



## Garden Leadership Committee Toolkit

# Seasonal Maintenance

### Overview

Organize ongoing upkeep of common spaces (e.g., mowing/weed whipping fence line and pathways, hose repair, tidying storage shed, snow removal).

**Time commitment: Periodic, year-round**

### Keys to success

- Depending on your garden, maintenance can be a lot of physical work! Use the gardener asset list to know who loves to prune, who loves to tidy, who can repair a hose, etc.
- Seasonal maintenance helps prevent larger issues later. Remember, it can be easier to maintain something than completely repair or replace it.
- Streamlined garden processes help the whole community. Having no system, or an overcomplicated system, can be too confusing for anyone who wants to help.
- Garden Project is here to help! Contact our team to talk through maintenance questions.

### Benefits of a well maintained garden

- The land use agreement with the landowner remains in good standing.
- The entire community recognizes the community garden as an asset.
- Your community garden will harbor fewer pests and weeds and will be healthier from season to season.

### Examples of seasonal maintenance

#### Tree trimming

- Allows for air flow and shade reduction.

#### Fence clean up and maintenance

- Remove saplings and brush.
- Patch holes.

#### Pathway maintenance

- Depends on pathway type.

- The goal is to maintain accessibility — paths should be weed free and walkable with clear plot definition.

#### Pre/post season walk through

- Check for trash, dumping or any other unique issues.

Make sure to teach people how to do things properly and lead by example.

Be clear with expectations and use pictures to show how the space should look. Include demonstration pictures in the gardener manual and post them in a prominent place. A best practice is to host learning events so gardeners have an opportunity to learn about garden systems.

## Clever ways to help with garden maintenance

- Install a hose hanger at every spigot.
- Use the garden budget to hire someone to mow pathways and/or shovel sidewalks in winter.
- Growing clover in pathways rather than grass is a perennial option that requires less mowing.
- Post a picture of the garden shed with tools organized.
- Paint an outline of tools on the shed wall to help identify where they are hung.
- Utilize volunteers — either gardeners or volunteer groups, particularly for workday coordination.
- Establish native plantings, especially along easements. They'll need weeding and seasonal dividing but will require less mowing.

## Tools

Use the asset list to determine if a gardener has skills to help maintain tools. Label tools with garden name and keep an inventory of tools and their condition. Here are some basic supplies to keep stocked:

- Air pump
- WD-40
- Wire scrub brush
- Zip ties
- Duct tape
- Loppers
- Fuel/2-cycle (clearly labeled and kept in tote to contain oil spills and leaks)
- Hose repair kit with rubber hose washers, plumber tape and a wrench

## Plant waste removal

Not every garden is set up to handle garden waste on site because of layout restrictions, ability of gardeners to manage it, etc. Create clear guidelines on how your garden handles weeds and waste. Share in the gardener handbook with lots of pictures.

## Know your community's composting services.

- Leaf bag composting at a recycling facility.
- City's composting schedule for curbside pick up.

## For on-site composting:

- Provide very specific instructions on what is/is not allowed.
- Create shared management plan is necessary.

## Plan

- It is important to have processes in place for reoccurring maintenance needs. Set up a maintenance schedule log and keep an ongoing record of repairs.
- Establish a reimbursement plan for maintenance needs. Many gardens save receipts and submit them to the committee member who handles fund management.
- Having a plan, log and written procedures means others can help or even take over.

## Additional documents

- [Sample Log Maintenance Schedule](#)
- [Instructional signage ideas for garden systems](#)

## Further reading

- [Ideas for accessible gardening from OSU extension](#)