



Durham Region Health Department Facts about...



Community & Allotment Gardens During COVID-19

COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus that can cause respiratory illness. For updated information about COVID-19, go to durham.ca/NovelCoronavirus

Community Gardens are permitted to open during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Gardens operating in Durham Region are required to follow the recommendations specified by the Durham Region Health Department. To further reduce the risk of spreading the disease we are recommending these facilities follow the [Province's sector specific guidance documents](#) and implement the following recommendations below.

Physical (Social) Distancing Precautions for Garden members:

- Maintain a distance of 2 metres (6 feet) with other people, unless they are in the same household as you. Limit the number of family members at the garden (i.e. 1-2 people).
- Limit the number of people within or around the garden. Continue monitoring and take steps to prevent crowding (e.g. put up signage to remind patrons to practice social distancing and to line up 2 metres (6 feet) apart, recommend waiting in their cars until their scheduled time, etc.).
- If there is no fence/gate around your garden, you will need to pay extra attention to ensure crowding doesn't occur and physical distancing is being maintained.
- Place physical distancing signage around the garden, particularly in high traffic areas.
- Place physical distance reminders throughout the garden as to what 2 metres (6 feet) looks like e.g. tape, markers, pylons etc.
- Remove any seating areas within the garden.
- Have a garden schedule to prevent crowding.
- If garden plots/boxes don't allow physical distancing to be maintained, ensure schedule is set so that people aren't in the garden at the same time as someone that is maintaining their plot/box directly beside them (e.g. schedule so that every other or odd plot/box are in one day, then the even plots/boxes are in the next day).
- Children can only be at the garden if necessary and must adhere to physical distancing requirements (e.g. stroller or baby carrier).

Community & Allotment Garden Operations:

- Update the list of current garden members or create a list of people who will be using/volunteering at the garden and their contact information. All active garden members/users/volunteers should be provided an acknowledgement agreement that they understand and will abide by the garden guidelines provided. Fail to follow the guidelines, they will be asked to leave immediately and/or lose their plots.

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- Agreements should be accessible in different languages (if required).
- Post a public notice at the garden or outside garden entry points indicating the garden is closed to the public, only authorized garden members/users/volunteers are permitted.
- Keep track of who is at the garden on any particular day (name & contact information) for assistance with communication and contact tracing, if required.
- Have designated roles for volunteers/members.
- Consider using a gate lock with changeable code. Give access only to gardeners who have signed the agreement. Change the code on a regular basis (where applicable).
- If the garden does not have a gate or an enclosure around the parameter, consider cording it off around the garden and post signs (where applicable).
- No pets are allowed. Garden members/users/volunteers can bring service animals.
- All notices, posters or handouts should be provided in different languages (if required).
- Place posters with garden policies and recommended measures around the garden.
- A plan must be in place for distributing harvested produce if garden members/users/volunteers are not taking it for themselves. A plan can consist of: contactless deliveries (e.g. leaving produce on a doorstep or curb, arranging a drop-off time), handwashing before and after handling deliveries, minimizing the number of people handling the deliveries, etc.
- If the number of gardeners/users/volunteers is small, they can have dedicated tools, bins and buckets.
- Garden members/users/volunteers should focus on completing one task rather than doing many things in different spaces. Gardeners/users should plan ahead, use gardening techniques that reduce labour, and minimize the number of trips they make to the garden.
- A designated person(s) can manage the compost and/or garbage.
- Designated person(s) opens the shed door or compost/garbage bin lids in the morning and it is left open for the remainder of the day. The same designated person(s) closes, empties and disinfects at end of day (where applicable).
- Advise garden members/users/volunteers to **not** visit the garden if they are ill, experiencing respiratory symptoms or have travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days.
- Anyone exhibiting respiratory symptoms at the garden should be asked to leave immediately.

Cleaning & Disinfecting:

- Gardeners should bring their own tools and garden gloves to avoid sharing of tools. If this cannot be done, then dedicate an area where tools can be cleaned and disinfected for the next user, where applicable. Or implement a clean & dirty system for tools, where used dirty tools can be dropped off in one area and clean and disinfected tools can be picked-up in another, a designated person must clean and disinfect tools.
- Ensure all tools and bins/buckets are cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces and equipment frequently (e.g. door/cupboard handles, counters, etc.).
- Limiting hours to properly clean and disinfect all areas of the garden that gardeners have had contact with.
- Commonly used [disinfectants](#) are effective against COVID-19. If an area is heavily soiled, it should be cleaned with soap and water before a disinfectant is used.

Handwashing & Glove Use:

- Proper handwashing is the best method to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Handwashing facilities/stations and an alcohol-based hand sanitizer must be provided for gardeners to use during their visit at the garden. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer must not be used



- when hands are visibly soiled. Post a health department handwashing poster at the station.
- Ensure to check the water, liquid soap and paper towel supplies at the handwashing station to make sure there is an adequate amount.
 - Increased handwashing by volunteers/members: wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - Single-use glove use is not recommended. If glove use is chosen it is important to change them every hour or more often as necessary and hands are to be washed and/or sanitized between changes. Remember to remove gloves when leaving the garden. When gloves are removed, new gloves must be used each time.
 - Re-useable gloves (i.e. garden gloves) must **not** be shared. Re-usable gloves must be brought home and washed between uses.

Personal protection measures recommended by the Durham Region Health Department:

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people: keep a distance of 2 metres between people.
- Mask use is recommended when physical (social) distancing is a challenge or not possible.
- Stay home when you are ill.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash your hands.
- If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve or arm.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Prominently post "[Stop the Spread of Germs](#)" posters.
- Be aware of the most current, credible, public health information/recommendations and communicate these to your staff and customers.
- For questions on what to do if you have symptoms of COVID-19 or have traveled, please visit durham.ca/NovelCoronavirus

The garden must remain closed if you are not able to follow the recommendations listed above. For more information contact your Public Health Inspector.

References:

Regional Municipality of Durham, [Community Re-opening Toolkit, May 2020](#)

Workplace Safety & Prevention Services, [Guidance on Health and Safety for Community Garden Sector during COVID-19](#)

Ministry of Health, [Face Coverings and face masks, May 2020](#)

Public Health Ontario, [Mask Use for Non-Healthcare Workers, May 2020](#)

Public Health Agency of Canada, [Community-based measures to mitigate the spread of coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) in Canada](#)

Ontario Ministry of Health, [Enhanced Measures to Protect Ontarians from COVID-19, March 16, 2020](#)

Public Health Ontario, [Corona Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings, March 11, 2020](#)

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