per month** to the community garden as a whole as a part of their commitment to the garden.

There are many jobs that need to be done in order to help the garden run smoothly, including keeping paths clear of weeds, turning compost, working with our food bank plot(s), maintaining tools, among other things. The saying that “many hands make light work” is very appropriate in a community garden setting. If everyone pitches in according to their ability, then the garden will prosper and grow.

Gardeners must also commit to using only organic gardening methods.

Rewards: Community gardening has the potential to offer a range of benefits to individuals, families, communities and the environment. Benefits include, but are not limited to:

Food Production – community gardens enable people to grow high quality fruits and vegetables for themselves, their families and their communities.

Community – community gardens foster a sense of community identity and stewardship among gardeners. They provide a place for people of diverse backgrounds to interact and share insights, knowledge and friendship.

Nutrition – some research indicates that community gardeners eat more fruits and vegetables than non-gardening families.

Exercise – gardening requires physical activity and helps improve the overall physical health of gardeners.

Learning – people of all ages can acquire and share skills and knowledge related to gardening, cooking, nutrition, health, culture, etc.

Mental health – interacting with plants and nature helps reduce stress and increase gardeners' sense of wellness and belonging

Youth – community gardens provide a place for youth to explore gardening, nature and community.

Environment – gardens help reduce the heat island effect in cities, increase biodiversity, reduce runoff from rain, recycle local organic materials and reduce fossil fuel use from long-distance food transport.

Above all, community gardens can provide a real sense of satisfaction and accomplishment for all involved.

Success and Security at the Garden

The following tips are intended to help ensure your success at the garden, minimize theft and vandalism and keep you safe while gardening.

Successful Community Gardening

- Plan to visit your garden two to three times a week during the growing season.
 - Make a schedule with yourself or other gardeners. Write it in your calendar, on a sticky note on your fridge, etc.! Because our community garden is not located outside your front or back door, it's sometimes easy to forget that there is weeding, watering, staking, harvesting, or volunteering to do.
 - If you are going to be absent for an extended period of time, please let the garden leaders know so that we can coordinate watering and harvesting of your plots, as necessary.
- Attend scheduled meetings and garden hours.
 - This will help you meet other gardeners and become part of your gardening community. You'll also learn about the various tasks and projects that need to be done to keep the garden in shape.
- Make friends with other gardeners.
 - Experienced gardeners are an invaluable resource in the garden. Pick their brains for gardening tips. Visit their plots to see how they stake their tomatoes or trellis their beans! Whenever you see a familiar or unfamiliar face in the garden, smile and say hello! Small gestures can go a long way!
- Educate yourself.
 - Check out books from the library. Attend classes or workshops (many of which we post to our facebook page - [facebook.com/rubyhillgarden](https://www.facebook.com/rubyhillgarden)). There is always something to learn about gardening.
- Use water wisely
 - Please be conscious of your water usage. Water most plants from the ground, rather than above. Never leave hoses on and unattended. Water in the cool hours of the day, before 10am and after 6pm. For more water conservation tips, please check out <http://dug.org/water-conservation>.

Security and Safety at the Community Garden

- Know your neighbors.
 - Learn about the neighborhood. Share some extra produce with those who come up to the fence and inquire about the garden. Take the time to tell people in the park or neighborhood about how the garden works.

- Harvest your produce on a regular basis.
 - During harvest season, let garden leaders know if you plan to be out of town for more than a few days. Gardeners can harvest for you and donate the food to our local food bank.
- Consider growing unpopular, unusual or hard to harvest varieties.
 - People generally go for easy to snatch things like tomatoes, peppers, watermelon, pumpkins, etc. Think about purple heirloom tomatoes, dragon beans, etc.! 😊
- Grow more than you need.
 - We can always donate any extra produce to our local food bank!
- Use common sense.
 - Enough said? Be smart and don't plan on gardening in the middle of the night – even if there is a full moon!
- Report theft, vandalism, etc. to garden leaders.
 - The more people who are looking out for the garden and talking about what's going on, the more success we will all have at being safe and curbing unwanted activities.

This is a community garden, located in a busy area of a popular park. Vandalism of some kind is likely throughout the season. Please don't get discouraged – there is a lot to show individuals when we rise up in the face of hard times!

FAQs

How much does it cost to garden here?

Our plot fees for the season are \$35. However, nobody will ever be turned away due to an inability to pay. If you need a scholarship to cover any portion of the plot fee, please note it on the waiver and feel free to speak to a garden leader.

What kinds of tools, equipment and supplies are available at the garden?

Your plot fees cover the cost of water, one delivery of compost (enough to cover each plot at the beginning of the season), the tools in the shed (shovels, rakes, hoes, etc.), water hoses and nozzles, as well as other supplies. If there is ever a need for additional tools or supplies, please let a garden leader know and we can determine the best way to proceed.

What do I have to do to stay in good standing with the garden?

You need to complete your **2 hours/month** of volunteer hours to the community garden. These 2 hours are to be spent doing overall community garden tasks and are **separate** from your individual plot duties. Be sure to check the bulletin board at the garden for volunteer opportunities.

How are plots assigned?

On the day of orientation you can pick your plot from those that are available. Returning gardeners get first priority and selection.

How many plots can I get?

Ideally, we would like to have only one plot per person to spread the work and share the community garden love. However, there may be instances where an individual may have more than one plot. Those who are interested in more than one plot should let the garden leaders know – any extra plots will be distributed to those interested parties **after June 1st**.

Is this an organic garden?

Yes, yes and yes!! This is 100% an organic garden. No pesticides, fungicides, herbicides, miracle gro, chemicals, etc.. Think compost, worm tea, etc. instead!

Can I grow marijuana?

No, you cannot grow marijuana for any reason.

Who do I contact for gardening advice?

Reach out to your fellow gardeners via facebook (facebook.com/rubyhillgarden) or email, attend workshops, seminars and class and utilize any and all resources given to you by your garden leaders or Denver Urban Gardens!

How can I get a hold of the garden leaders?

You can contact the garden leaders through facebook (facebook.com/rubyhillgarden), email (rubyhillgarden@gmail.com), or by phone (720-235-8282).

How much time should I expect to spend at the garden?

This is very dependent upon each individual gardener and what types of crops they are growing. However, you can expect to spend approximately 2-3 hours per week on your own plot maintenance, plus your mandatory 2 hours per month of volunteer time.

What should I do if I experience or see theft or vandalism?

Reach out to your garden leaders and let us know, and if appropriate, also let the police know. You can use the non-emergency number for the Denver Police Department to report any strange activities (720-913-2000) or use 911 if you feel it is an emergency.

What should I do if I am threatened or harassed at the garden?

Call the police. You can use the non-emergency number for the Denver Police Department to (720-913-2000) or use 911. Please let your garden leaders know what is going on as well and we can try to mediate as best as possible.

Gardener Guidelines

The following guidelines have been established by the Ruby Hill Community Garden. Please read these guidelines prior to our orientation meeting and come prepared with any questions or comments for the garden leaders.

1. All gardeners are required to complete and sign the Denver Urban Gardens' application and waiver. A plot fee of **\$35** (or scholarship has been noted on waiver) is due by June 1, 2015.
2. All gardeners are required to complete **2 hours per month** of volunteer time to the community garden throughout the growing season (May-Oct). These are for tasks beyond the general maintenance and upkeep of your individual plot.
3. Garden leader hours and garden parties are scheduled throughout the season. Please plan to attend and get to know your fellow gardeners.
4. Keep your plot and the adjoining pathways tended (clear of weeds, trash, and debris). If your plot appears to be untended for a period of time, and you haven't contacted one of the garden leaders, you will be contacted and your plot may be assigned to another gardener. Call (720-235-8282) or email the garden leaders (rubyhillgarden@gmail.com) if you need help or if you will be out of town for an extended period of time. If you plan to discontinue use of your space, please let the garden leaders know ASAP.
5. No smoking or chewing tobacco in or around the garden area. Tobacco can transmit a lethal virus to tomatoes and cigarette butts are loaded with toxins.
6. Pick up all trash when you see it.
7. Do not apply anything to or pick anything from another person's plot without their expressed approval.
8. Please do not leave the water on unattended. When finished gardening for the day, please wind up the hose(s) and place them on the appropriate hook (being mindful of adjacent/adjoining plots), return tools to shed and lock the shed and gate before leaving the garden.
9. Children must be supervised at all times.
10. No pets or drugs allowed inside the garden.