

# Abbotsford Community Garden

## Garden Agreement Supplemental Guide



[www.abbotsfordcommunitygarden.com](http://www.abbotsfordcommunitygarden.com)

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## Contact Information

Location: 1786 Angus Campbell Road  
Email: [administrator@abbotsfordcommunitygarden.com](mailto:administrator@abbotsfordcommunitygarden.com)  
Website: [abbotsfordcommunitygarden.com](http://abbotsfordcommunitygarden.com)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/Abbotsford-Community-Garden-573622176012398/](http://www.facebook.com/Abbotsford-Community-Garden-573622176012398/)

## Welcome to the Abbotsford Community Garden Society

In addition to looking after individual garden plots, each member is responsible for helping to maintain the common areas. We have lawns; community shared plots of herbs, raspberries, and annual vegetables; a small orchard; and, perennial beds along the driveway and in front of the greenhouse.

Collectively we take care of the land; maintain the fertility of the soil; maintain a balance and diversity of living organisms; and, ensure that the garden is available for future gardeners.

## Purpose of the Abbotsford Community Garden Society

The Abbotsford Community Garden Society (ACG) Constitution states our purpose as:

- a) To foster the principles behind community growth and development by offering an outdoor space for individuals and groups to develop and nurture their passions for gardening;
- b) To engage and educate members of the community on nutrition, environmental stewardship, agriculture, and passive recreation through seminars, reading materials and other resources;
- c) To provide a positive and complimentary environment where agriculture, wildlife, and passive recreation are brought together;
- d) To create a growing space for community interaction across all ages, cultures and incomes; and
- e) To provide members an opportunity to participate in the natural process of growing food, and thereby improving the local food supply.

## The Abbotsford Community Garden Society

The ACG is located at 1786 Angus Campbell Rd (south-east corner of Angus Campbell and Delair Roads) and administered by the City of Abbotsford (City) Parks, Recreation and Culture. We are governed by City park rules and by the rules set out by the ACG. Examples of park rules that we must follow include:

- **Fires and Smoking** are not permitted at the garden site, and,
- **Pets** are not allowed in the garden area.

The ACG works with the City to make the area a place of enjoyment now and in the future

for the citizens of Abbotsford.

## Who Maintains the Gardens?

Tending the garden's common areas day to day, as well as long-term planning and development of the gardens, is done entirely by volunteer members. Central to the idea of a community garden is low fees made possible through member participation.

**When you become a member, you have both the opportunity and the obligation to be involved in garden activities. Participation is a requirement of all gardeners and is built into the annual plot and membership fees.**

## Membership

Garden members elect an executive committee annually to provide administration, organize the work of the gardens, and, arrange education sessions on organic gardening. The Annual General Meeting is held each year between February and April.

## Plot Renewal

Members have the option to renew their plots from year to year, provided the plots have been maintained the previous season, the member is in good standing, and the plot registration is renewed by the plot renewal deadline.

The ACG offers two plot re-registration dates, one at the end of September and a second one in October. These dates, which are publicized on the ACG [website](#) and [Facebook](#) pages, are the deadline for membership and plot renewal with payment of fees. Plots that have not been renewed by the final re-registration date go into the pool of available plots to be rented at the new member registration dates in the spring.

### ***Community Garden Agreement***

Gardeners can officially garden at Abbotsford Community Garden after reading and signing the "Community Garden Agreement" and paying the annual fees.

### ***Membership Fees and Deposits***

Fees cover operating expenses of the gardens.

Annual membership fees per plot:

\$20 and 6 hours of work in-kind for a 10' x 20' garden plot **or**

\$10 and 3 hours of work in-kind for a 10' x 10' or raised bed garden plot

In-kind hours must be submitted to [inkindhours@gmail.com](mailto:inkindhours@gmail.com)

*Work-in-kind hours per year must be completed before September 30<sup>th</sup>.*

- First-time renters pay both a "Clean-up Deposit" of \$20.00 for the plot and a "Key Deposit" of \$20.00. The clean-up deposit is forfeited if the garden plot, (if not re-

registered), is not cleaned up by the final reregistration date in the fall. The key deposit is forfeited if the key is not returned to the ACG registrars.

### ***Incomplete Work-in-Kind***

Gardeners who are non-compliant regarding work-in-kind hours (described above under [Membership Fees and Deposits](#)) will not be considered to be in good standing for membership renewal and will not be permitted to renew their plot(s). Non-compliant gardeners forfeit their right to rent a plot for 1 (one) full year.

### ***Unmaintained Plots***

Gardeners who are non-compliant regarding plot maintenance and clean-up by September 30th will not be considered to be in good standing for membership renewal and will not be permitted to renew their plot. Non-compliant gardeners forfeit the right to rent a plot for 1 (one) full year.

## **What are the fees used for?**

Any monies raised by the ACG are used for the following:

- Operating costs (fuel, waste disposal, porta potty, compost)
- Replacement and repair of equipment (hand tools, mowers, weed-eaters, hoses, etc.)
- Community garden events (social or educational)

## **Renting a Second Plot**

Garden plots are assigned at the spring registration on a first-come, first-served basis. A member who is in good standing with no current notices or warnings and who has been a member for at least one year is eligible to apply for a second plot, based on availability. A maximum of two plots can be rented per household.

## **Member Responsibilities**

- Keep the Society informed of any changes to your contact information.
- Work on your plots by May 1st. At a minimum, weeds and cover crops must be cut down.
- Maintain your plots and provide weed control throughout the growing season.
- Arrange for someone to look after your plot if you are away or unable to tend it.

## **Garden Tools**

Some tools are provided by ACG. These have either been purchased by ACG or donated by merchants or by gardeners. Use tools in a safe manner and clean them before returning them to the tool storage area. Community tools are only to be used at the garden. They must be returned at the end of each day and are not to be taken home. If tools are not being used or cared for properly, garden members will have to start bringing their own as the ACG will discontinue purchasing them. Please leave a note if a tool is broken.

Any wheelbarrows that gardeners no longer need must be cleaned and returned to the wheelbarrow storage area.

Any use of power equipment is at your own risk.

## Parking

Obey the signs! Parking is permitted only in the parking lot. This is a requirement of the City of Abbotsford. If you are loading or unloading heavy or overly large items, you may park closer to your plot temporarily, but must move your vehicle immediately afterwards. Wheelbarrows are available to help transport materials to and from your vehicle.

## Your Garden Plot

### Environment

We are an *organic* garden. Herbicides, insecticides and other pesticides or chemical fertilizers cannot be applied anywhere unless they meet the [Canadian Organic Standards](#). If in doubt, contact a member of the executive. Use of products such as salt and vinegar are not permitted as herbicides unless the product is registered under the *Pest Control Products Act*. Use of unregistered products is not allowed. As an example, salt and vinegar used to control weeds will harm the soil and is not a permitted use under organic standards.

### Planting

Plots must be gardened, not left fallow. Plants must not shade neighboring plots, and must remain within plot boundaries. Any planting in common areas must be approved by the executive.

### Invasive Species

The Abbotsford Community Garden forbids the planting of the following invasive species:

- \*English Ivy (*Hedera helix*) and varieties
- \*Lamium (*Lamium galeobdolon*) & varieties
- \*Policeman's Helmet (*Impatiens glandulifera*)
- \*Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)
- \*Morning glory (*Convolvulus sepium*)
- Goutweed (*Aegopodium podagraria*)
- Yellow flag Iris (*Iris pseudocarpus*)
- Periwinkle: Vinca (*Vinca major*, *Vinca minor*)
- Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*)
- Blackberry (*Rubus discolor*, *Rubus laciniatus*)
- Marijuana (*Cannabis sativa*)
- Tobacco (*Nicotiana tabacum*) or (*Nicotiana rustica*)
- Plants of concern: Mint, Sun chokes (Jerusalem artichokes), Horse Radish

Noxious Weeds: Tansy Ragwort, Wild Chervil, Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed need to be reported.

\*denotes species we need to watch for

**Trees are prohibited in garden plots.**

### ***Plot Maintenance***

- You must keep your plot weeded and prevent plants from growing beyond the borders of your plot. Please prevent vegetation from overtaking walkways and adjacent plots.
- Be respectful. Tall crops such as sunflowers and corn and structures should be planted to not shade another garden. If over 6 feet tall, these plants must be trimmed back.
- Cover crops must be cut or dug under by May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Weeds and sod can be composted or buried on your plot. This will improve your soil fertility. If you are unable to bury this material, it can be added to the community compost bunker.
- Gardeners are responsible for weeding and trimming all edges of their plots. Weeds must not be allowed to go to seed. Neighborhood pathways must be kept clear of rocks, wire, wood, garbage, tools or any other material.
- Maintain your plot throughout the year. Harvest your produce as it ripens. If you are unable to use your produce, please consider placing it in the provided food bank donation bin. Begin plot clean-up as you harvest and have your plot clear of debris by September 30<sup>th</sup>. Winter crops such as kale, leeks, garlic, Brussels sprouts, etc., can be left to mature.

The consequences of not maintaining your plot are outlined in the section on [Guideline Enforcement](#).

### ***Water***

- All plots have access to a hose stand. Some hoses are provided, but bringing your own lightweight, expandable hose may be of benefit. Bring your own nozzle or watering wand. Gardeners must be diligent to shut off the water off after use. Turn off the water before you hang the hose back on the hose stand. Flooding can occur due to the water not being shut off. Replace hoses on hose stands.
- Only handheld nozzles are permitted; any other type of sprinkler or soaker may not be used. Do not turn on the water to your garden and then leave.

### ***Mulches***

Mulches help to conserve soil moisture and we encourage their use. Acceptable mulch materials include grass clippings, straw, leaves, peat moss, manure, bark or and sawdust (not cedar). Cardboard and newsprint are acceptable provided they are covered. *Do not* use western red cedar bark mulch, hay or gravel.

### ***Pathways in your plot***

Acceptable materials for covering pathways are landscape fabric (covered under a mulch),



sawdust or bark mulch, leaves, straw, concrete blocks, and stepping stones.

### ***Garbage***

Please remove all garbage (such as unused plant pots, plant tags, plastic wrap, string, trays and scrap wood) from your plot and the area around your plot. We do not have garbage collection at the garden, so please take these items home and dispose of them appropriately. They should not be left around the garden or placed in the compost bin.

## **Plot Structure Guidelines**

Structures include pole bean and pea supports, trellises, arbors, plant/row covers, cold frames, fences, water barrels and raised bed borders.

### ***Guiding Principles***

- Be considerate of fellow gardeners.
- Do not place a structure on your plot that will shade a neighbour's plot.
- Structures must be aesthetically compatible with park and garden atmosphere.
- Structures must be sturdy and safe. Avoid sharp edges, protruding edges, and glass. Treated wood is not permitted.
- Permanent structures must be monitored year-round and repaired as required.
- All structures in common areas must be pre-approved by the executive.
- Construction materials should not be left in the plot.
- Construction materials cannot be stored in pathways or common areas.

### ***Restrictions***

- No treated lumber.
- No loose-fitting netting (hazard for birds).

## **Structures**

### ***Cold Frames***

- Maximum height 1.83 meter (6 feet).
- Maximum coverage 5 square meters (48 square feet) per plot.
- No glass and no treated wood.

### ***Plant /Row Covers***

- Maximum height 1.83 meters (6 feet).
- Maximum area: 5 square meters (48 square feet) per plot.
- Must be structurally sound and anchored within the plot border.
- Clear plastic covers must be of a durable thickness (5 mil) that will be wind-proof and will not tear. Winter removal is recommended. Fabric row covers must be thoroughly secured.
- Row covers must be kept in good repair.

### ***Pole Bean and Pea Supports***

- No limit per plot for temporary seasonal supports, but must not exceed 1.83 meter (6 feet) high.

### ***Raspberries/Grapes***

- Must be planted a minimum of 2 feet from the plot border.
- Must be trellised and confined so that they don't grow into the pathway or neighbours' plots.
- Must be properly pruned within the boundaries of the plot and kept below 6 feet.

### ***Trellises and Arbors***

- Must be sturdily constructed and safely anchored.
- Maximum height 1.83 meters (6 feet from ground level to highest point).
- No treated lumber.

### ***Compost Boxes inside Plots***

- Must be securely anchored.
- Plastic or non-treated wood allowed.
- Maximum size: 1 cubic meter.
- Must be located within the gardener's plot.
- If odour or the attraction of pests becomes a problem, the gardener may be asked to remove their compost box/bin.

### ***Fences***

- Fences must be located within the plot area and constructed in such a way that all supports are situated on the inside of the fence. Wire should be on the inside of the fence or covered with wood at the bottom. This is done to facilitate mowing the pathways.
- Soil, wood, brick or other materials should not be placed around the outside of fences.
- Non-injurious materials permitting movement of light and air will be considered. *No treated lumber.*
- Maximum height: 105 cm (42 inches).

## **Respecting Other Gardeners' Plots**

- Stay out of other people's plots unless specifically invited.
- While you may view the success of other gardeners, refrain from stepping into or interfering with their plots.
- Harvest only plants that you are growing or have permission from the grower to pick.
- If you move to a new plot at the end of the current garden season, you must remove all of your belongings that you wish to move, including plants, from your previous plot by October 31 of the same year. After that, you no longer have permission to enter

your previous plot, nor to remove anything from it. Doing so would be considered trespassing and theft, and you would lose your membership to the Abbotsford Community Garden Society.

## Shared Community Garden Plots

Several perennial sites have been established (herb garden, raspberry patch, and orchard). As well, we keep a crop-rotated vegetable patch. These are community ventures. You are allowed to join in the harvest from these areas as long as you complete your work in-kind hours. **Only take enough to supply yourself with one meal.**

## Gardeners, Family, and Pets

### *Gardeners*

In the spirit of cooperation, all gardeners shall treat the garden, other gardeners, neighbours and visitors with respect and consideration. No stealing, harvesting from others' plots without authorization, verbal or physical harassment is allowed.

### *Children*

Children are welcome at the garden when accompanied and fully supervised by an adult garden member. Teach children to stay on the paths, keep out of others' plots, and to not bring balls or other play equipment into the garden areas. Parents are encouraged to bring children to the garden and introduce them to the wonders of gardening.

### *Dogs or other animals*

Dogs or other pet animals are not permitted at the Abbotsford Community Garden.

## Miscellaneous

### *Garden gates and locks*

The last gardener to leave the garden, regardless of the time of day, should securely close and lock the perimeter fence gate and garden shed. Be sure to check that you are not locking someone in the garden.

### *Disposal of Materials*

- Plot owners are responsible for removal and disposal of all unwanted gardening materials and lumber.
- No materials are to be disposed of in the common areas or adjacent to the community garden.

## Guideline Enforcement

Every effort will be made to help gardeners understand and follow the guidelines. If the guidelines are not followed, your membership may be revoked and you will lose your plot(s).

The disciplinary policy is as follows:

a) **You will receive one caution and one warning, then your plot may be terminated under the following situations:**

- Plot not worked by May 1<sup>st</sup>
- Plot not cleaned up by September 30<sup>th</sup>
- Plot neglected and causing the spread of weeds
- Use of treated lumber
- Use of materials or structures that do not meet the guidelines
- Use of herbicides, insecticides and fungicides that are not approved for organic gardening
- Parking inappropriately. For details, see the section on [Parking](#).

b) **Your plot may be terminated immediately under the following situations:**

- Conducting any illegal activity
- Bringing waste into the garden for disposal or compost
- Stealing from or damaging someone else's plot
- Use of racial slurs
- Threatening a member's safety.

Members will lose their plots without notice if they do not register for the upcoming year on time or do not document their work in-kind hours.

## Seed Starting Guide

Examples of seed starting guides are available from [West Coast Seeds](#) or [Old Farmer's Almanac](#). In general, you should be aware of the last spring frost and first frost of the fall if you wish to plant seed or transplants in the garden. The Community Garden is somewhat colder than the Abbotsford Airport ([Environment Canada Weather Office](#)) so the last spring frost will be later, the first frost will be earlier, and the frost free period will be shorter.

Unless you have raised beds or modified the soil in your plot, the soil generally stays colder at the community garden due to it being a finer texture and generally wetter landscape.

Abbotsford Airport (avg.)

Last Frost Date April 7<sup>th</sup> (as late as April 20<sup>th</sup>)

First Frost Date November 1<sup>st</sup> (as early as October 23<sup>rd</sup>)

Frost Free Days 208 days (or short as 180 days)

## A Beginner's Guide to Vegetable Gardening

(Source of original article: UBC Botanical Garden, Tony Maniezzo, Horticulturalist. Article is no longer available on-line.)

### *Keep It Simple*

The biggest mistake made by beginning gardeners is starting too big. They are soon overwhelmed by the task, feeling discouraged and guilty. Vegetable gardening should be fun. If it becomes an onerous chore to water, weed, thin and pick, you will probably give up. We all live busy lives. When you start grumbling about going out to the garden after a day's work, the garden is going to suffer.

### *Getting Started*

- Start small, gain confidence. A single raised bed 2m (6ft) by 3m (9ft) or 4m (12ft) is large enough. You can always add beds later as your confidence and skill grows. If you already have a large bed to begin with, consider dividing it up into smaller sections. Maybe plant some flowers or herbs to fill in the area? If your area is large, another idea is to plant squash or pumpkins – they cover a large area and help to reduce maintenance.
- Choose a site that gets at least 6 hours of sunlight per day
- Remove the sod from the site, shake off the soil and add the sod to your compost bin. It speeds up the composting if you rip up the sod into small pieces. If you don't have a compost bin, build one. You will be doing your garden a favor in the future. If there is buttercup in the sod pieces, do get rid of it.
- I recommend framing in the bed area and creating a raised bed. The soil will warm up sooner in the spring and help to keep weeds out of the bed. Use landscape ties or

2' x 10' boards. The really adventurous can build concrete forms. A 30-45 cm (12 to 18 inches) deep beds works well. Fill with topsoil.

- Feed the soil, not the plants.
- Add organic matter to a depth of approx. 10 to 15 cm (4 to 6 inches). This can be compost, animal or mushroom manure.
- Dig the organic matter into the top layer of soil. Let it sit for at least a couple of days before sowing or planting.

### ***Sowing Seed***

- Start sowing early in the season. At the Botanical Garden (located in Vancouver, British Columbia), we start in the first week of March.
- Remember, only grow what you and your family will eat. At this point in your gardening career, don't worry too much about trying to supply yourself with vegetables that will last all year. What you are trying to do is have small successes that build into something greater over time.
- This guide, catalogues, gardening books, and the Internet can be used to help you plan what to grow at different times of the year
- In April, sow spinach, green onions, carrots, cabbage, lettuce and Swiss chard.
- In May, sow pole beans, turnips, bush beans and corn.
- In June, sow bush beans.
- In July, sow spinach, mustard greens, Swiss chard and rutabaga.
- In August, sow onions and radishes.
- In September, sow radishes, broad beans, Oriental greens, salad blends and arugula.

### ***Planting***

- Warm season vegetables, such as tomatoes, squashes and peppers, are best bought from a local nursery (at least until you become more skilled at sowing seeds and creating indoor growing space). These are best planted in late May and early June.
- Other vegetables can also be purchased from the nursery and planted earlier. In the early stages of gardening I recommend this to help with the success of your garden.
- Another time of year for planting is August. This is when your winter vegetables would go in. Unfortunately, nurseries don't seem to carry vegetables at this time of year so you would have to sow your own in July or purchase plants earlier and plant then.

### ***Weeding***

- Weeds rob moisture and nutrients from vegetable plants, therefore you are helping to increase harvests by eliminating competition. Weeds also block sunlight.
- Have a positive attitude toward the task. It provides exercise, helps make compost

and produces better veggies.

- Hoe regularly, even when you don't see a lot of weeds. This helps to kill germinating seeds and cultivates the soil.
- Avoid walking on newly cultivated beds as the soil compaction helps weeds to germinate and destroys soil texture. Use boards for walking on if you must go into the beds.
- Make sure you get all the roots of perennial weeds. A tiny root of dandelion or buttercup will quickly regrow into a full size weed.

### ***Mulching***

- To help combat weeds, you can mulch between rows. Organic mulches are best. When they breakdown, they benefit the soil. Use straw, grass clippings or pine needles.
- Mulching also helps to conserve moisture and modify soil temperature.
- Black plastic can also be used. It works, but personally I think it's ugly.
- Mulches should be applied when soil is moist.

### ***Watering***

- Deep regular watering is best. This allows for better root formation, plant stability and nutrient recovery.
- Seeds and transplants need to be kept moist. Watering every day may be required. For seeds that are planted deeper, such as beans, drying out is less of a problem.
- Best time to water is early morning.
- Do not wait for plants to show symptoms. Check soil regularly, grab a handful and squeeze it. If particles cling together, it is fine; but, if it feels dry and particles separate, it needs watering.
- Lack of moisture shows itself in different ways. Beets stop growing and become fibrous. Radishes grow hollow and stringy. Melons will not set fruit. Corn ears will not fill to the top. Leafy vegetables become bitter. Beans grow distorted. Tomatoes will show physical disorders such as blossom end rot. Squash wilt.

### ***Pests and Diseases***

- Try not to get crazy about insects chewing on your plants. If you fret about every little thing, gardening will not be a fun activity. Remember, bugs need to eat too.
- Do not use pesticides – poisons are not fun. They often kill beneficial insects along with the unwanted ones.
- Practice companion planting, e.g., onions and garlic around carrots and other root crops.
- Attract beneficial insects by planting flowers around your vegetable plot. Fennel and dill both attract a beneficial wasp that preys on aphids.

- Become observant. Check for aphids and rub them out with your hand or blast them with the hose.
- Look for cabbage butterfly larvae under the leaves and pick them off. A few holes is not a problem, as it usually the outer leaves that are affected.
- Slugs can be trapped with beer or kept away from vulnerable plants with eggshells.

### ***Some Final Thoughts***

These are the basics that should allow you to have a simple yet productive garden. With early success comes enthusiasm. The rest is up to you. Read books, talk to neighbours, use online forums, resources on the Internet, experiment and, above all, have fun. You will soon take the next step, trying new varieties and techniques for an even more rewarding experience – happy eating and enjoy!