

This document is a living document. Please check back for additions. This document is a compilation of additional guiding principles for community and civic gardening efforts in the face of a public health crisis.

Summary: We believe that gardening provides many human health benefits from physical activity to the mental health benefits of being in touch with nature. Gardening in a community often offers support and camaraderie, and an opportunity to work off tension and stress. Growing your own food offers a sense of accomplishment and access to nutrient dense produce that can not be found in grocery stores where produce was often harvested weeks before it reaches a consumer's shopping cart. Keeping a community garden open for gardeners in a time of crisis and uncertainty is one of the greatest services such a garden can offer to its community members. Community Gardens and School Gardens draw many parallels in benefits provided to their human stewards.

Background: A draft of "COVID-19 Guidelines for Safe Community Gardens" was distributed to several listservs seeking guidance and feedback. Those listservs include: Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG); the Community Food Security Coalition at Tufts (COMFOOD); the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future Food Policy Networks (fpn-clf); and Boston Food System listserv at Tufts (BFS).

Additional key points of information gleaned from the enormous amount of feedback received when the COVID-19 guidelines for community gardening draft was first circulated

In addition to the basic 'COVID-19 Guidelines for Community Gardening', it is recognized that community gardens are as diverse as the communities they serve and each garden holds its own unique set of conditions. When using the basic guidelines, one may consider the following points as they may or may not apply to your situation.

For gardens with regular shared workday requirements: offer options for community members to perform specific tasks on their own

For 'high risk' community members that shouldn't risk coming to the garden: offer support from the broader community to plant and cultivate the plot for that person

For heavily trafficked gardens where social distancing might be difficult: consider setting up a schedule - there were many ways to achieve this suggested including: schedule people by location in the garden; require an online signup for a specified amount of people per timeslot; offer priority scheduling to those that rely more heavily on the garden produce to feed themselves and their families;

Provide an inventory of most commonly touched places in the garden (spigots, hoses, sheds, etc.) to raise awareness amongst gardeners to be diligent when coming into contact with those areas.

Post simple, graphic signs throughout garden that are easy to follow with very few words

Thoughts captured directly from feedback and emails received via several listservs and credit to the contributors

- (from Lorraine Johnson):
 - Schedule community gardeners to limit numbers present in garden at any given time
- (from Mariya Strauss):
 - Advice from 2 public health doctors in Baltimore
 - We should stay home if sick at all or with worrisome contacts; stay apart by 6 feet, bring and wear our own gloves, and wash hands thoroughly. Our more fragile members might chose to stay away.
 - We are welcoming folks to perform specific tasks to be determined by the garden leaders at other times throughout the week if folks are not comfortable with the shared workday. Harvesting of ripe veggies and fruits will also be allowed on a limited basis by folks coming to do weeding and other tasks on their own. We are wiping down tool handles and wheelbarrow handles and wearing our gloves 100% of the time.
- (from Tracy Lerman):
 - Could you set up a schedule to help maintain social distancing and ask people to sign up for hours? Could time slots be prioritized for people who rely on their garden plots as a critical source of food? Could you provide a hand-washing station that people use upon entering and leaving?
 - Gardens support mental health
 - Some people rely heavily on the produce they can grow
- (from Stevie Schafenacker):
 - Close off tool storage shed
 - Inventory all other areas in garden where people commonly come into contact (spigots, gates, etc.)
- (from Elizabeth Henderson):
 - Put signs up in garden
 - Gardening is good for mental health
- (from Ann Carroll):
 - CC'd a B.U. colleague, Dr. Wendy Heiger-Bernays
 - Gardens have less opportunity for social contact than grocery stores
 - Schedule gardening based on location of plot in garden

- Gardens are good for stress management and exercise and can provide a space to actually lower social interaction
- Add guideline that if anyone knows they are COVID-19 positive, or have come into contact with someone that is, they should stay away from garden
- People should wear gloves
- (from Gmoke):
 - We should be expanding community gardening as much as possible!
- (from R Wai - Ritchie):
 - Continuously communicate with and gather detailed information from members
 - --> This includes knowledge about vulnerabilities and current well-being, needs, etc
 - Streamline and Clarify protocols
 - Create, discuss, communicate/distribute, actively practice and enforce protocols
 - For example: E.g scheduling of work based on plot locations, covering work for those in age/vulnerability groups; hand washing, potential need disposal locations and methods, use of (shared) items and sanitization methods; food hygiene; non-personal contact sharing (drop offs); self-monitoring and communication
 - [Proper use of gloves](#)
 - Have a plan in place to tend the garden when the bulk of gardeners can't get there (weeding, seed starting, harvesting, etc.)
 - [Preliminary study on COVID-19 virus survival times on 4 surfaces](#)
 - --> Air (aerosolized): possibly beyond 3 hrs (duration of test was 3 hrs)
 - Cardboard: up to 24 hrs
 - Stainless Steel: up to 72 hrs
 - Copper: up to 4 hrs
 - Plastic: up to 72 hrs
 - [Diluting Bleach \(if absolutely necessary\)](#) - for use on non-absorbent surfaces free of soil
 - [COVID-19 symptoms by percentage \(China\)](#)
 - [Early stage case fatality rates by underlying health conditions \(China\)](#)
 - [Early stage case fatality rates by age group \(China\)](#)
 - --> From Our World in Data's [Corona Virus reporting](#)
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 - [WHO - Situation Report 32, Food Related Considerations, pg. 2](#)
- (from duronchavis): Consider addressing food insecurity in gardening community members that rely on the garden for food for themselves and their families
- (from Nicola Williams): start seed distribution - particularly mentions medicinal herbs - this spun off into another discussion about community seed distribution! :)
- (from Lisa Brukilacchio): [Sommerville](#) Growing Center struggling with same issues of how to keep the garden open and garden safely
 - Supports idea of scheduling
 - Supports Nicola Williams idea for seed distribution

- Lovely quote: “Nurturing our souls and bodies during these challenging times calls for lots of creativity and ingenuity, which may have been lying dormant all winter. Spring is here. Time for energy rising and seeds to be planted and to enjoy the wonders of nature which can offer us joy and solace--though in changed social circumstances.”
- (from Cora) gardeners often share food with each other and others. Probably need to add something on food safety. Here's a resource:
<https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/food-safety-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>
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