

Franklin Community Gardens

Organic Growing Guidelines

Updated: April 5, 2023

WELCOME.....

The Town of Franklin Recreation & Public Works Departments along with the Franklin Community Garden Coordinators are working hard to ensure that your raised bed is ready for a successful growing season. We've only used natural organic components to produce the beds, and will be obtaining top quality soil components (March 18, 2022) to ensure your plants have what they need to grow strong. We purchase several yards of organic horticultural mix each year and make it available to the gardeners.

Thank you for your cooperation in making the King St. Garden safe and healthy for all participants.

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1. Garden Etiquette

A major goal of the community garden is to build a stronger community. Introduce yourself and get to know your fellow gardeners. If you're curious about what someone is growing, then ask them about it. You can welcome any visitors that are interested in learning about the garden. Here are some basic guidelines to promote a friendly gardening space.

- If planting tall crops (tomatoes, peas, pole beans), do so where they won't shade other garden plots, and create supports that keep them from climbing too high (please note that **corn is not allowed**).
- Weed and maintain your garden regularly as weed seeds quickly spread and make more work for other gardeners.
- Remove pests and diseased plants often as they also quickly spread.
- Never borrow tools from another gardener without permission.
- Do not pick any planting from another plot even if you think that plot has been abandoned or neglected. IF you notice a garden bed that seems neglected or unkept, please notify the Recreation Department at: franklinrecreation@franklinma.gov so that we can rectify.
- Children are welcome at the Community Garden; however please watch them and monitor their activities so that they do not disturb fellow gardeners or their plots.
- Use personal music players instead of radios in the garden and please no loud cell phone use.
- Do not bring pets to the gardening area. Service animals are allowed.
- If you have a concern or issue with a gardening neighbor please address it with him/her in a neighborly manner.
- Volunteer to mow the grass and edge around the fence and the beds from time to time. Details about available times in SignUpGenius will be available at the appropriate time.
- Help maintain the fence free of vines and other weeds.

2. Organic Guidelines

The National Organic Standards Board defines organic gardening as "an ecological production management system that promotes and enhances biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity. It is based on minimal use of off-farm inputs and on management practices that restore, maintain and enhance ecological harmony."

Organic gardening emphasizes working with nature, soil building, preventing problems before they occur, and using only natural, non-toxic or minimally toxic substances if intervention is required.

2a. FERTILIZERS

The best fertilizer money can buy is already in your raised bed. Organic compost is truly a revitalizing and magical gardening mixture. It provides nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, as well as other elements (calcium, magnesium, sulfur, and micronutrients). Furthermore, compost aerates soil, breaks up clay, binds

together sand, improves drainage, prevents erosion, neutralizes toxins, holds precious moisture, releases essential nutrients, and feeds the microbiotic life of the soil. No chemical or additive comes close to providing so many benefits.

It is suggested that you amend your bed every year with any of the following: organic compost, organic soil, peat moss, lime.

Below are recommended fertilizers (followed by N-nitrogen, P-phosphorus, or K-potassium representing the three major plant nutrients provided by each fertilizer) that may be used; followed by prohibited fertilizers. It is important to note that with the mix of fresh compost and loam combined with the deep soil of your raised bed, additional fertilizers shouldn't be required to grow healthy plants. You may use the recommended fertilizers if you wish, but they aren't necessary.

Recommended

Organic compost (N, P, K), Animal manures (ideally composted or aged before use) (N), Alfalfa meal (N), Blood meal (N), Hoof and horn meal (N), Kelp or seaweed (liquid or powder) (N), Fish emulsion (N, P), Rock phosphate (P), Soft phosphate (colloidal) (P), Bone meal (P), Wood ashes (K), Granite or feldspar dust (K), and Greensand (K).

Prohibited

Synthetic fertilizers of any kind (**e.g. Miracle Gro**), Any formulations containing sewage sludge (**e.g. Milorganite**), DAP and MAP (ammonium phosphates), Chilean Nitrate, Superphosphate (acidulated phosphates), Chilean Nitrate of Potash 15-0-14), Muriate of Potash, KCl, (0-0-60), Charcoal ashes (from BBQ, stove, etc.) and Cigarette ashes

2b. PESTICIDES

Organic methods promote a healthy ecosystem where birds, insects, plants, microorganisms, and people all reach a natural balance that is beneficial for all. The first line of pest control for the organic grower should be a careful evaluation and maximization of the soil and nutrients for a plant. Good compost and loose, rich soil are often the best solutions for pests. Make sure plants receive enough water and sunlight, choose plants that grow well in this part of the world, utilize companion plantings and rotate crops. All of these considerations can help prevent insect problems. There will be coffee cans with soapy water scattered around the garden. Please put your "bad" bugs in there and the soap and water will get rid of them.

Listed below are recommended and not recommended (but permitted, with caution) pest controls that may be used when there are still problems despite trying the methods listed above; followed by prohibited pest control substances.

Recommended

Beneficial insects (ladybugs, praying mantids, trichogramma wasps, lacewings, tachinid and syrphid flies, etc.), Hand-picking, Traps (pheromone, sticky, water, food, etc.), Row covers, Spraying with garlic, onion or vegetable oil, and pepper sprays, Insecticidal soaps (preferably biodegradable soap solutions), BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), Chitin, **Diatomaceous earth**, Bicarbonates (sodium bicarbonate – baking soda, and potassium bicarbonate), Sulfur, Isopropyl alcohol, and Hydrogen Peroxide. OR make your own using garlic cloves, water and hot pepper flakes or fresh hot peppers.

Use sparingly

Neem Oil

Not Recommended

Pyrethrum, Quassia, Rytania, Sabadilla

Prohibited

Synthetic pesticides, insecticides or fungicides of any kind (Bug B Gon, Captan, Diazinon, Insectagon, Kelthane, Lindane, Malathion, Permethrin, Sevin, Thuricide, etc.), Nicotine in any form, Formulations containing copper (e.g., Bordeaux Mix), Rotenone, Pyrethroids (synthetic pyrethrum), Synthetic herbicides of any kind are prohibited (Preen 'n Green, Roundup, Weed-B-Gon, etc.)

A big thanks to the Bloomington Community Gardens for the use of their organic guidelines.

3. Growing Guide

Your raised bed is aligned to allow for full sun throughout the growing season and is the perfect medium for a number of plants. At the same time there is produce that is not appropriate to a community garden setting and should be avoided. This list is designed to give you the best results for your growing season. This list is focused on vegetable gardening. Ornamental flowering plants are welcome in the community garden as well, though we have no specific recommendations at this time.

Recommended

Bush Beans, Beets, Broccoli, Brussel Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Chinese Cabbage, Bush Cucumbers, Eggplant, Greens (Arugula, Endive, Escarole, Mustard, Radicchio, Spinach, Lettuce, etc.), Herbs (Basil, Chives, Cilantro, Dill, Fennel, Marjoram, Oregano, Parsley, Sage, Tarragon), Kale, Kohlrabi, Leeks, Okra, Onions, Bush Peas, Peppers, Potatoes, Radishes, Rutabaga, Spinach, Bush Summer Squash, Swiss Chard, Tomatillos, Determinate Tomatoes (these stay a manageable size and do not grow too tall,) and Turnips

Not Recommended

(These are perennial plants that will need to over-winter and require a multi-year

commitment) Asparagus, Strawberries, Rhubarb (*These plants have the potential to grow too high or escape your bed if not properly trained*) Pole Beans, Vining Cucumbers, Pole Peas, Rue, Sweet Potatoes, and Indeterminate Tomatoes (indeterminate tomatoes get really tall, be prepared to stake/cage well)

Prohibited

(Will either be invasive, will grow for miles!, are a perennial and difficult to remove from a bed, or grows too high)

Peanuts, Melons, Corn, Gourds, certain Herbs (Mint, Horseradish), Vining Summer Squash, Raspberries, tall Sunflowers, and Winter Squash and/or Pumpkins.

4. Mulch

Organic mulches allow for better water absorption and water retention in your bed, while also helping to suppress weed growth. Mulches can also increase or decrease the temperature of your soil, so be sure you're using the correct mulch for your plant types.

Recommended

Straw, Hay, Compost, dead leaves

5. Watering Guide

Water is available on site through three spigots that operate from late spring through October. Water is shut off seasonally so the pipes do not freeze. After watering your bed, turn off the water, empty the hose completely, and return it to its holder, wrapping it as neatly as possible and away from the ground to prevent damage caused by tools or by the lawn mower. Do not leave the hose at your raised bed. Do not leave it with any amount of water inside, as the temperature could rise and the hot water could cause the hose to break.

The rain barrels collect rainwater from our shed roof. Please be gentle with the rain barrel spigots.

All watering will be done by hand, either by hand-held hose or watering cans unless otherwise noted. Sprinklers or soaker hoses are not allowed.

One of the great advantages of deep soil is it retains water better than shallow soil. Even if the top few inches are dry the plant's roots can still access water reserves deeper down. The way you water can have a large impact on how your plants grow, so follow these simple guidelines to success.

Your raised bed needs an average of 25 gallons of water on any given week. It can obtain that through rain or through hand watering. When plants are young it is best to water frequently to help seeds germinate and to allow transplants to get

established. As your plants mature, however, it is better to water less often more deeply. If you water mature plants deeply once or twice a week they are encouraged to send roots deeper into the soil which increases their access to nutrients and water in the deeper parts of your bed. Help your schedule and your plants out by watering deeply once or twice a week. Be mindful of the weather and plan accordingly. Rain could replace a deep watering session.

Once more, thank you for your cooperation in making the King St. Garden safe and healthy for all participants. Happy Gardening!

If you have any questions about planting restrictions, please leave a note on the bulletin board.