

Acton 2025- 2026 Community Garden Rules & Expectations:

The Acton Community Garden Agreement requires all community gardeners to follow the rules and expectations listed below. Visitors to the community gardens are expected to follow the same rules and expectations set below.

Community Garden Monitoring & Inspections

Throughout the growing season, the Community Garden Coordinator and Town Staff may perform periodic visits to the community gardens.

Rules and Expectations Enforcement

- Report possible violations via email to Communitygarden@actonma.gov
- In the event of a possible violation, the following action will be taken:
 1. Gardeners will be notified by either mail and/or email
 2. Two (2)-week time period to resolve the situation
 3. If not resolved within 2-weeks, the Town can opt to resolve the matter
 4. Gardener will be sent \$50 fine for non-compliance
- Three (3) violations that are not resolved by a gardener within one (1) growing season could result in automatic forfeiture of their garden plot and not allowed to renew for the next growing season.

DURING THE GROWING SEASON

- Gardens are open dawn until dusk, seven days a week.
- Work needs to begin no later than June 1st.
- If a plot remains unused for more than 1 month during the growing season, the gardener could lose their assigned plot. At this time, the unused garden plot could be assigned to another gardener.

END OF SEASON

- Annual garden plots must be completely cleared before the 2nd Monday in November.
- Plot Clearance includes the removal of weeds, rocks, personal items, landscape fabric, stakes and posts, and plants.
- Any personal property remaining on the plot upon termination of the gardener's rights or at the end of the season will become the property of the Town and may be disposed of or used at the Town's discretion.
- Gardeners who have not cleaned up their plot(s) by this date may not be invited back in the future.

COMPOSTING PLANT MATERIAL

- The compost areas are only to be used by the Community Garden for weeds, trimmings, and plant material pulled up during the growing season.
- Do not place diseased plants into the compost, or any other plant, food, or substance from outside of the garden.
- PLEASE DO NOT ADD COMPOST MATERIAL FROM HOME TO THE COMPOST PILE.

DISPOSAL

- Community Gardens are CARRY IN/ CARRY OUT; please take all trash and debris with you.
- Please practice Leave No Trace principles – [Click on this link](#) or visit this website for more information: <https://lnt.org/why/7-principles/>

DOGS AND PETS

- Dogs and pets are not permitted inside the fenced garden area.
- Please do not put dog waste in the compost piles.

FERTILIZER

- Only organic additives such as compost, manure, bone meal, fish emulsion, etc. are permitted. Non-organic pesticides, fertilizers, and fungicides are not allowed. If in doubt, check with the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) at <http://www.omri.org/omri-lists>

- No chemical remedies or enhancers of any kind are to be used unless labeled organic. Organic products are recommended for use as fertilizers and fungicides. Miracle Grow is not recommended.
- For questions on which fertilizers you may use, reach out to Communitygarden@actonma.gov

NOT ALLOWED

- Extending into footpaths – all footpaths will remain clear or debris will be removed.
- Bee-Keeping
- Herbicides
- Extending your garden beyond your assigned plot. Any planting done in this manner will be removed.
- Borrowing privately-owned tools or hose from other plots without the owner's permission.

STRUCTURES

- No permanent structures (e.g. sheds, raised-bed gardens, concrete footings, treated lumber) are permitted without approval from the Town.
- All structures (e.g. fencing, trellising, etc.) should be limited to 6 feet high and be located where they will not negatively affect neighboring plots with shade.
- Structures must be contained within individual plots and are not permitted on pathways.
- Any structures found in violation of the rules may be removed and discarded at the Town's discretion.

WATER BARRELS

- If gardeners have stored water on their plots, the containers need to be covered to control mosquitos.

WATERING

- Follow any Acton Water District (AWD) watering restrictions ([Click here to visit Acton Water District Website](#))
- You are required by the Acton Water District to conserve water. The community garden watering rules must be adhered to by every gardener:
 - Hand watering by hose with an automatic shutoff nozzle is permitted. This is a nozzle that stops the water flow when your hand is removed. All watering hoses must have such a nozzle. No hose may be left open and allowed to run on the ground. – AWD ask about nozzles and providing seasonal regulations
 - Hand-held watering cans may also be used.
 - Any hose attached irrigation devices of any kind must be approved by the Community Garden Coordinator each year, if not they will be removed. They must be designed with water conservation in mind, they cannot restrict others' water flow– no sprinklers, soaker hoses, etc.
 - Water the base of the plants only – the root systems, not the leaves. This minimizes the amount of water utilized.
 - Do not flood your plot. This wastes a great deal of water which the plants don't use and encourages the growth of unwanted vegetation and disease.
 - Do not allow young children to operate or touch the valve systems, or to water your garden.
 - If you are the last gardener using the water in your area, you must turn off the watering system all the way back to the feeder valves. If you don't understand the watering system, ask one of the other gardeners. If you find a leaking valve, it is your responsibility as part of the community to contact the Community Garden Coordinator.
 - Communitygarden@actonma.gov
 - You may only water on your garden's watering days before 9:00 AM and after 5:00 PM. This will minimize water loss through evaporation.
 - There is no guarantee that water will be available throughout the entire summer.