

GENERAL QUESTIONS ASKED BY GARDENERS - ENGLISH

GARDEN OPENING AND ORGANIZATION:

1. Why are you not tilling the garden on time?

Tilling does not always happen as early as gardeners would prefer because of how wet spring in mid-Michigan can be. Operating the tractor and tilling wet soil is detrimental to the overall health and structure of soil. Our goal is to have all gardens open by Memorial Day, or preferably, before, but the garden will open as soon as weather and soil conditions allow.

2. Who are garden leaders? Are they paid?

Garden Leaders are the dedicated, key contact in your community garden. They are the first-responders you can reach out to talk with about most of the things in your community garden. No, they are not paid. They are volunteering their time, skills and knowledge for the betterment of the community garden, so please be sure to thank them for their help on a regular basis. If you are also interested in helping as a Garden Leader, then feel free to contact to your current Garden Leaders and/or Garden Project Staff.

3. Who is allowed in the garden? Is it secure?

The garden is a public place, open to everyone. We recommend greeting everyone, so that you get to know fellow gardeners and can identify visitors easily. If you see someone in the garden that you don't know, ask them if they have any questions and explain how the space is used. The last person out of the garden at the end of the day must lock the toolshed and gate (if there is a lock). Each shed and many of the gates have a combination lock; ask your Garden Leader or GP Staff for the combination. We have had theft in the past.

GARDEN RESOURCES:

4. Where do I get free seeds and plant starts from?

All registered gardeners can visit our Resource Center where they can pick out 25 vegetable seeds packets and 15 flower and/or herb seed packets per season. Gardeners can also pick up a specified number of plant starts, once a week. The number of plant starts per person depends on the number of plants available. The RC is located in Foster Park at 2401 Marcus St. Lansing, MI 48912. There is NO additional cost – these resources are included in your plot fee. The RC is open 2-4 times a week from April -July.

5. What other resources are available at the Resource Center (RC)?

The RC also has a wide range of tools, books, and supplies like row cover, cover crop seeds, and straw available for free or discounted prices.



6. Why are we not getting compost on time?

We place all compost orders at the very beginning of spring, but availability and delivery are often out of our control. Availability of both compost and trucking, wetness of compost piles, and the hardness of the ground/road are some of the contributing factors of when compost will be delivered.

7. I wasn't here when compost was delivered, will you bring me compost again?

No. All gardeners should be accountable to each other and compost should be shared equally among all the gardeners.

WATER:

8. Why are we not getting enough water?

We are doing our best and Garden Leaders are filling the tank as often as they can. If you are willing to help fill tanks, let GP staff know and we will train you. More help, makes more water available. We will limit water if it is being wasted. Water is not free; we must pay the bills each month. Water bills are going up each season and gardeners are ultimately responsible for using water appropriately.

9. Can I wash my vegetables, hands and legs with tank water?

No, you cannot wash your vegetables, hands and legs with tank water. Tank water is only for watering the plants growing in your plot.

10. Why can't I use a hose to water my plants?

Using a hose to water plots limits the water access of others and we want all gardeners to be able to have equal access to water. Using water from the blue barrels/tanks ensures equal water access so no one has to wait to water their plants. Also, running a hose to your plot might damage crops in other's plots. So, please fill the blue barrels/tanks and use water from there, rather than a hose.

11. Watering takes a long time. How can I use less water?

In addition to compost, we recommend using straw, shredded leaves and grass clippings around your plantings. Covering the soil with these mulching products will help retain moisture and discourage weeds.

POTENTIAL GARDEN PROBLEMS:

12. Who is stealing my produce?

We really don't know who is stealing your produce. We all should work together to reduce this problem in the garden by frequently communicating with each other, keeping eye on everyone's plot, and reporting any suspicious activities in the garden to the Garden Leader and/or Garden Project staff.

13. If someone is stealing from my garden, what should I do?

If you catch/suspect someone stealing from your plot, then approach them and have a conversation (if you are comfortable). If you are not comfortable, then you can talk to your Garden Leader or Garden Project staff. Taking a picture of the thief is also a good idea. If the situation is threatening, call the police.



14. If I saw some vandalism in the garden, what should I do?

If you are comfortable, approach the person and have a conversation. You should also notify your Garden Leaders and Garden Project staff. If the situation is dangerous then you should call police.

15. Neighborhood children are creating problems, what should I do?

You should try to talk to the children or the parents of those children. Usually, children stop creating problems once they learn that it is not a right thing to do. You can also reach out to Garden Leaders and Garden Project Staff to get more help, but we are only at your garden from time to time. The gardeners themselves are in the best position to monitor and correct the problem.

GARDEN SITE & PLOT MAINTENANCE:

16. Where should I throw my trash?

Gardeners should take all trash home with them to throw away. Please, do NOT leave trash in the garden.

17. What are the things I should and shouldn't put in compost bin?

Compost bins are only for old plants from your plot which will decompose relatively quickly and naturally. (Any thick stalks - sunflowers, brassicas, etc. - should be chopped up.) Items that should NOT go in the compost pile include trash, plastic planting containers and all-other man-made materials. Also, do not put any perennial weeds (crab grass, burdock, bindweed, thistle, etc.), diseased plants, weeds that are dropping their seeds, woody branches or plants/food/animal droppings from home.

18. Why shouldn't I throw my plant residue over the fence?

You should not throw your plant residue over the fence because it creates habitat for weeds and pests. The buildup of all that plant residue makes it hard to maintain the fence line, making it less effective.

19. Could I use the compost from compost bin?

Yes, you can use the compost from the compost bin but please, share it with other gardeners.

20. I have extra produce, where should I take it?

If you know someone in need, then you can share with them. Local food pantries and community kitchens also accept fresh produce. GP can provide you a list of those accepting donations

21. Why are there vegetables left on picnic table?

Those are extra vegetable left by your fellow gardeners to share with others in need. Feel free to take some if you need it. Also, feel free to leave some of your extra vegetables for others.

22. When do I have to clean up my plot? Why do I have to clean my plot?

The fall garden cleanup deadline is in mid-October at all GP community gardens. Plot cleanup is the responsibility of each registered gardener. Gardeners must remove all man-made items, including trash and twine, as well as diseased plants. Cleanup in the fall makes it possible for us to get an early start next spring.