

COVID-19 and Community Gardens

Public Health Direction

Pursuant to [Ontario Regulation 82/20, schedule 2\(47\)](#), any person who uses allotment gardens or community gardens shall do so in compliance with the advice, recommendations or instructions of local public health officials.

This document outlines the conditions as set by the Medical Officer of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts that users of such gardens must meet. If the operator(s) of a community or allotment garden does not have the capacity to meet these conditions, they must not operate the garden until the [emergency order](#) has been lifted or otherwise modified OR until the garden can meet the required conditions.

The operator(s) of community or allotment gardens must ensure that all garden members are familiar with this document and related resources.

Garden access

DO NOT go to the garden if:

- You or anyone in your household has symptoms of COVID-19; or
- You or anyone in your household has had contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days; or
- You or anyone in your household has travelled outside the country in the last 14 days; or
- You have been instructed to [self-isolate](#).

Signage must be posted at the garden entrance and at various locations throughout the garden especially where there is shared equipment, tools, etc. Signage must instruct individuals listed above not to enter the garden and where to obtain assistance if they have symptoms. This includes completing the [COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#), calling a local COVID-19 assessment centre, or contacting their health care provider. To download signage visit phsd.ca/resources.

Other conditions:

- Limit access to gardens to registered garden members, staff, and volunteers.
- Access to gardens is for planting, maintenance, and harvesting only.
- Children who are too young to understand [physical distancing](#) and hygiene practices are not allowed to enter, unless they can be otherwise cared for (for example, kept in a stroller or are carried in an on-body support).

Physical distancing

- Unless gardening with members of the same household, maintain a distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) from others at all times.
- Block off seating areas and other places people may congregate.
- Arrange a schedule to ensure physical distancing can be maintained, including staggering arrival and departure times.
- Determine the safe number of people in the garden at any one time to make physical distancing possible and do not allow this number to be exceeded at any time.

Garden tools

- Where possible, shared tools are to be removed from circulation. Gardeners should be encouraged to bring their own gloves and tools. Gloves should be laundered after use.
- If removing shared tools is not possible, gardeners should:
 - Wear their own gloves when using shared tools. If gloves are not available, ensure hands are washed after use.
 - Ensure shared tools are cleaned and disinfected as per the cleaning and disinfection section below.

Handwashing

- If possible, provide a place for gardeners to wash their hands. Signage encouraging proper [handwashing](#) and proper use of [hand sanitizer](#) is to be posted at the entrance, at the handwash station, and within the garden enclosure.
- Gardeners should be encouraged to wash their hands upon entering and leaving the garden.
- When hands are visibly soiled, hand sanitizer is not effective and the use of soap and water is required.
- If a handwash station equipped with water under pressure, liquid soap and paper towels is not available, consider encouraging gardeners to carry wet wipes and/or warm, soapy water and a washcloth in a thermos for handwashing.
- Encourage gardeners to bring their own hand sanitizer.

Cleaning and disinfection

Frequently touched surfaces include, but are not limited to water spigots, hoses, shed/cabinet or gate handles, compost bin lid, padlocks, etc.

These surfaces must be cleaned prior to being disinfected. Cleaning removes germs, dirt and impurities from surfaces by using soap or detergent and water. After cleaning, tools/surfaces must be allowed to dry or the disinfectant will be diluted.

Disinfecting refers to using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. Use only approved disinfectants that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). This number indicates that the product is approved and safe for use in Canada. Any disinfectant that will come into contact with food contact surfaces must also be food-grade.

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least twice daily.
- Consider finding ways to limit touching of shared surfaces (for example, a designated person can open the shed door in the morning, another person closes and disinfects at the end of the day).
- Refer to Public Health Ontario's fact sheet entitled [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#).

Best practices

- Limit interactions and time spent in the garden.
- Wash produce brought home according to [safe food handling requirements](#).
- Consider the [use of a non-medical mask](#).

For more information, call Public Health Sudbury & Districts at 705.522.9200 (toll-free 1.866.522.9200) or visit phsd.ca/COVID-19.

References

Toronto Urban Growers, 10 other Toronto Agencies, the Ontario Community Growing Network, and Food Communities Network. (April 14, 2020). *COVID-19 Recommendations for Community Gardens*. Retrieved from: <https://sustainontario.com/2020/04/26/ontario-allows-community-gardens-to-open/>

KFL&A Public Health. *COVID-19 Safe Operating Recommendations for Community Gardens*.

Ministry of Health. (April 27, 2020). *COVID-19 Advice to Public Health Units regarding Allotment Gardens and Community Gardens*.

Ce document est également disponible en français.

May 6, 2021