



Recommendations for Gardens during Covid-19

It is essential as garden leaders, gardeners, and staff that we do our part to ensure gardens can continue to support citizens to be more food secure, stretch their food dollars, relieve stress, and provide a social network that can offer support and encouragement in challenging times.

However, the health and safety of people must come first. Should you determine that your garden does not have the capacity to enforce and follow through with the recommendations noted, we would ask you to reconsider opening this season.

We want to assure the community surrounding our gardens that we are doing everything we can to “flatten the COVID-19 curve” and keep our gardens open.

Best Practices

- **Communicate** that anyone displaying symptoms of COVID-19, or who has come in contact with someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 should not come to the gardens.
- Ask anyone displaying symptoms to leave.
- Postpone any garden events until further notice to avoid people gathering in close contact. This includes work parties, tours, events....
- Practice social distancing within the garden when multiple gardeners are present on site. Maintain a 6-foot social distance between people.
- Consider closing the garden to the general public during this time, leaving it open only to members, staff, official volunteers only and scheduling that time in the garden dependent on the size of garden.
- **Consider how you will ensure these new rules will be enforced in your project.**

- Consider that you will most likely have to start later this year.
- Post these and the directives below specified for your garden within the garden site in agreed upon, clearly visible space/s.

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Have hand-sanitizer (60% alcohol) available and request that everyone wash their hands before entering the garden and upon leaving the garden. If it is not possible to have this openly available, define the system that will ensure this occurs in your garden clearly to gardeners. For example will a garden committee be responsible to put out each day, or gardeners will provide own hand sanitizer for entry while the garden hand sanitizer will be kept in shed for use when in garden. For proper use of sanitizer see video at <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/health-topics/infection-prevention-control/hand-hygiene>
- **If your garden site can accommodate a hand washing station, see step by step directions for making:**
https://foodsafety.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/handwashing_station_instructions.pdf?fwd=no

See Ontario Public Health for proper hand washing video:

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/health-topics/infection-prevention-control/hand-hygiene>

- Consider bringing your own tools from home and not sharing tools
- If sharing tools, wash and rinse tools prior to sanitizing to **remove organic matter (dirt etc.)** on the surface that would reduce the benefit of sanitizers. Provide a tub of soapy water (a biodegradable soap should be just fine here) and a separate tub to rinse tools before tools are sanitized. Tools must be dry or the sanitizer will be diluted and ineffective.
- **Clean and wipe handles of carts and tools before and after use** (soap/water as above and disinfectant wipes/sprays)
- Consider gardeners bringing and wearing their own garden gloves.
- Disinfect commonly used surfaces on a regular basis including reusable bins and buckets, shared tools, railings, doorknobs, tables, locks, gate latches, water spigots, hoses etc. Find ways to limit or eliminate touching of surfaces. For example, a

designated committee member opens the shed door in the morning and it is left open as next person enters the garden. Committee person closes and disinfects at end of day.

- Bleach may be used to disinfect surfaces, but the concentration needs to be higher for COVID-19 than for everyday sanitation: 1:10 ratio or 1 part bleach (5.25% sodium hypochlorite – 50,000 parts per million available chlorine) and 9 parts water; 5,000 parts per million; leave on for approx. 10 minutes (Ontario Public Health <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/at-a-glance-ipac-pss-disinfectant-tables.pdf?la=en>)

Plan Ahead

- Be prepared for the possibility that there may be limited access to the garden or gardeners may be sick at critical times in the future. **Does this require that only the committee has the code to entrance gates for those that have fencing and/or sheds?**
- **Do not assume that anyone else has followed these guidelines.**
- **Be proactive, bring your own sanitizing wipes or sanitizer and use them/it.**
- **Consider that there may need to be schedules for garden use dependent on size of garden.**
- Mulch now to prevent weeds and reduce soil moisture loss.
- Use row covers for insect control when feasible.
- Stay ahead of seasonal tasks.

Stay Engaged

Look for other ways to stay connected and support each other while maintaining social/physical distancing. Use online tools such as Skype, Zoom, Discord, Google Hangouts, social media, and newsletters to foster connections with each other and share:

- Garden stories
- Tips
- Recipes\Photos of gardens from previous years, new plants, fruits of your labour

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