



# La Vista Community Gardens

## Rules and Guidelines

The City of La Vista Community Gardens Program is a garden plot rental program. Residents participating in the program enjoy nature, plant flowers, grow fruits and vegetables for

food, and get exercise from the practice of gardening. The Community Gardens Rules and Guidelines 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 City of La Vista will provide residents the opportunity to participate in a community gardening experience through the Community Gardens Program. Garden plots are available in the following parks:



**Camenzind Park**, 7120 Wood Lane Drive

**Hollis Park**, 7521 Joseph Street

**Jaycee Park**, 7323 Harvest Hills Drive

Garden plots are raised beds and measure **4 feet by 12 feet**; a few smaller plots, **4 feet by 8 feet**, are available at some locations. Gardening is permitted when the park is open, generally from dawn to dusk.

The rules and guidelines for the Community Gardens 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. By following the rules and guidelines, you show that you want to garden successfully in a community garden plot program. All gardeners agree to follow the rules and guidelines of the Community Gardens Program.

## II. Gardener Eligibility

The following criteria establish eligibility for having a garden plot:

1. You must be a resident of La Vista. If you move from the city, you forfeit your plot at the end of the growing season.
2. You must sign and return the rental contract with a **\$20** payment by **February 1st**.
3. Only one garden plot per household unless plots are still available by the end of the sign-up period.
4. Food grown in the rental garden plots is for personal consumption only. Food may not be grown for commercial purposes.
5. You must agree to comply with rules identified in Section III for the duration of the rental period.



## III. Rules

Below are the rules that govern the program. When gardeners sign up for the program, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the following rules.

1. All gardening activities must be contained within the plot boundaries as marked by the City.
2. Prepare your plot for gardening and begin planting any time weather permits in the spring. Complete fall clean-up by November 15. Removal of dead plants and plant supports are typical clean-up activities.
3. If used, fences may only consist of mesh fence materials and may be no taller than 2 feet.
4. Simple, non-permanent structures, such as trellises (maximum of 4 feet high), plant supports and containers are permitted. Neither solid walls nor roofs are permitted.
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.
7. Mulches that are non-biodegradable (such as stone or carpet) are prohibited.
8. All woody plants, such as trees, shrubs, woody vines, etc., are prohibited. If a gardener's plant extends and/or creates shade in a neighboring plot, the gardener may be asked to remove or relocate the plant.



9. If you must use a pesticide, you **MUST** follow these rules.
  - a) **ONLY GRANULAR PESTICIDES ARE PERMITTED.** Apply according to the label – do not increase the dose or frequency.
  - b) **READ THE LABEL.** 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).
  - d) Research the pest and the guidelines for managing it.
  - e) **NO** pesticides or fertilizers may be stored anywhere in the garden plot.

10. Flamers or torches for weed control are not permitted.
11. Baiting or trapping animals is not permitted.
12. Place all trash and plant debris that you do not compost within your plot in the trash receptacles located in the park. **DO NOT** dump plants or trash anywhere outside of your plot or in the surrounding park or neighborhood.
13. Gardeners may not store excess lumber, fencing or other materials not needed for gardening at their plots.
14. Garden plots are to be maintained throughout the season with active planting, harvesting and weeding.
  - a) Fences are to be kept in good condition: posts upright; replace severely rusted wire, etc.
  - b) Keep weeds under control and keep weeds off fences.
  - c) Remove dead or diseased plants, litter, and other debris as soon as it occurs.
15. Do not block off garden paths and aisles with structures, equipment or debris.
16. Gardeners who are not in compliance with these rules will:
  - a) Receive a notice by mail, email and/or phone from the City;
  - 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.



#### IV. Guidelines

These guidelines are designed to make gardening enjoyable and successful for you and your garden plot neighbors. For more gardening information, visit the UNL Extension website, <http://byf.unl.edu/>

##### 1. Fences

Fences are not required. If a gardener chooses to erect a fence, it must be located on the **inside of the planter box**. The gardener supplies the materials and labor.

- a) Fence posts may be wood or metal, and may be up to **2** feet tall and up to **2** inches wide. Posts must be placed deep enough into the soil to securely anchor the post. **NO poured concrete may be used.** Metal fence posts with a flange at the base are highly recommended.
- b) The maximum fence height is **2** feet. Fencing materials must be open mesh for all fences between plots.
- c) Plots not in compliance with fencing and structure rules may be reclaimed.

## 2. 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) Storage bins for tools are NOT permitted to be left at the garden – tools should be brought with you when you come and taken away when you leave.
- c) Row covers are permitted. Please anchor them to prevent blowing away, and store them when not in use.
- d) Cold frames are permitted if they are no larger than 30 inches **wide** by 30 inches **high** by 60 inches **long**, and covers are made of sturdy plastic not glass.

## 3. 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 guidelines below will help you make good choices for gardening in a community garden program. Talk to your gardening neighbors to share ideas for good plant choices for success.



- a) Perennials such as 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 are permitted.
- c) No plants on the list of Invasive Plant Species of Nebraska, <http://nematode.unl.edu/neplants.htm>
- 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 the 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.
- e) Gardeners may plant a fall crop or cover crop after the summer season.

## 4. 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) 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 **within the plot** is an excellent way to reduce trash and conserve nutrients. Do not compost food scraps (such as meat, oils, or fat), as this attracts animals.
- d) Avoid fresh manure which may contain weed seeds, smells bad, and may have sanitary issues that could affect neighboring plots. Composted manure is permitted.
- e) Garden plot renters may obtain **free mulch** at the La Vista Public Works facility, 9900 Portal Road,

during regular working hours; phone 402-331-8927.

## 5. Watering

The community garden plot sites have water faucets where gardeners may attach their own hoses. Many gardeners must share the same faucet. We recommend using water conservation methods such as mulching and selecting plants that use less water.



- a) Hoses may not be stored at the community garden; you may bring your own hose or bucket for watering.
- b) If using a hose, you should have a Y-splitter to attach to the main faucet while watering. This will enable another gardener to water simultaneously.
- c) Hoses may not be strung across or on other gardeners' fences without their permission.
- d) All gardeners should be considerate when using the water. If someone is waiting to water, please limit your time to 15 minutes.
- e) Fix leaky hoses and leaky connections so water is not wasted or cause a problem with soggy spots in other plots or common areas. **Please report water faucet problems to Public Works at 402-331-8927.**
- f) Standing water or excessively wet spots are breeding grounds for mosquitoes, which are a health hazard. Empty all containers and store them upside down.

## 6. 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 commercial pesticide very sparingly and only as a last resort. See the **Rules** section for specific guidance on pesticide use.

- 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. Over-watering can cause diseases to increase.
- c) Remove unwanted insects by hand, such as caterpillars and beetles. Some insects are beneficial, such as ladybugs.
- d) Clean up and dispose of dead and diseased plants immediately.
- e) Get ideas from the extension service, your fellow gardeners, the internet, or books and magazines 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 La Vista Community Gardens Program is managed by **Dave Karlson** who can be reached by phone at **402-331-3455** or by email at [dkarlson@cityoflavista.org](mailto:dkarlson@cityoflavista.org) . You may also download program information via the City's website at <http://www.cityoflavista.org/>

### 2. Rental Procedures

- a) Garden Plots are rented on an annual basis from February 1 through January 31.
- b) Rental contracts are available on-line or by calling **402-331-3455**. Contracts must be mailed or returned to the Community Center with the **\$20** payment (cash, check or credit card accepted) by February 1<sup>st</sup>.
- c) Gardeners in good standing will be given priority for renewals. At that time a gardener may request a trade to a different plot, if any is available.
- d) As a garden plot renter, the gardener and family members agree to abide by the rules and guidelines of the program.



### 3. Inspections

- a) The City may inspect and send written notices to gardeners whose plots are not in compliance with the rules, who interfere with neighbors; or, whose plots are not used appropriately.
- b) The City will contact the garden plot renter to address problems.
- c) Gardeners who fail to address a rules violation will risk losing their garden plot rental.

### 4. Plot Return Policy

- a) Gardeners may return their plots at any time by contacting the City; call **Dave Karlson** at **402-331-3455**.
- 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 City.
- c) Fees are not returned or prorated if a garden plot is returned early or if it is reclaimed.

### 5. 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.
- c) The City of La Vista assumes no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal property, plants or produce at the garden.
- d) Should you observe illegal activities, such as theft, alcohol use, malicious damage, etc., please contact the La Vista Police Department at their non-emergency number 402-331-1582. You may file a report at the Police Department, 7701 S. 96<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Be a good community garden member and enjoy the benefits of gardening!**

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