



## Oskaloosa Community Gardens Rules and Guidelines

### **Overview**

The City of Oskaloosa recognizes the value of urban agriculture and establishes this Community Gardens Program hereinafter called Oskaloosa Community Gardens to promote the development of Community Gardens throughout the city. Community Gardens build and strengthen the community, provide economic benefits, increase social equity and promote environmental stewardship. By providing access to affordable, nutritional foods, Community Gardening is among the most practical approaches to preventing and reducing obesity and associated diseases. Under the City's program, Community Gardens will be created and maintained by community groups and residents. This will help the City decrease its operation and maintenance costs. Turning vacant lots into attractive gardens can also help neighborhoods more effectively attract and retain residents and businesses.

Urban agriculture improves the quality of life for urban residents by creating green spaces and enhancing the connections between garden participants. Community Gardens can also provide environmental benefits including managing storm-water runoff by capturing and filtering water in the urban environment.

### **Oskaloosa Community Gardens**

The City of Oskaloosa seeks to encourage Community Gardens by offering city property to non-profit organizations, civic associations, community groups, residents, and other eligible entities to be developed into Community Gardens when certain criteria is met. Groups are encouraged to engage with individual gardeners by creating their own policies to rent individual plots or otherwise let individuals use the parcel. All gardeners must follow the Oskaloosa Community Gardens Rules and Guidelines.

### **Oskaloosa Community Gardens Goals**

The goals of the Oskaloosa Community Gardens are to create an understanding of the value of Community Gardens and the need for Community Gardens in the City of Oskaloosa. To encourage and facilitate local urban agriculture and to increase access to fresh, nutritional food for residents. To turn vacant and underutilized city parcels into productive gardens.

Subject to available resources, the city will support Oskaloosa Community Gardens in the following manner:

- Offer eligible city-owned parcels for use as Community Gardens
- Provide space on the City's webpage to provide information about Oskaloosa Community Gardens
- Help raise awareness of community gardening through the webpage



## **Definitions**

City property means city-owned real estate or any portion thereof that may be used as a Community Gardens.

Community Gardens means city property used to grow fruits, vegetables, flowers, herbs, wood products or native or ornamental plants for non-commercial purposes, in which there is no exchange of goods for monetary value.

Gardener means anyone participating in a Community Gardens on city property.

Community Group means any organization or group of people from Oskaloosa that want to apply for and use space provided for Community Gardens by the City of Oskaloosa.

Coordinator means anyone who applies and receives a permit for a Community Gardens through the Oskaloosa Community Gardens. The Coordinator will act as the primary contact to the city.

## **Oskaloosa Community Gardens Requirements**

Gardeners must agree to comply with the Oskaloosa Community Gardens Rules and Guidelines for the duration of the use of the Community Gardens.

## **Oskaloosa Community Gardens Rules**

The following rules are established to govern the Oskaloosa Community Gardens, to ensure that the plots are maintained and that the City of Oskaloosa's policies and laws are followed.

The rules are subject to change. The rules and all changes to the rules will be posted on the Oskaloosa website.

### **General Rules:**

Permit holders must designate a Coordinator to be responsible for its Community Gardens and to serve as the group's primary contact with the city.

The City will offer a parcel for use through the issuance of a permit revocable and terminable at will for any reason, upon due notice, by either the City or the Coordinator, for the annual use of city property for a period not to exceed 12 months from the date of any such issuance.

The permit must be filed by the Coordinator to request the use of city property as a Community Gardens. Plans for the Community Gardens must be submitted with the application. Plans must include how the gardens will be promoted, and the number of plots offered to the public.

The City will accept applications for a parcel on a first come, first served basis until March 30 of each calendar year for that year.

The City will accept renewal applications until November 30 of each calendar year for the next year. If a Coordinator does not submit its renewal application by the deadline then its parcel may be reassigned.

Coordinators from the previous season in good standing will have first preference and may choose either the same parcel or a vacant parcel if one exists.



All designated Community Gardens will be approved by a designee assigned from the City Manager's Office.

All gardeners participating in a Community Gardens will be required to complete an Oskaloosa Community Gardens Release Form. Release Forms are required within seven calendar days of an individual agreeing to participate in the Oskaloosa Gardens Program. Failure to send Individual Release Forms will result in the Coordinator being solely responsible for the defense of and compensation for any and all personal injuries and/or property damage sustained as a result of an individual's participation in the Oskaloosa Community Gardens.

No produce or any other items grown in the Oskaloosa Community Gardens may be exchanged for goods for monetary value. No fees can be assigned to the garden plots.

Coordinators are prohibited from using the "City of Oskaloosa" name in any context without prior written permission from the City of Oskaloosa. The City may promote the Oskaloosa Community Gardens in any manner allowed by law.

Plants regulated or prohibited by federal and state laws are prohibited in gardens. If any such plants are found, the permit for the parcel will be immediately revoked.

The City of Oskaloosa prohibits the use of synthetic fertilizers and all pesticides and herbicides.

Gardeners must remove all structures, fencing and materials from their parcel when it vacates the parcel unless the City of Oskaloosa permits otherwise.

If a Coordinator abandons their plot for any reason, they must notify the City of Oskaloosa.

All Community Gardens activities must take place between dawn to dusk, i.e. daylight hours only.

No alcohol, tobacco, or illegal substances are allowed and any use will result in immediate revocation of the permit.

All gardeners are prohibited from baiting, trapping or transporting animals on City Property.

Theft of any kind is not allowed and will result in immediate loss of gardening privileges and forfeiture of garden plot.

The City of Oskaloosa will check all parcels on a periodic basis to ensure compliance with the City of Oskaloosa Community Gardens Rules and Guidelines.

Plots must be set back 7' from all property lines. Property lines will be marked by the City of Oskaloosa.

**Maintenance Rules:**

Applicants are responsible for maintaining the entire parcel in excellent condition. Maintenance is defined as: regular mowing of parcel, attention to weeds within the plot, and regular harvesting and removal of dead/dying plants and rotting vegetables. Individual gardeners must maintain the areas immediately surrounding their plot.

It is illegal to cut down or remove any trees on city property.



Gardeners must maintain their plot throughout the growing season with active planting, harvesting and weeding. Weed control must follow the Oskaloosa Community Gardens Rules and Guidelines.

Plots must be prepared for planting no later than May 1. Plots must be cleaned-up no later than December 1. If an applicant does not maintain their plots, then gardeners may be declined renewal for the following year.

All gardening activities on all parcels must be contained within the plot boundaries established by the City of Oskaloosa.

Diseased and pest-ridden plants must be removed from the site or placed in the trash bin to prevent spreading.

Gardeners must keep all organic gardening debris, non-organic debris, trash and litter cleaned from their plot, as well as from adjacent pathways and fences. DO NOT dump plants or trash anywhere outside your plot. It is illegal to dump on City Property any illegal dumping will result in the immediate revocation of the permit.

Gardeners shall pick only their own crops unless given permission by another plot owner.

Gardeners shall not block garden paths, aisle ways or public access areas with equipment, structures, debris or vehicles.

### **Compost Bins**

Composting plant materials within the plot is an excellent way to reduce trash and conserve nutrients. However, composting of food scraps (such as meat, oils, or fat) is not allowed, as this attracts animals.

Compost bins must be located to the rear of the garden parcel.

Avoid locating bins near pedestrian pathways and adjacent property lines.

### **Water**

The city will not provide free water to the Oskaloosa Community Gardens.

Approved by Council: February 17, 2015