



Town of Mansfield

6 Park Row, Mansfield, Massachusetts 02048

Parks & Recreation

Sherrri Hutton Garnon, Director

Mansfield Co-Operative Gardens Program 2021

(386) Essex Street

Plot Holder Enrollment & Agreement Contract

Registration begins Monday, March 1

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Assigned Plot # _____



Program Details & Pricing

- (1) 10 ft x 20 ft plot = \$25.00; 62 plots available
- Registration is offered on a "first come, first served" basis
- We accept cash & checks; credit card payments can be taken in the Recreation Office or with an on-line program registration
- Registrations/payments can be mailed to Recreation, Six Park Row, Mansfield, MA 02048, placed in the Town's drop box located at the corner of Park Row and South Main Street, or returned to the Recreation Office; checks payable: Town of Mansfield
- Any returned checks will be subject to a \$25.00 non-refundable service charge
- **REFUND POLICY:** There are no refunds once registered; no exceptions

Community Plot Rental Agreement

____ I have read, understand, and agree to comply with the Mansfield Co-Operative Gardens Guidelines and Policies. I understand that failure to meet the agreed upon Guidelines and Policies can result in a loss of gardening privileges.

____ I will follow all guidelines, use organic gardening practices, and be a good gardening neighbor.

____ I agree to tend to my garden and understand that if I abandon my plot the space may be reassigned.

I, the undersigned, will not hold the Town of Mansfield or any of its employees, volunteers, Recreation Commission, Park & Recreation Director, the Mansfield Co-Operative Gardens Program Volunteer, liable in the event of a mishap, personal injury, damage or loss of property during the above listed event.

Signature _____ Date _____

Mansfield Co-Operative Gardens Plot Rental Guidelines and Policies

The Mansfield Co-Operative Gardens is a cooperative program between the Mansfield Parks & Recreation Department/ Recreation Commission and the Mansfield Conservation Department. The goal of the Mansfield Co-Operative Gardens program is to provide the local community with a variety of avenues to access and learn about sustainably and locally grown food.

Thank you for your cooperation in making this project safe and fun for all involved.
Please read through all program guidelines and policies below.

Plot Rental

(1) 10ft. x 20ft. = \$25.00 per season

- Program registration & plot renewals will be available the first Monday each March. Current plot holders will be given (2) weeks after registration begins to renew their plot. If we do not receive email confirmation from you regarding plot renewal, it will be assumed you no longer wish to keep your plot.
- Plot availability varies each year. You may email recreation@mansfieldma.com for more information as to what plots are available for the season.
- The rental fee includes payment for use of the land and water.
- Co-Operative Garden Members must be registered with the Mansfield Parks & Recreation Department to participate in the Mansfield Co-Operative Gardens program.

Garden Information

1. Garden hours are dawn to dusk and are subject to change throughout the season.
2. The gardening season runs from April 1st through late fall.
3. We encourage personal garden tools to be used throughout the 2021 season.
4. The Co-Operative Garden is a public space and Town of Mansfield is not responsible for lost equipment or tools at the garden.
5. Water is available in the garden area. Hoses must be wrapped and put back off the grass areas after every use. Watering must be done by hand, please conserve water and turn off the main water valve when leaving. Participants may water their gardens daily during the following hours only, no exceptions: **6:00am-10:00am & 4:00pm-8:00pm**
6. A fence surrounds the garden to prevent deer from entering and is locked with a combination lock. When leaving the garden, members are required to close and lock the gate.
7. The north end of the site and greenhouse are to be used for Community Plantings; member approval is needed for use of this area. The Greenhouse is for use by members on a first come, first served basis noted in your March registration.

Expectations for Plot Holders

- Members are expected to care for their plot throughout the growing season. This includes but is not limited to, weeding, harvesting, and pest and disease control.
- Members are expected to work and prepare their own soil in the spring. Members may use personal or rented rototillers, or hand tools to do so. The Town of Mansfield does not supply power tools like rototillers or mowers.
- Members are expected to tend to their plots regularly. If a plot has not been worked on or appears abandoned, we will reach out to the plot holder by email and phone. If there is no response within 5 days, your plot will be reassigned the following week to the next person from the waitlist. Please contact us, recreation@mansfieldma.com, if you can no longer tend to your plot.
- Following the fall harvest, all plots must be cleaned up for the off-season. Mulching with hay or use of a cover crop is highly recommended, but not mandatory.
- Members are expected to use organic gardening practices. Members may NOT use chemically derived pesticides, herbicides, or fertilizers. If there are any questions about a product or how to take care of a pest, gardeners are expected to reach out to recreation@mansfieldma.com before applying a questionable product as a control. Please see “gardening tips” for more information and recommendations on what to use in your plot.
- Members are expected to maintain the grass and path per the schedule issued by the Parks & Recreation Department prior to the start of the season.
- The uses of PT *‘pressure treated wood’* is strictly prohibited within the gardens. Hardwoods like oak, ash and hickory are the preferred long term woods for structures.

Etiquette

A garden is a great tool to foster a sense of community.

- For the 2021 season, no additional activities will be permitted in the garden area, including play dates/ family meetups, group lunches/dinners, work outside of the gardens, etc.
- If entering the shed to retrieve seasonal items, no more than one person is allowed in the shed at a time. Please wait an appropriate distance away if you need to wait to enter the shed. All tools and materials should be stored inside the boundaries of your garden or in your vehicle for the 2021 season.
- We encourage all gardeners to follow the current recommended public guidelines, including: frequent hand washing/ sanitizing; maintaining appropriate social distance of 6 feet or more; wearing face coverings at all times when interacting with other gardeners.

All tools from the shed, wheelbarrow, lawn mower, and other community tools need to be sanitized after each use.

- If planting tall crops, do so where they won't shade other garden plots and create supports that keep them from climbing too high.
- Weed and maintain your garden weekly as weed seeds quickly spread and make more work for other gardeners.
- Remove pests and diseased plants to prevent them from spreading to other gardens.
- Refrain from using another member's tools without permission.
- Children and guests are always welcome at the Co-Operative Gardens but please advise them to be respectful of other member's plots. For members sending guests to help maintain their garden, please advise them on all necessary garden practices & information.
- Please be respectful of your neighbor's garden experience and refrain from shouting or listening to loud music.
- Pets are NOT allowed at the Mansfield Co-Operative Gardens site.
- If you have a concern or issue with a gardening neighbor please address it with him/her in a neighborly manner. If the issue cannot be resolved, please contact us, 508.851.6458 or recreation@mansfieldma.com for support.

SOIL TESTING

While a soil test is not required, a soil test is highly recommended for gardeners serious about food production in their plot. A soil test will tell you exactly what your soil needs, so you will not have to guess and/or add too much of one thing while neglecting another. The best time for taking a soil sample is late fall or early spring. A simple test can be done through UMASS extension.

ORGANIC GARDENING PRACTICES & TIPS

The Mansfield Community Farm and Gardens follows organic practices. Organic gardening emphasizes working with nature, soil building, and preventing problems before they occur. This all starts with soil fertility. Research has shown that a healthy, mineral and nutrient rich soil produces healthier plants than soil with low fertility. Healthy plants are better able to withstand stress from disease and pests, and contain more nutrients than unhealthy plants. Soil fertility is fostered by amending soils, adding compost/organic matter, mulching plants, supporting soil biology, and providing adequate moisture. **All soil amendments must be OMRI Certified products.**

Soil Amendments

Below are recommended soil amendments that may be used. Please note that while nutrients N-Nitrogen, P- Phosphorus, and K-Potassium are mostly focused on, plants also require secondary nutrients: calcium, magnesium, and sulfur, and micronutrients: boron, copper, iron, chloride, manganese, molybdenum, zinc and silica, to thrive.

Recommended (no particular order)

Compost

Cow, horse, goat or chicken manure (composted or aged before use)

Alfalfa meal (nitrogen, potassium)
Blood meal (nitrogen)
Kelp/Seaweed (micronutrients, enzymes, amino acids)
Fish emulsions (nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium)
Soft rock phosphate/Calphos (calcium, phosphorus)
Bone meal/Bone char (phosphorus)
Granite meal (potassium)
Greensand (phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, silica, iron)
Zeolites (silica)
Azomite (trace minerals)
Gypsum (calcium, sulfur)
Inoculants/Microbial Plant Mixes (encourages adequate soil biology)

COMPOSTING

Our compost area is located in the North corner. We encourage you to add your plot waste throughout the year. The process of composting is the process of recycling food or other organic crop residues back into soil! Compost provides countless benefits in the garden. Compost adds organic matter, which aerates soil, breaks up clay, binds together sand, improves drainage, prevents erosion, neutralizes toxins, holds moisture, releases nutrients, and feeds the microbiology in the soil. No chemical or additive comes close to providing so many benefits. Please note that we do not add meat to our compost pile.

**We ask that you do not bring your personal home food waste to our compost area.
This is due to food safety and compost regulations.**

RESOURCES

Garden Planning:

<http://www.gardeners.com/on/demandware.store/Sites-Gardeners-Site/default/KGP-DesignSoil>

Amendments:

<http://www.fedcoseeds.com/ogs/search.php>

UMASS Soil Sampling:

<https://soiltest.umass.edu/fact-sheets/sampling-instructions-routine-soil-analysis>

<http://soiltest.umass.edu/services>