

City of Cambridge
Community Garden Program Policy
Revised 2025

1. The Cambridge Community Garden Program is for Cambridge residents only. Anyone interested in having a plot must submit an application.
2. An applicant may apply for space in up to 3 gardens in order of preference. Due to the high demand for garden space, each applicant may become a member of one community garden.
3. Garden coordinators distribute plots to applicants in the order of the waitlist. The City adds applicants to the waitlist when they receive completed applications.
4. Applicants remain on the city-wide waitlist until a plot becomes available. Once a gardener accepts a plot, The City removes them from all waitlists.
5. Please note that some gardens are communally gardened, and others have assigned plots. Refer to the descriptions under each garden on the website for more information.
6. If a garden has more plots than applicants, members may tend unused plots communally.
7. Cambridge residents who have a disability that results in the need for an accessible plot will be given priority for an accessible (e.g., raised bed) garden plot. In any given year, if no one with a disability applies for an accessible plot in each garden, that plot may be assigned to a nondisabled applicant, with the explicit understanding that they will relinquish that plot at some future time to a resident with a disability.
8. Each year, each garden must choose its coordinator(s), who must be a gardener in that garden. Coordinators take on these tasks, and possibly more:
 - orient new gardeners to operating procedures
 - ensure that gardeners put out trash/yard waste curbside each week
 - organize clean-up days
 - answer questions
 - settle disputes
9. Garden coordinators should make efforts to shorten applicant wait times by:
 - Identifying unused/untended plot(s)
 - Identifying communal plot(s) that waitlist applicants can tend collectively
 - Creating partnership plot(s) with existing gardeners that need extra help

10. Gardeners must conduct operations safely. Herbicides and pesticides are not allowed. Gardeners must use fertilizers per manufacturers' instructions. They must never leave fertilizers at the garden or unattended. Gardeners must store tools in a shed or take them home, unless otherwise approved by the City. Any shed or other structure must be installed in compliance with zoning and building requirements and approved by the City.
11. In newly established community gardens, the city will assist with the plot layout. Pathways (and other common areas) and watering facilities (and other shared features) within community gardens shall be accessible, consistent with the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) and shall follow universal design principles wherever possible. A minimum of five percent (5%), but not less than one percent, of the garden plots shall have raised beds (minimum 18 inches above the ground). The city will install a perimeter three feet high, and an appropriate water service.
12. Gardeners must keep gardens clean, especially to deter rodents. Gardeners must conduct two garden clean-ups each year: early spring and late fall. During the season, gardeners should weed the garden. They should also remove all fallen fruit/vegetables. At the end of the season, gardeners must remove all material from plots, including stakes. Gardeners must cut existing perennials back to eliminate, or at least reduce, harborage.
13. Under no circumstances will anyone install locks at the gardens or individual plots.
14. The gardeners at each garden may adopt additional garden policies specific to that garden.
15. The City does not discriminate based on disability, and upon request will provide auxiliary aids and services, written materials in alternative formats, and reasonable modifications in policies and procedures to persons with disabilities.
16. The City of Cambridge reserves the right to revise this policy at any time.