

Bloomfield Community Garden

Membership Outline 2012

Being a member of the Bloomfield Community Garden gives you a plot in the garden in which to grow. It also means that you are committed to working with the other members of the garden to manage the site, build up collective skills and resources, and engage the community around the garden site.



Growing food in a collective space is wonderful, but it isn't always easy. We all have different capacities to contribute, as well as different needs and challenges. We hope all members will engage with the garden space and do what you can to make it a positive and productive space, while at the same time having understanding of where each of us are coming from. Some of our garden members are busy raising young families, some of us experience lower incomes than others, many of us have never gardened before; we speak different languages and have different ideas of what beauty is. We will always be learning as we go, and it is important that each member shares ideas, energy, and frustrations as we go. We hope to create a functional, positive and accessible space to grow in and good communication will be key in this process.

Membership Details

Annual Membership running April 2012- April 2013

Membership Fee is \$20 annually. If cost is a barrier please just let us know.

Members need to renew their membership plot annually by September 30th of each year.

When a plot opens up we will first contact those on our waiting list and if needed, make a public call for new members.



Collective Management and Community Access

Volunteer Hours

Members should be prepared to spend a minimum of 3 hours a week in the garden. This is simply a guideline to give you an idea of the time commitment it takes to work in a community garden. This time includes tending to your own plants, doing collective garden tasks, sharing your learnings with other members and with the community, and attending garden work-parties. Most of these hours will be informal, spent whenever you stop by, other times will be when we gather together and work on a collective project to better the garden space at large. These times together are essential to take care of the larger tasks that need attention (i.e. compost, repairing infrastructure etc.) and to foster communication and understanding between members. We are here to work together. Below is a better idea of what these hours will entail.

Community Access

We will strive to make the garden a welcoming space for each other and for other residents of the neighbourhood. The garden is a public space and we are responsible to care for it. We will invite the public to our events by putting up notices in the garden space, and the community at large. We will also work with connected projects and organizations to foster momentum and collaboration between food and garden activities in the community. Some of these connections and collaborations include:

- Bloomfield Community Greenhouse (located beside the garden with it's own organizing members).
- Imagine Bloomfield (Community Organization responsible for the creation and maintenance of the garden site).
- Urban Garden Project, Native Plant Pollinator Project & The Ecology Action Centre



Member Tasks

There are many tasks that go into a productive and beautiful garden. The joy of collective management is that we get to share the work. There are two ways we will share the work, work-parties and a caretaker schedule.

Work-parties

The Steering Committee will call work-parties to take care of larger tasks, and to bring gardeners together to answer questions or issues that have arisen within the month. This will help keep our soil healthy and happy for years to come. These events are opportunities for those new to gardening to learn from others in the group, and those who have more gardening skills to share their knowledge with other gardeners.

Garden members will work with the steering committee to organize and set up these events. Your friends and families are always welcome to these events, the more the merrier, children included of course.

These work-parties will include:

- Preparing the soil in the spring (adding amendments and compost, bring tools back out to the garden, repairing rainbarrels etc);
- Building and turning compost piles (using materials collected either from home, or collected within the community.);
- Pruning the tree and rose bushes, taking care of native plant gardens;
- Fall garden clean up and soil prepping (adding needed amendments, mulching with straw or planting fall rye, cleaning tools and storing them for the winter).

Caretaker Schedule

Each member will be assigned a two-week period in which they will be caretakers of the collective areas of the garden, starting around the last week of May and ending around the second Saturday in October. Being a caretaker means taking care of any of the following tasks that may need attention at the time:

- Filling up the rain barrels each day or as needed;
- Weeding/pruning/planting/mulching/fertilizing common garden spaces;
- Building and turning the compost piles;
- Cleaning up any garbage on site.

It will be up to members to communicate times they are out of the city and to organize someone to cover their tasks for those times. Some members may be able to commit more time than others, we hope that members with a larger capacity can support those with less capacity to be at the garden to attend collective events.



Organic Gardening

We will be managing our garden organically. This means we will not be using any synthetic additives in our soil or in our space. In order to minimize problems and grow a lush garden we will all need to contribute to the health of the soil. Add nutrients to your plot when you can, adding organic fertilizers, leaf mould, compost and compost teas. We will do some of this together, but everyone is responsible to their own plot.

Tools will be stored securely in the garden. When you are done with the tools, please clean the tool and return them to minimize rust and theft. We have shovels, pitch forks, watering cans, hose and hand tools. Please bring your own gloves.

There is a rain barrel on site and we have watering cans for hand watering. If the barrel needs filling you can use the hose and the water hook-up on the side of the school. Please do not leave the barrel more than 1/3 empty.

There are compost holding areas where you may deposit clippings, dead plants, etc. These bins will feed directly into our compost operation.

We will be experimenting with ways to keep the garden productive and healthy throughout the season, this means we will all be learning as we go and sharing information. It will be essential that we communicate well and ask lots of questions.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will be a small group (2-3 gardeners) who will help to coordinate the garden. They will help keep communication open and make plans when needed. Some of their responsibilities will include:

- Set-up a caretaker schedule for the season and make it accessible online and onsite;
- Keep tabs on tasks or projects that need taken care of;
- Call work parties and let members know;
- Respond to questions and concerns of gardeners;
- Call meetings when things need discussed or reviewed;
- Resolve conflicts;
- Renew memberships and keep track of the waiting list.

The Steering Committee's role is to facilitate action and communication in the garden, and not to make all the decisions or bear all the responsibility of the space. They will need lots of support and input from all the members to do their job well.

