



2023 Community Garden Program Policies and Operations Guidelines for Volunteer Participants

Community Garden Program Mission

Enhancing our understanding of sustainable garden practices as a form of stewarding land. As a community, we learn from each other throughout the year while working together, using farming practices tailored for our unique coastal climate and soils.

Community Garden Program Objectives

- Increase the community's capacity to grow healthy, affordable, local foods by growing plant starts and distributing them through plant sales, food banks, and public school gardens.
- Program participants share seasonal produce for personal household use only
- Provide sustainably grown produce to the local food banks, Latinx community support systems, and the senior meals program
- Focus on education and sharing knowledge within the program participants, visiting school groups, and community volunteers.
- Create a sense of community through programs and activities

Lower Nehalem Community Trust Conservation Values

- To garden is to steward the land
- Recognize that nature and natural systems sustain all life
- Take responsibility for human impact on the natural world around us
- Learning is an ongoing process
- Live in harmony and balance with nature

Program Overview

The Community Garden Program, located at Alder Creek Farm and Natural Area in Nehalem, includes a row garden and orchard area of approximately 1.2 acres, a greenhouse and hoop house, and two growing tunnels, all managed and maintained by volunteers. Alder Creek Farm is a communal garden, which is cultivated as a group vs. managed as individual plots.

The Garden Coordinator, a staff person of the Lower Nehalem Community Trust, and a Garden Leadership Team composed of experienced Community Garden volunteers guide the work of garden volunteers. The leadership team manages the planning aspects of the garden, while the volunteers participate in the day-to-day tasks of running this small farm.

Application to the program is open to interested community members on a "space available" basis. The application period begins February 1 each year. Priority is given to returning gardeners, much like a traditional community garden program.

The program runs from late February through mid-October with weekly work parties, and then monthly work parties during the winter months. We are in the garden rain or shine, as our work sessions are aligned with the schedules of local distributors of food in our community. However, weather events which may create a risk to volunteers, such as high winds, may result in a cancellation.



Policy Overview and Operations Guidelines

*Acknowledgement of these guidelines, and compliance to them,
is required to participate in our program.*

Land Stewards:

A gardener is a steward of the land. We garden in a manner that will maintain or improve the soil to produce food for many generations to come. We use organic gardening methods and products exclusively (as defined by Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI)). In order to ensure compliance, our Garden Coordinator will purchase all supplies for the garden program.

As Alder Creek Farm is a Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Trust has a policy that no dogs are allowed on the property.

Program Participant Cost:

The 2023 Garden Program fee will be \$65 per family. These fees are used to cover the costs of seed and bare root plants, soil amendment, tools, etc. Fees are non-refundable, and are due by the first work session of the program (see below). During the application process, gardeners may request a full or partial scholarship on this fee. Approval is at the discretion of the Garden Coordinator and our Executive Director.

Seasonal Time Commitment: February 28 - Oct.22

Our program will **Kick Off on Tuesday, February 28 and Saturday March 1.**

These days will include a welcome message from representatives of our Trust Staff and Board, introductions of the Garden Committee Leadership, an overview of garden policies and practices, and is required participation for all new and returning gardeners.

During the season, volunteers must be able to spend a minimum of 3 hours per week, approximately 100 hours annually. This ensures we are able to keep up with the program schedule for garden and crop maintenance and harvest. Our schedule each week is intentionally aligned to the hours of operation of our partners in food security, and to allow for working families to participate.

Tuesday 9am - Noon

Saturday 9am - Noon

Missed time should be made up within the month of an absence, unless otherwise approved by the Garden Coordinator. Options include switching to an alternative work party day, or being assigned a task that can be completed outside the normal work party schedule.

NEW in 2023: Three Hall Passes! We are increasing the number of program attendees to allow everyone more flexibility for being absent from the garden during the season. Every gardener can choose to use a Hall Pass, or make up missed time. Let's see how this works!

The garden program's final weekly work parties, or "**Put the Garden to Bed**" days, are **October 24 and 28, 2023.**

During the winter, there are five additional opportunities to participate:

- Thanksgiving Day harvest and delivery
- Monthly work parties on the 2nd Saturday of November, December, January and February.



Harvest Sharing:

Community Garden volunteers take home fresh produce for their personal household only, the remainder is planned for distribution into our community. We harvest at the beginning of each work party, and gardeners on-site take some fresh fruits and vegetables home that day. During peak season, we may harvest some crops daily (zucchini!) and will let gardeners know when produce is available in the refrigerator.

Careful Use of Resources:

As a non-profit organization, we need your help in careful management of our resources.

- Please drive slowly on Underhill Lane and the gravel road; the posted speed a maximum of 10 MPH, in order to reduce disturbance to the neighbors and to maintain the condition of the gravel road. We encourage walking, biking or carpooling to work sessions whenever possible.
- Gardeners are expected to make careful use of resources, such as seeds, fertilizers, soil amendments, to help us keep program costs within budget.
- Gardeners are expected to practice good tool maintenance practices, such as cleaning and properly storing tools after use, to help them last longer in our climate.

Community Aspects:

- Actively share knowledge and skills with fellow gardeners, from "what's that?" to how to prepare some of our more unusual fruits; this is one of the joys of the community gardening experience.
- Composting practices require gardeners to be mindful of invasive plants, flowering weeds, weeds with seed heads etc. Absolutely no home waste can be brought into the garden composting bins.
- Community gardens contribute to awareness of local food cycles and provide a venue for training and skills development. The establishment and ongoing management of community gardens also contribute to building community leaders.
- By bringing people together, often from different age groups and diverse ethnic, cultural and economic backgrounds, community gardens play an important role in combating loneliness and isolation, improving social cohesion, building life skills and awareness, and building connectedness with our neighbors.
- Radios/cell phones, etc. are not to be on "speaker" mode while you are working, as a courtesy to other gardeners.
- Each gardener is expected to constructively work along side others and resolve any conflicts respectfully. If you find yourself in conflict with another volunteer, please engage the Garden Coordinator to help resolve issues and questions.

Gardener Safety and Operations Practices:

- No smoking or vaping is allowed at Alder Creek Farm buildings in the garden.
- No firearms or fireworks are allowed at Alder Creek Farm.
- Maintain the garden in a neat and safe manner, for ourselves and our guests. This means we put away tools and secure irrigation lines. Any maintenance observations should be reported timely to the Garden Coordinator or a Garden Leader for repair.
- Use of Power tools (mowers, trimmers, rototillers) requires training, and use of appropriate safety equipment. Safety equipment is provided by the Trust, or you may bring your own.
- Guests are welcome to join you during a work party, however, they must stay with a gardener and be supervised by a gardener while they are on premises.



- Gardeners must be capable of and willing to:
 - lift 25 lbs , sometimes repeatedly during a single shift.
 - push wheelbarrows and pull carts filled with garden materials
 - be trained and to operate lawnmowers, a gas weed eater, or other power tools

Note: some tasks may require less strenuous capabilities – please discuss with Garden Coordinator if you would be challenged to manage the above activities.