

# Strathroy-Caradoc Community Gardens Program

## Purpose

The purpose of the Strathroy-Caradoc Community Gardens Program Guidelines are to provide Strathroy-Caradoc residents with standards and procedures for the successful development and operation of Community Gardens on municipally owned lands.

## Scope

These guidelines apply to all Gardeners who have plots and/or accessible boxes in municipally owned Community Gardens as part of the Strathroy-Caradoc Community Gardens Program.

## Overarching Position Statement

The Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc strives to provide a welcoming and safe environment at all Community Gardens on municipally owned land for the use and enjoyment of all residents.

Gardeners and other parties are required to act with respect and consideration for people, animals, plants, property, and the environment.

The Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc is entrusted with the responsibility to ensure that the guidelines are followed and will apply them in an impartial and respectful way for the benefit of all.

## Definitions

**Accessibility:** barrier free accommodations for persons with a diversity of abilities

**Accessible Box:** a ground level or raised planter(s) box

**Municipality:** the Corporation of the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc, or its representatives (i.e. Municipal Staff)

**Community Garden:** a site where municipally owned lands are used for the growing of produce, flowers, and native plants for non-profit use through individual or shared plots

**Community Garden Plot:** a plot in an existing Community Garden used for growing vegetables, fruits, herbs, native plants and/or ornamentals

**Community Gardens Staff:** any Municipal employee who works for the Community Gardens Program

**Composter:** a bin or container used to turn garden waste into compost

**Customer Service Representative:** any Municipal employee whom assists with plot/accessible box registration

**Plot Rental Agreement:** the standard form that all Community Gardeners must sign on an annual basis to rent a Community Garden plot on municipally owned land

**Rain Barrel:** a barrel that collects and stores rainwater

**Visitor:** any individual, other than Municipal Staff, who enters a Community Garden and has not signed a Plot Rental Agreement

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## Code of Conduct

The following behaviours are **expected** in Strathroy-Caradoc Community Gardens:

- Act with respect and consideration for people, animals, plants, property, and the environment.
- Be mindful of noise levels
- Dispose of litter into Municipal garbage containers located within or near the Community Garden
- Use the communal pathways

The following behaviours are **prohibited** in Strathroy-Caradoc Community Gardens:

- Being disorderly, intrusive, rude, or threatening
- Damaging or vandalizing community garden plants, equipment, and/or property
- Taking flowers or produce without permission from the plot owner
- Selling flowers or produce at the garden
- Smoking or vaping on Community Garden property or within nine metres of any recreation amenity (including community gardens) within Strathroy-Caradoc parks ([STRATHROY-CARADOC BY-LAW NO.92-18](#)).
- Using speakers for any purpose, including, but not limited to, speakerphone and playing music

## The Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc R-Zone Policy is in effect within all Community Gardens

Take responsibility for your actions and respect people, animals, plants, and property while using City facilities, programs, and parks. Report inappropriate activities to

Municipal Staff. For more information, please visit [www.strathroy-caradoc.ca/en/getting-active/rzone](http://www.strathroy-caradoc.ca/en/getting-active/rzone).

## Allotment of Community Gardens

The Municipality's Community Gardens allotment options will include the following:

Ground Plots (Number of plots in parenthesis):

1. **Small Plot (0)** – This will be 10' by 8' and will include ready to plant topsoil. Currently unavailable.
2. **Large Plot (10)** – This will be 10' by 20' and will include ready to plant topsoil.

Accessible Boxes (Number of boxes in parenthesis):

3. **Fully Accessible Small (6)** – This is a 2' by 8' raised box 36" off the ground. Box is wheelchair accommodated and will include ready to plant topsoil.
4. **Fully Accessible Large (4)** – This is a 2' by 12' raised box 36" off the ground. Box is wheelchair accommodated and will include ready to plant topsoil.
5. **Seated Accessible Small (2)** – This is a 4' by 4' raised box 24" off the ground. Box is seated height and will include ready to plant topsoil.
6. **Seated Accessible Large (8)** – This is a 4' by 8' raised box 24" off the ground. Box is seated height and will include ready to plant topsoil.
7. **Ground Accessible Small (2)** – This is a 4' by 8' box at ground level. Box will include ready to plant topsoil.
8. **Ground Accessible Medium (2)** – This is a 4' by 12' box at ground level. Box will include ready to plant topsoil.
9. **Ground Accessible Large (2)** – This is a 4' by 16' box at ground level. Box will include ready to plant topsoil.

\* There will be a limit of 1 plot per person and 2 plots per address up until March 31. After March 31, remaining plots will be open for individuals to have multiple plots.

## Responsibilities of Community Gardeners:

1. Read, sign, and return the annual Plot Rental Agreement to the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc, by mail or email (addresses provided under the 'Program

Registration Locations' section below), **within one week (seven days) of it being received.**

2. Review all garden orientation material provided at the beginning of the season. **New Gardeners must attend a mandatory orientation for new gardeners** in April (date and location to be determined). Gardeners must notify Community Gardens Staff if they are unable to attend and arrange an alternative day to meet). \*Plan to start in 2026
3. Educate visitors about the Code of Conduct.
4. Keep a well-maintained garden, including normal watering, **weeding at least once a week**, controlling perennials to prevent spreading, and general care of the leased plot, to the satisfaction of Community Gardens Staff **from May 1 to September 30.**
5. **Report illness, injury, vacation, or any other unexpected event exceeding 14 days to [recreation@strathroy-caradoc.ca](mailto:recreation@strathroy-caradoc.ca).** Temporarily absent Gardeners are required to complete a short form and are given the option to request short-term assistance from an ambassador in the garden (up to 30 days).
6. Treat garden amenities, like hoses, picnic tables and weed waste sites with respect.
7. Use compost, composted manures, and organic fertilizers.
8. Use mulch, soil, and water responsibly and sparingly.
9. Follow the Municipality's [waste reduction and conservation calendar](#) and standards for [yard waste and composting](#).
10. Maintain all pathways, keeping them free of weeds, yard waste bags, litter, and other items.
11. Protect all tools and personal property brought into the Community Garden and take them home with you after every visit.
12. Report any maintenance issues to [recreation@strathroy-caradoc.ca](mailto:recreation@strathroy-caradoc.ca)
13. **Complete fall clean-up by September 30. Remove all non-organic items, like gardening supplies, tomato cages, trellises, rotting vegetables (etc.).** Gardeners who plan to return the next season are permitted to leave up temporary fencing and trellises supporting late harvest crops. As well as a personal composter and/or rain barrel within their plot. All communal tools like mowers and shovels should be hidden and secure.
14. Notify Community Gardens Staff to abandon your plot or if you do not plan to renew for the following season and confirm that you have cleaned your plot.

#### Approved:

- Friendly signage (helpful to deter theft)
- Inclusive community garden events and gatherings
- Personal composters that follow guidelines under the 'Composting in Community Gardens' section of these guidelines
- Rain barrels with screen lids
- Service animals
- Sharing produce with other gardeners, staff, and community members
- Temporary fencing (must be discrete and well-maintained)

- Tomato cages and trellises that are safe and secure
- Vegetables, fruits, flowers, and other legal and non-invasive plants

### Prohibited:

1. Disrespectful signage
2. Garden waste, chairs, or other materials left in communal pathways
3. Cannabis, illegal substances, and species that are both non-native and invasive, or listed as a weed by the Ontario Invasive Plant Council: <https://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca/invasive-plants/>
4. Pesticides and toxic chemicals
5. **Fencing that is ripped, falling, or interfering with the use of a pathway**
6. Structures that are permanent, made of rebar or sharp metal, over seven feet, or deemed unsafe by Municipal Staff
7. Pad locks and other locking devices
8. **Planting in communal spaces.** The Municipality reserves the right to remove any plants that are in communal spaces without consultation

Gardeners agree to indemnify and hold the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc harmless from any liability, loss, damage or claim that arises on their own Community Garden or results from the direct use of their own plot and garden area by themselves, or individuals that they invite onto their garden plot.

### Consequences of Failing to Comply

Municipal staff conduct regular inspections of garden areas year-round. If any violation of the above rules is found, Community Gardens Staff will issue an email, phone, or letter notice to the Gardener. Staff will work with Gardeners, whenever possible, to assist them in resolving the issue. If the problem has not been resolved by **one-week** (seven days), the issue will be reviewed with the Municipality's Supervisor of Recreation, Programs and Community Liaison or designate, and the Gardener's Plot Rental Agreement may be cancelled. The Municipality is free to reassign, tarp, or use unoccupied plots for new purposes upon its discretion.

### Responsibilities of the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc

1. Collect signed garden plot rental fees and authorize the Gardener to use the Municipality's property and the specific garden plot
2. Provide visible signage for each Community Garden, which provides the name of the Garden and specifies that plots are rented for individual use
3. Provide a water supply at each Community Garden
4. Pick up yard waste left at roadside according to the Municipality's [Waste Reduction and Conservation Calendar](#)
5. Provide grass maintenance around the perimeter and in communal spaces of the Community Gardens located on municipal property
6. Conduct regular supervision and inspections of gardens

7. Provide a one week notice via email or phone to Gardeners who are not following the guidelines set out in this document. The Municipality reserves the right to reassign the plot after one week (seven days) if the problem has not been resolved and is responsible for maintaining the plot until it has been reassigned or used for another purpose
8. Receive and manage all forms for illness, injury, vacations, and unexpected events longer than 14 days
9. Receive and manage all issues, complaints or concerns related to Community Gardens and mediate successful resolutions
10. Facilitate ongoing communication with Community Gardeners through various channels, such as meetings, one-on-one discussions, emails, and the [Community Gardens Link](#)
11. Provide support to garden members regarding advertising and promotional opportunities for Community Garden events and projects

## Registration

Please read carefully before registering.

By registering for a garden plot, you are committing to weed once a week from May 1 until September 30. Gardeners are required to report any illness, injury, or other unexpected events longer than two weeks (14 days) to Community Gardens Staff ([recreation@strathroy-caradoc.ca](mailto:recreation@strathroy-caradoc.ca)).

a.) For Returning Gardeners:

**Registration Period:** The month of January

If you do not register before January 31, then your next chance to register will be in March as a New Gardener.

1. You can register online, over the phone or in-person only. **Payment is due at the time of registration**
  - o Phone: call 519-245-1070
  - o In person: Town Hall - 52 Frank Street, Strathroy. See the 'Program Registration Locations' section below for a list of locations and hours of operation
  - o Online via [Univerus](#)
2. You will be emailed/mailed a receipt of payment

If you would like to request to move gardens or plots at your current garden, please contact the Community Services Department or email [recreation@strathroy-caradoc.ca](mailto:recreation@strathroy-caradoc.ca). If the request is not possible, you will still be able to rent your current plot.

b.) For New Gardeners:

**Registration Period:** March until the gardens are full

1. You can register online, over the phone, or in-person. **Payment is due at time of registration**

- Online via [Univerus](#).
- Phone: 519-245-1070
- In person: Town Hall – 52 Franks Street, Strathroy. See the 'Program Registration Locations' section below for a list of locations and hours of operation

2. You will be emailed/mailed a receipt of payment

## **Rates**

### **Ground Plots**

8' by 10' = \$20/season (currently unavailable)

10' by 20' = \$50/season

### **Accessible Boxes**

#### **Fully Accessible**

2' by 8' = \$16.00/season

2' by 12' = \$24.00/season

#### **Seated Accessible**

4' by 4' = \$16.00/season

4' by 8' = \$24.00/season

#### **Ground Accessible**

4' by 8' = \$16.00/season

4' by 12' = \$24.00/season

4' by 16' = \$32.00/season

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## Composting in Community Gardens

Personal composting is encouraged within Community Gardens; however, all composting practices must adhere to the following standards:

- Bin composting is preferred to open compost piles as open piles can attract unwelcome rodents and pests
- **Compost bins must be responsibly constructed, well-maintained (including no overflow), and located within the Gardener's plot**
- Compost piles must be well-maintained and not exceed a quarter of the total size of the plot
- Do not put anything in the bin that attracts pests, such as meat, dairy, breads, or grains or that is hazardous to one's health, such as pet waste
- Compost debris that will not fit into compost bins should be left bagged or neatly piled within the plot until roadside pickup according to the Municipality's [Waste Reduction and Conservation Calendar](#). Please note that Gardeners are responsible for providing their own yard waste bags
- Visitors are prohibited from using the composting bins

Community Gardeners should review the Municipality's [Composting Guidelines and Information](#).

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