



# COMMUNITY GARDEN PROGRAM HANDBOOK

City of Santa Rosa, California  
Recreation & Parks  
Kimberly Hatch, Recreation Coordinator  
(707) 543-3279, [volunteersantarosa@srcity.org](mailto:volunteersantarosa@srcity.org)  
[www.srcity.org/parksvolunteer](http://www.srcity.org/parksvolunteer)

## I. INTRODUCTION: Welcome to Recreation & Parks Community Garden Program

### **Purpose of this Handbook**

This Handbook aims to provide guidance and essential information for new gardeners interested in participating in the City of Santa Rosa Recreation & Parks Community Garden program.

### **Department Vision**

*Creating community through people, parks, and programs.*

### **Department Mission**

Santa Rosa Recreation & Parks provides recreational experiences, fosters human development, increases cultural unity, protects environmental resources, facilitates community problem solving, strengthens safety and security, promotes health and wellness, strengthens community image and sense of place, and supports economic development.

### **Benefits of the Community Garden program:**

- **Recreational experience.** To recognize and promote gardening's recreational experience, which provides physical, nutritional, aesthetic, spiritual, emotional, economic, and ecosystem value to the community.
- **Social interaction and cooperation.** To provide the opportunity for neighborhood social interaction and collaboration.
- **Sustainable food production practices.** To encourage community participation in sustainable food production practices.
- **Access to nutritious food.** To increase access to healthy and nutritious food and food production for participants.
- **Reduce community greenhouse gas production.** To reduce greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging food production within the distance of neighborhoods.

## II. COMMUNITY GARDEN PROGRAM

### **Role of the Recreation Coordinator**

Recreation and Parks manage the City of Santa Rosa community gardens in Finali and Juilliard Parks, and the Recreation Coordinator oversees the community garden program. The Recreation Coordinator maintains the garden plot database and waitlist, assigns plots, ensures that all permits and forms are complete, and mediates conflicts. The Recreation Coordinator

also acts as a liaison between City park staff and the Lead Site Volunteer by scheduling and notifying City staff of work projects, supply deliveries, site meetings, workdays, and garden issues. Gardeners should always feel welcome contacting the Recreation Coordinator with any questions, concerns, or problems.

### **Role of the Lead Site Volunteer**

Essential to the community gardens' efficient and effective functioning is the Lead Site Volunteers of each garden. A community garden must have at least one Lead Site Volunteer to operate. He or she is chosen by a committee of plot users from the community garden and approved by the Recreation Supervisor.

The Lead Site Volunteer acts as the onsite manager and intermediary between the gardeners and the Recreation Coordinator. They oversee the day to day operation of the garden site. They also function as the "eyes and ears," informing the City of problems, issues, and requests posed by the gardeners. They are the onsite point of contact for gardeners who have questions about the garden's function, gardening in general, and responsibilities. The Lead Site Volunteer is responsible for posting their contact information, orientation for new gardeners, organizing group workdays and events at the garden, and maintaining good communication with the Recreation Coordinator and community gardeners.

**Qualifications:** Experience in gardening and working collaboratively in a community setting

**Age Requirement:** Age 18 or over

**Time commitment:** Varies

**Background check required:** No

**Reports to:** Recreation Coordinator

### **Contacts**

- Kimberly Hatch, Recreation Coordinator (707) 543-3279, [volunteersantarosa@srcity.org](mailto:volunteersantarosa@srcity.org)
- Park Maintenance Weekdays (707) 543-3770, Nights/Weekend/Holidays (707) 543-3805
- Non-Emergency Police (707) 528-5222
- Lead Site Volunteers
  - **Finali Park:** Kevin Flores (415) 217-9725, [atlascloud@gmail.com](mailto:atlascloud@gmail.com)
  - **Juilliard Park:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **III. PROGRAM OPERATION**

### **Application Process and Liability Waiver**

Individuals, at least 18 years old, wishing to become a gardener, must complete a Community Garden Plot Application. Submit applications to the Recreation Coordinator at [volunteersantarosa@srcity.org](mailto:volunteersantarosa@srcity.org) or the Finley Community Center front desk at 2060 West College

Ave. Santa Rosa, CA 95401. The Recreation Coordinator will review the application and either create a Garden Plot Permit or add the applicant to the waitlist.

Community garden plots are intended for use by Santa Rosa residents and are limited to one plot per household. Plots are issued yearly starting February 1<sup>st</sup> on a first-come, first-serve basis, with priority given to returning gardeners in good standing. New gardeners will be assigned a garden plot off the waitlist in the order City staff added them to the waitlist.

A secondary plot may be temporarily assigned to an existing gardener after March 1<sup>st</sup> if empty plots are available after everyone on the waitlist is contacted. Gardeners who do not work their plot by June 1<sup>st</sup> may have their garden plot assigned to another gardener. Secondary plots are temporary and for one growing season only.

### **Discrimination**

Recreation & Parks prohibits discrimination based on race, color, gender, national origin, ancestry, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.

### **Accessibility**

Community gardens will have an accessible path of travel in compliance with Title 24 of the California Building Code, with at least 5% of the garden plots being wheelchair accessible. People with disabilities will have priority in the assignment of accessible garden plots. If no disabled person requests a plot, the Recreation Coordinator may temporarily assign the plot to another gardener.

### **Orientation**

New gardeners must have a signed Garden Plot Permit/Liability Waiver before meeting with the Lead Site Volunteer for the new gardener onsite Garden Orientation. The Lead Site Volunteer will go over garden site specifics, including schedule, plot location, and gate code.

### **Community**

Many participants in our community are interested in more than just a place to garden; they are interested in becoming part of a community of gardeners. The City of Santa Rosa Recreation and Parks encourages and supports this by assisting the Lead Site Volunteer in organizing group workdays, meetings, and social events. Attending these community activities is a great way to meet other gardeners and answer gardening questions and problems.

### **Workdays**

Every community garden has areas commonly used by everyone: paths, perimeters, watering sites, and tool sheds. Because they are part of the “common,” they need to be cared for by the garden community together during scheduled workdays. Workdays are essential for the smooth functioning of a site, and it is every gardener’s responsibility to attend as many as possible. The Lead Site Volunteer determines the workdays, which vary per garden site.

## **Annual Timeline**

- **January 1<sup>st</sup>** - Garden plots are renewed each year in January. Gardeners in good standing may begin the application renewal process.
- **February 1<sup>st</sup>** - Deadline for returning gardeners to renew their plot from the previous year or request a new plot.
- **February 15<sup>th</sup>** – Waitlist and new applications are assigned plots.
- **March** - Spring Garden Meeting. Spring and Fall meetings are for having group discussions and making community garden decisions. Recreation and Parks encourage consensus-building among gardeners, with the City of Santa Rosa making all final community garden decisions. The Recreation Coordinator will offer any empty plots temporarily to current gardeners during the Spring meeting.
- **June 1<sup>st</sup>** - Gardeners who do not work their plot by June 1<sup>st</sup> may have their garden plot reassigned to a gardener off the waitlist or temporarily to a current gardener.
- **September** – Fall Garden Meeting. Spring and Fall meetings are for having group discussions and making community garden decisions. Recreation and Parks encourage consensus-building among gardeners, with the City of Santa Rosa making all final community garden decisions.
- **December 1<sup>st</sup>** – Deadline for winterizing plots.

## **Time Required**

Most new gardeners underestimate the amount of time it takes to maintain a garden plot. Plan on a minimum of one hour per week, maintaining the plot from early May until late October. Gardeners who do not work their plot by June 1<sup>st</sup> or have abandoned their plot will have their plot reassigned or cleared of all growth during workdays at any point in the season. The Lead Site Volunteer will consider a garden abandoned when it is overgrown with weeds taller than 24 inches. The Recreation Coordinator will make efforts to contact the gardener involved before acting. Still, the gardener's responsibility is to inform the Lead Site Volunteer of any obstacles that prevent them from gardening in a timely or acceptable fashion.

## **Right of Publicity**

Recreation & Parks reserves the right to photograph facilities, activities, and program participants for potential promotional use. All photos will remain the property of Recreation & Parks, and the City may use them for publicity or promotion purposes only. If you or anyone in your family do not wish to have your photo taken, please contact the Recreation Coordinator.

## **Resignation**

At any time, you may voluntarily end your community garden commitment with Recreation & Parks. Please inform the Recreation Coordinator as soon as possible to keep your good standing and future ability to obtain a Garden Plot Permit.

## **IV. GARDEN GUIDELINES**

### **Standards of Behavior Expectations**

The City of Santa Rosa expects gardeners to act as part of the garden community by getting to know neighboring gardeners, being considerate of those neighbors by keeping weeds down, helping others with gardening if they need it, and asking for help when needed. Disrespectful or abusive language, harassment, discrimination, illegal activities, activities that endanger others, or destructive behavior (including vandalism and theft) may result in the immediate and permanent loss of privilege to garden in any City of Santa Rosa community garden.

### **Mediation**

The Lead Site Volunteer and Recreation Coordinator are available to mediate conflict between gardeners as needed. Gardeners may be required to meet with City staff to address conflict or other garden-related issues.

### **Termination**

The need to dismiss a gardener is rare but sometimes is required for the safety and protection of the garden, community, staff, and citizens. Recreation & Parks reserves the right to terminate a Garden Plot Permit to gardeners who do not adhere to City of Santa Rosa policies, procedures, or standards of behavior.

### **Plan Ahead**

The community garden experience is different from working in a home garden. You can run inside for seeds, sunscreen, gloves, water to drink, bags for picking, and so on at home. At a community garden, you need to bring everything you might need with you. Another thing to remember is that our community gardens do not have restrooms.

### **Forbidden Plants**

Community gardens are considered an open and public space to be enjoyed by the community at large. The cultivation of marijuana creates a potential for community gardeners and park visitors to be put at risk, as the plants could be attractive targets for theft. The City of Santa Rosa has determined that growing marijuana plants in a City of Santa Rosa community garden is prohibited regardless of whether it is legal. City staff will immediately remove any marijuana plants found growing in the community garden. Any gardener found to be growing marijuana will immediately and permanently lose the privilege to garden in any City of Santa Rosa community garden.

Invasive plants such as mint, berry vines, and Nopales are not allowed. If the Lead Site Volunteer finds these plants growing in a plot, they will ask the gardener to remove them. If the gardener fails to do so, City staff will remove the plants for them, and the gardener may not be allowed to renew their garden plot.

## **Organic Gardening**

The City of Santa Rosa is committed to gardening in socially and environmentally responsible ways. Only certified organic products marked OMRI or labeled for use on organic gardens are allowed. Homemade insect control mixtures may not be permitted. All products applied to plants or soil, including fertilizers, must be approved by the Lead Site Volunteer before use. Soil fertility is maintained or enhanced by creating optimal conditions for biological activity through crop rotation and the addition of organic material, and the careful use of organic and natural mineral amendments. Toxic chemicals, pesticides, or herbicides are not allowed. The use of prohibited chemicals will result in the immediate and permanent loss of privilege to garden in any City community garden.

Certified organic seeds or seedlings are encouraged but not required.

## **Weed Control**

Recreation and Parks expect gardeners to control weed growth in and around the perimeter of their plot. Staying on top of weeds is a challenge for all gardeners. Herbicides of any kind are prohibited as they are hazardous to human health, may kill or damage desirable crops, drift into neighboring plots, and persist in the soil. Recommended practices for controlling weeds are hoeing, mulching, and hand weeding. Weeds growth is quick, and the bigger they get, the harder they are to remove, so remove the weeds when they are tiny.

## **Insect Control**

Synthetic insecticides are prohibited. Preferred control methods include crop rotation, hand picking of insect pests, the introduction of predator species, and biological controls, such as ladybugs, lacewings or *Bacillus thuringiensis*, companion planting, and row covers.

## **Disease Control**

Most diseases, especially soil-borne ones, can be controlled by maintaining a clean garden and healthy soil, rotating crops annually, watering sparingly, selecting disease-resistant and healthy plant varieties, and removing diseased plants from the garden as soon as possible. Solanaceous plants and fruit, such as tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, and eggplant, should be removed at the end of the year to minimize the presence of disease spores that can devastate them the following year.

## **Fertilizers and Soil Amendments**

In general, well-maintained soil should not need fertilizers. Instead, gardeners should direct efforts to improve the soil's quality by adding organic material of plant or animal origin, such as compost, leaf mold, aged livestock manure, blood and bone meal, fish or plant meals. Natural mineral amendments, such as greensand, granite dust, ground limestone, or rock phosphate, are also acceptable. Should other fertilizers be required, liquidized seaweed, fish emulsions, and commercially prepared organic fertilizer blends are acceptable.

**Water**

The City may charge gardeners an annual water fee based on plot size or a rate based on metered water usage. The fee is subject to change based on costs. *Currently, we are not charging a water usage fee.*

Drip irrigation systems are required to conserve water and reduce costs. Each gardener is responsible for knowing how the system works and how to make light repairs on their plot. Ask the Lead Site Volunteer for instruction on installing drip irrigation. Gardeners can use a watering can to irrigate seedlings or transplants. Hoses are not allowed.

**Garden Refuse**

Gardeners are responsible for maintaining their plot all year long, including weeding and removing old plants. Dumping of weeds into unused areas of the garden is strictly prohibited. The preferred method for dealing with onsite garden refuse is to compost it. Gardeners must chop vegetation in 9-inch segments before being discarded in the designated composting area. Recreation and Parks do not permit weeds that have gone to seed or weeds that reproduce from cuttings in the community garden compost, and gardeners should dispose of them off-site. Inquire with the Lead Site Volunteer to see if your garden has a composting area.

Gardeners must harvest their ripe produce regularly to reduce garden pests. All produce/food must be removed from the garden site and CANNOT be discarded in the community compost to discourage pests.

**Commercial Use**

Commercial use of garden plots is prohibited except for fundraising by a nonprofit entity or the garden itself. Gardeners are encouraged to share their extra bounty from their harvest with fellow gardeners or local food banks.

**Structural Changes**

Changes to the community garden, such as plot layout, irrigation system, adding storage sheds, and planting trees, berries, or vines, must be approved in advance by City staff. The Lead Site Volunteer must submit a Volunteer Project Proposal form to the Recreation Coordinator, who will take it to the Parks department for approval. See appendix for Volunteer Project Proposal form.

**Safety**

Recreation & Parks is committed to providing a safe environment for gardeners and non-gardener visitors. Gardeners must notify the Lead Site Volunteer immediately if encountering an unsafe situation.

Keep pathways unobstructed and clear of any tripping hazards, leaving them wide enough to easily walk down them while carrying a bucket of tools or bag of vegetables. Plants must be maintained and kept within the garden plot area. If plants extend past the plot onto the pathway, the Lead Site Volunteer will ask the plot gardener to trim or remove the plant. If they



fail to do so, City staff will trim or remove it for them, and the gardener may not be allowed to renew their garden plot.

### **Garden Visitors/Helpers**

Visitors are welcome in the community garden when accompanied by a permitted gardener. To protect the community garden, permitted gardeners should not give the gate code to guests. Visitors must submit a Volunteer Waiver form to the Recreation Coordinator to help in the garden. The gardener's responsibility is to ensure that helpers working in the garden have submitted all the required paperwork.

### **Children**

Children working in the garden must submit a Volunteer Waiver and a Parent Permission Form to the Recreation Coordinator before beginning work in the garden. A responsible adult must always accompany children in the community garden enclosure.

### **Dogs**

Dogs are not allowed within the community garden enclosure.

### **Park Policy**

City park rules of conduct apply in all community gardens. Gardening hours are the same as park hours—6am till dark. City community gardens and parks are closed to the public and gardeners after dark. All City parks and facilities are glass, smoke, and drug-free. Alcohol in a neighborhood park is allowed with a Park Permit.

### **Winterizing**

Sometime between October and November, gardeners should winterize their plot. Recreation and Parks expect all gardeners to winterize their plot by December 1<sup>st</sup>. Gardeners who do not winterize their plot will be thought to have abandoned their plot and may not renew their plot the following year. To achieve this state, gardeners must:

- Remove all dead annual plants and weeds.
- Remove all diseased or solanaceous plants and discard them at home.
- Remove and take home all cages, stakes, strings, plastic, and all other non-organic material not being used for perennial plants
- Remove all tools and store them appropriately, either at home or in the community garden shed.
- Attend any final work party scheduled for your site.

All garden plots should be free of all non-organic material not in use and have a neat appearance.

## IV. APPENDIX

### Community Garden Plot Application

---



SRRP Volunteer Program  
2060 W College Ave.  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401  
VolunteerSantaRosa@srcity.org  
(707) 543-3279

### Community Garden Plot Application

This is an application, not a registration. Only returning gardeners who are in good standing and applying for the same plot gardened the previous year are guaranteed a plot. Fill out this form, return to Santa Rosa Recreation and Parks by email or address above and staff will contact you.

#### Community Garden

☐ Finali ☐ Juilliard

Bayer Farms is managed by Landpaths. For inquiries, contact Landpaths at (707) 544-7284 x 103

#### Contact Information

Name

Address

Email  Phone

Please list any additional gardeners who may work on your plot:

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

#### Returning Gardeners

Did you have a plot(s) last year? ☐ No ☐ Yes, Plot # , ,

Returning Gardeners: Please note that if there is a waitlist for a plot, returning gardeners will be limited to one plot.

How many years have you had your existing plot(s)?

Would you like the same plot(s) as last year?

☐ Yes

☐ No, I'd like to change plots. Please let me know which plots are available

**New Applicants** - Plots are available to new gardeners after February 15 on a first come first serve basis and by availability.

If a plot is not available, would you like to be placed on the wait list? ☐ Yes ☐ No

11/25/2020

## Volunteer Project Proposal Form

11/25/2020



Recreation and Parks Department  
2060 W College Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401  
VolunteerSantaRosa@srcity.org  
(707) 543-3279

### VOLUNTEER PROJECT PROPOSAL

DATE:

### TYPE OF PROJECT

☐

One-Time Service Project

☐

Ongoing Volunteer Project

### PROJECT INFORMATION

Date(s) of Project

Ongoing Schedule Details (i.e. Every Tuesday, first Saturday of the month, etc.)

Start Time

End Time

Location - Park/Site

Estimated # of Adult Volunteers (Age 18+)

Estimated # of Youth Volunteers (Age 13-17)

Youth Volunteers Must Work Under the Direction of an Adult

Estimated # of Child Volunteers (Age 12 and under)

Child Volunteers Must be Accompanied by a Legal Guardian

Project Description

☐ If more space is needed, please check this box and include additional details on a separate piece of paper

Request for City Assistance

☐ Volunteer Recruitment

☐ Tools

☐ Debris Bin

☐ Portable Restrooms

☐ Other

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Organization (if applicable)

Contact Name

Address

Email

Phone

Submit Proposal E-Mail: VolunteerSantaRosa@srcity.org  
OR

Mail to: SRRP Volunteer Program  
2060 W College Ave.  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Received:

Reviewed:

Responded:

Approved Denied

Permit #:

## Volunteer Waiver Form



Recreation and Parks Department  
2060 W College Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401  
VolunteerSantaRosa@srcity.org  
(707) 543-3279

### **VOLUNTEER WAIVER**

**DATE:**

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Name**   
**Address**   
**Email**  **Phone**

#### **EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Name**  **Phone**   
**Name**  **Phone**

#### **AGREEMENT AND SIGNATURE**

By submitting this agreement, I authorize the City to perform a background check as necessitated by the volunteer position for which I am applying. Volunteers will be notified in advance if a background check is required. I, individually and on behalf of my heirs, successors and assigns, do hereby release, waive, discharge and relinquish City of Santa Rosa and its officers, employees, and agents from any liability, loss, damage, claim, demand or cause of action for personal injury, property damage or death against them arising from or attributable to my participation in the volunteer activity, whether same shall arise by their negligence or otherwise. Furthermore, I warrant that I am in good health and have no physical condition that would prevent me from volunteering in this capacity. I understand and agree that I am volunteering my services without any anticipation of financial compensation.

**Name (please print)**   
**Signature**  **Date**

#### **IF UNDER 18, PARENT/GUARDIAN AUTHORIZATION REQUIRED**

**Parent/Guardian Name (please print)**   
**Signature**  **Date**

#### **CITY OF SANTA ROSA VOLUNTEER POLICY**

It is the policy of this organization to provide equal opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual preference, age, or disability.

11/25/2020

## Parent Permission Form

---



Recreation and Parks Department  
2060 W College Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401  
(707) 543-3279


### Parental Permission to Volunteer

---

If a volunteer is under 18, the volunteer's parent or guardian must sign this form in order to participate.

Date of Project:		Time of Project:	
Location/Site:			
Event Name and/or Project Description:			

**By signing this form,** I do hereby release, waive, discharge, and relinquish the City of Santa Rosa and its officers, employees, and agents from any liability, loss, damage, claim, demand or cause of action against them of any kind arising from, or in connection with, my child's participation in the volunteer activity, whether the same is caused by their negligence or otherwise. Furthermore, I warrant that my child is in good health and has no physical condition that would prevent him or her from volunteering for this project.

Parent/Guardian Name and Signature			
Parent/Guardian Name (please print)			
Parent/Guardian Signature			Date:
Phone		E-mail	
Emergency Contact			
Volunteer Name			
Volunteer Name (please print)			

Please Bring This Completed Form to the Volunteer Event, or Return To:	
Kim Hatch, Recreation Coordinator	(707) 543-3279
City of Santa Rosa Recreation & Parks	<a href="mailto:volunteer@cityofrosarica.gov">volunteer@cityofrosarica.gov</a>
2060 W College Avenue	
Santa Rosa, CA 95401	

Thank you for volunteering with Santa Rosa Recreation & Parks!