

Growing Your Own Community Garden Toolkit



Prepared by the TBDHU of Thunder Bay, Ontario

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Introduction



Welcome! The Community Garden program in Thunder Bay is blossoming and it is a perfect time to become a part of the growing gardens in the city. Whether interested in starting a garden, joining an existing garden or just finding out more, this guide should be the first stop for your needs. This guide will give instruction on following policy, and the logistics of starting a garden in the City of Thunder Bay. For resources on specifics of gardening, check out “Additional Resources” for links and where to find information about gardening specifics.

What is a Community Garden?

A community garden involves neighbours planning and growing a garden together. Gardening can be a wonderful way to relax, get some gentle exercise, beautify your community and stretch your food budget.



Planting fruits, vegetables and flowers are great skills to have. Community gardens help to nurture this type of knowledge while providing food for community consumption.

Community gardens should be a welcoming space where people can work together, share knowledge and build community!



What are the Benefits?

A Place for Everyone

A community garden is a place for people of all ages, cultures and walks of life to come and grow together. Our society and technology separate us more and more from the people right next door. It is quite easy to travel from home to work and not speak to anyone in between. Getting outside in a community garden allows you an opportunity to meet those people next door.

Health

Community Gardens can increase access to nutritious affordable food for individuals, family and groups. Fresh food is sometimes hard to come by. Whether it be due to a lack of time, money or ability. Foods that are easy to prepare and high in starch often become the standard meal served in the home. Fresh fruit and vegetables support overall health by providing essential vitamins and nutrients to protect us against illness and disease such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

Learn

A Community Garden is a place for neighbours to share knowledge about growing, harvesting, and preserving fruits, vegetables and herbs. Gardening may seem like a daunting task if you've never done it before, however there is lots of information out there on gardening. You can use this guide, look for it in the library, or learn from the person growing next to you. Our neighbors often hold a wealth of information easily accessible if we take the time to ask.

Movement

Gardening provides exercise and an opportunity to get some fresh air. Exercise is also a great way to prevent certain illnesses and diseases.

Community

Community gardens build community by allowing us to share a common space and common goal.

Understanding

Gardening can increase our social and cultural interaction between all people. It provides a space to share knowledge between people of different ages and cultures and learn from others.

Beautify

Planting a garden makes a beautiful addition to an unused piece of urban property.

Connect

Create partnership between urban and rural communities. Growing food helps us appreciate the work farmers do and ties us to the land.

Give Back

Surplus food can be donated to those who need it most. Gardens can produce a great deal of food on a small plot of land. Food that we can't use all ourselves can be donated to local food banks and community kitchens.

Learn to Love

Most of us love to eat food. How better to appreciate that love for food than to watch it grow from seedling to that beautiful meal sitting on your plate.

Getting Involved

Whether you're an experienced gardener or completely new, there should be a place for you within the Community Gardens of Thunder Bay. Take a look at the existing gardens and see if there are any nearby, and call to see if there is space for you. Have an idea for a spot for a garden? Look through the steps to start one.

Joining a Garden

If you are interested in joining an existing community garden, call the Public Health Nutritionist at the Thunder Bay District Health Unit at (807) 625-5968 for assistance related to community gardens in the Thunder Bay area.

What we can do for you:

- Assist in providing support for new garden initiatives
- Facilitate meetings for all volunteer garden coordinators
- Provide leader training
- Connect interested gardeners with existing gardens
- Identify potential sources of funding
- Provide forms and contracts for leaders and gardeners

Make a Wish List

Topsoil, compost, patting soil

Plant varieties

Mulching materials

Insecticidal soap

Child-sized tools

Plant labels, plot markers, signs

Seeding trays, peat pots

Locks & chains

Fabric row covers, cloches

Tool caddies & aprons

Tool & storage shed

Seeds, bulbs, bedding

Natural fertilizers

Hand held sprayers

Hand tools (p.17)

Watering Supplies

Plastic/Clay flower pots

Wooden planters

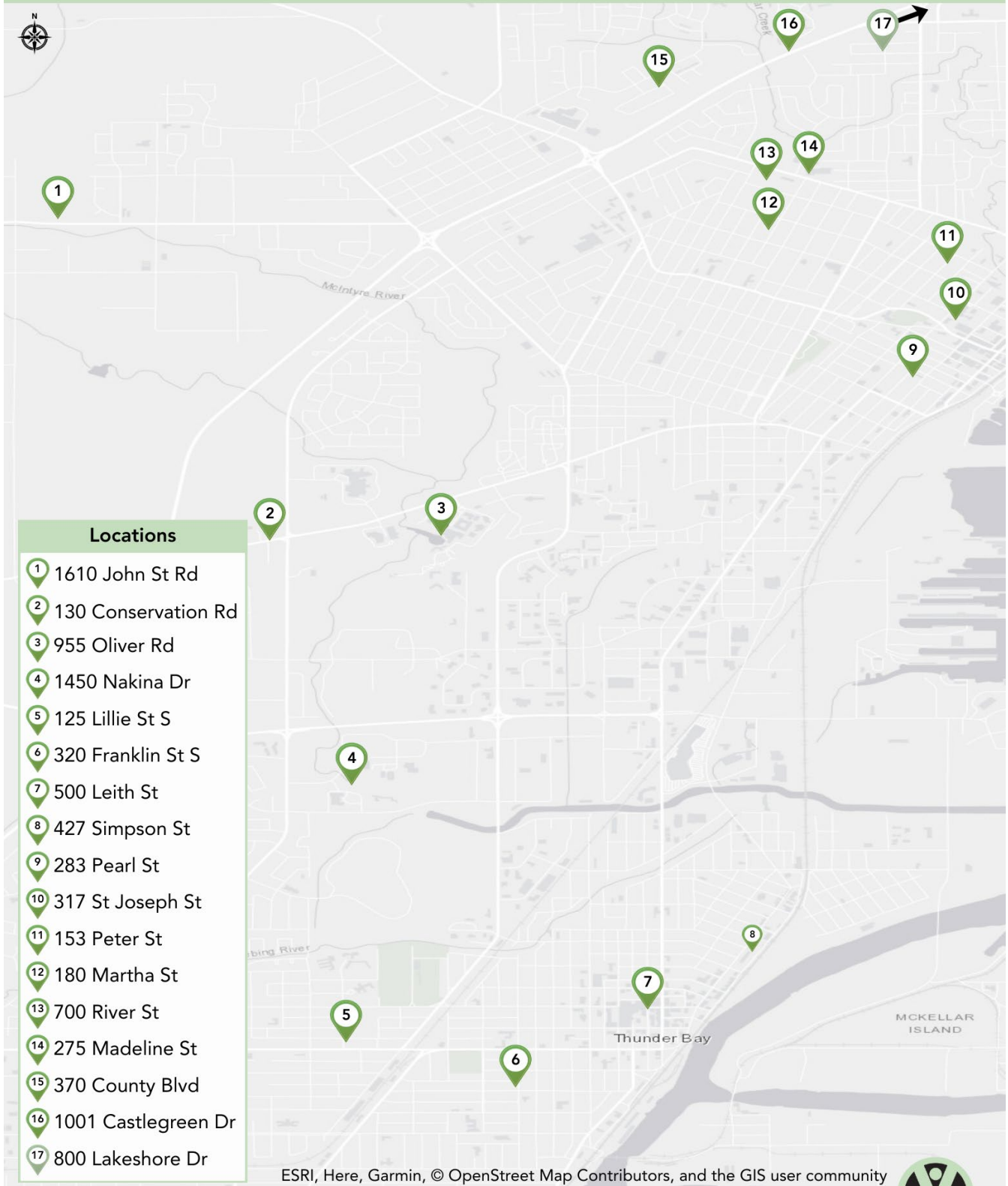
Fluorescent lights, timers

Gloves

Bulletin Boards

Trellis & arbours

Community Gardens in Thunder Bay



Become a Garden Leader

In order to successfully implement a community garden there must be members of the community that have expressed an interest in the project and are committed to the process. Ways to get people involved vary but the following tips can be helpful.

Highlight the benefits of a community garden. Elaborate on the economic, environmental, educational, health-related, and social advantages that community gardens offer.

Spread the word. Encourage conversation about a community garden in the neighbourhood. Tell friends and families and have them promote the initiative by word of mouth.

Align your goals with identifiable agencies. Partner with organizations concerned with the welfare of the community such as daycares, schools, churches, community centres, councils and local businesses. Get their members involved so that they're invested in the opportunity.

Promote the garden locally. Develop posters and contact lists that are available to the public. Schedule meetings and upcoming events and include community members and valuable stakeholders. Utilize all forms of media, including websites, social media, newspapers, and radio. Attend community events and hand out information on the garden and how to get involved. Consider using a display board to catch people's attention.

How to Choose a Space

If there is an opportunity for you to start your own community garden you will need to find an appropriate location to host it. Once you have plots of land in mind reach out to the City of Thunder Bay, Parks & Open Spaces Section at (807)625-2941. If the land is not obtainable the city will help find a suitable site for the project before granting permission to build. Inquire about receiving help with digging up the site as they may be able to aid in the garden's preparation as well.

After consulting with the city, application forms must be filled out in accordance with the zoning bylaws. Make sure to find out the exact process of applying for land at this point.. For more information check out our "Advice" section for additional suggestions.

Do not forget to consider other variables, such as soil, sun, drainage and accessibility when choosing a space.

Getting Started

When looking into becoming a Garden Coordinator or setting up your own garden committee contact the Public Health Nutritionist at Thunder Bay District Health Unit for assistance. She can be reached at (807) 625-5968 and will help guide you through the process.

Step 1: Getting a group of interested people together

It can take up to a year before a community garden is actually planted due to the steps involved before the final product is achieved. Having several informal community meetings will help in gauging the amount of support, need, and interest surrounding the garden. If the level of commitment from community members is strong from this group of people, a garden committee made up of dedicated individuals should be formed. Keep in mind any relevant events or meetings that are being held during this time that you can attend for networking purposes, including developing partnerships and promotional strategies. To get an idea of how to coordinate your first community garden meeting take a look at a sample agenda in [Appendix A](#).

The garden committee should be responsible for completing the following tasks before presenting the community garden proposal to the rest of their recruits:

- Decide on a budget and look into potential funding and income opportunities.
- Choose a space for your community garden. If the initial location does not work out have more than one back-up plan ready. Read up on “How to Choose a Space” for more information on who to contact.
- Be knowledgeable of group member skills and match these traits with duties that also align with their level of commitment.
- Figure out what type of garden you are going to plant. For instance, vegetable, flower, or both.
- Target a particular population that’s interested in participating in your community garden such as seniors, children, or low income. Have them take part in all aspects of planning.
- Find sponsors such as local businesses, local agencies, hospital, food banks and churches.
- Develop guidelines for members and volunteers, as well as recruitment procedures.
- Create position descriptions and responsibilities for your garden committee even if the only formal position is for the Garden Coordinator.

- Name the garden.
- Investigate which community organizations will be able to offer assistance throughout the entire planning and implementation process. Some examples are other community gardens, health units, local schools/colleges that include a landscaping component, parks and recreation departments, and local landscapers and architects.

Once these details have been figured out a meeting should be held in which the garden committee reveals their plans to the rest of the members, volunteers, and stakeholders. Use this meeting to gain additional input on how to go about implementation of the garden and to invite others to join the committee. This would also be a good opportunity to mention and thank any sponsors. If no sponsors have been recruited at this point, it is important to make this a priority in order to move forward.

The garden committee should be made up of dedicated individuals. It can consist of those who helped with the planning but new members should be encouraged as well. The main responsibility of the garden committee will be to plan and set goals and/or policy to keep everyone on track in implementing and maintaining the garden. Typically, a community garden coordinator is a community gardener who acts as the contact with the city on behalf of the participants in an individual community garden. An example of the Garden Coordinator position description can be found in [Appendix B](#).

Step 2: Putting Plans into Action

The garden committee will host frequent meetings throughout the year to continue planning and decision-making for the garden in the first year. They will also help put together appreciation events and end of the year celebrations. In order for the garden committee to run successfully it may require reaching out to community members to handle other aspects of a community garden, such as education, youth engagement, or assembly.

The Garden Coordinator could easily be considered a full-time job, so if funding is not available the responsibilities can be divided between several people. However, it is always a good idea to hold one person accountable in taking a final responsibility on Garden Coordinator tasks. This ensures that there is a group lead that volunteers and members can come to recognize.

In order for the garden committee to be effective the following initiative should be taken immediately upon group ratification:

- Meet at least once per month to set new goals, check the progress on past goals, and set or modify timelines for both. In following years these meetings can be less frequent and more informal as the garden becomes more self-sufficient.
- Establish both short term and long-term goals.
- Prepare an itemized budget of all costs associated with the development of your community garden.
- Make a list of potential sponsors, if not already done, and decide who will approach them, when and how.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of the sites chosen to host the garden, approach the Parks & Open Spaces Section to see which locations are obtainable, and create a to-scale plan of the garden and its surroundings. They may be able to help you with this.
- Continue recruiting volunteers if more outreach is needed.
- Have a clear set of rules for members and volunteers to follow and refer to. Doing this can help to solve any disputes later on. It may help to include a certain number of hours required to participate and/or to incur any membership fees for garden plots. Keep in mind possible policies including land upkeep, water use, charitable donations, child liability, or types of fertilizers/pesticides used.
- Consider producing a newsletter. This can be completed by utilizing a separate committee.
- Have another sub-committee design the site and work with those in charge of finances in order to budget different materials needed for the project. Be sure to check into whether anything can be donated. For example, Schools may have their

Quick Tip:

It is important to host events of appreciation for volunteers or to recognize their contributions and help keep them engaged. You want them to feel valued.

“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; They have the heart.”

~Elizabeth Andrews

students build a variety of structures for outside organizations which saves a great deal on labour costs.

- Check into hosting relevant workshops or seminars with local experts. Contact these people to see their level of interest and get an idea of what the actual gardeners want to learn about. Canning is always useful knowledge once the garden is ready for harvesting.

By the end of March, you should already have acquired a site for your community garden. At this time, you will begin assessing everyone's progress and checking that they are on schedule and whether they have any pressing issues. After touching base with members and volunteers the following goals and objectives should be undertaken as well:

- Develop an inventory for the site. This would be more effective in a group meeting in order to make sure all points are covered.
- Finalize the site design plan and present it to the entire group for feedback. Once this is complete construction can begin.
- Create a registration form for participants.
- Have a detailed construction schedule, including a list of those involved and relevant appointments with people that are required to oversee or help with any part of the process.
- Order supplies for gardening. Contact local experts to get a better idea of what will be ideal for planting under your garden's conditions. Superior Seed Producers offer a variety of seeds to choose from and may be able to help. Check for more information under "Additional Resources".
- Make a work day schedule so that members know what to do for each day on the job. This makes it easier to match the person and their skills to the task.
- Make sure to confirm arrangements with people coming in to help with site construction ahead of time.
- Assign plots to participants.
- Organize a water system to keep the garden hydrated.
- Get tools for the garden, whether budgeted or through donation. Have a tool sharing policy to prevent confusion or arguments.
- Look into on-site storage units for tools and belongings.
- Check into compost bins or contact local farmers to see if they're interested.
- Schedule applicable workshops.

Step 3: Gardening Time

By the time April rolls around it would be a good idea to schedule an orientation meeting with your registered gardeners to prepare them for gardening season. At this meeting you will go over the rules and regulations and proper gardening procedures. Make sure they are aware of the garden rules. It would be a good idea to get an understanding of each participants gardening knowledge during this meeting as well. This will determine the level of support they may need throughout the season. Other necessary steps to ensure a good start to the garden season include the following:

- Don't forget to send a sample of your soil to the Lakehead University Centre for Analytical Services (LUCAS) soil testing lab. Check out the "Advice" section for more on the importance of soil testing.
- Finish construction of the community garden's structure (fencing, pavement, retaining walls, etc.) and begin working with the soil. DO NOT start digging if the ground is wet or frozen as this will damage the soil and take longer for you to repair in the long run.
- Stake out plots and mix in all of the components recommended by the soil test results, such as compost and manure. This may not be possible until mid-May depending on weather and/or soil conditions.
- Plant "cool season" crops, such as onions, beets, carrots and potatoes between late April and mid-May. Check with local experts for additional advice. It may be easier to have a timeline for approximate dates that different crops should be planted ahead of time. This also makes the purchasing of supplies more convenient.
- As the weather heats up the soil beds can get fully prepared by the gardeners. This would be an ideal time to check up with them and offer additional assistance.
- During planting and preparation of garden plots there should be lots of excitement generated through social media posts. A press release should be sent out to local news at this time as well.
- Schedule a date between mid-May and late May with all gardeners and volunteers in which everyone works together to complete their garden plots. This will help to keep everyone on track while increasing excitement and cohesiveness among members.
- Consider having a demo garden plot in which a member of the garden committee exhibits the proper way to cultivate and maintain a garden for others to view.
- Be aware of the last frost-free date in your area and share the information with other gardeners. This can help members prepare for the planting of warm weather crops, like tomatoes.
- If you have put together a newsletter committee begin writing a newsletter monthly.

Quick Tip:
Visit
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/climate-zones-and-planting-dates-vegetables-ontario> for more information on planting crops in your area.

"Despite the gardener's best intentions, Nature will improvise."

*~Michael
Gorafalo*

- Plan and schedule an opening day celebration for the garden. Invite friends, family, volunteers, gardeners, stakeholders, sponsors and media.

Step 4: Maintenance

Maintaining your garden is key to its success. Proper watering, pruning, and soil upkeep is important in getting good results for harvesting. Use the following tips to help guide your garden to safety:

- Have a harvesting schedule for crops that have already been planted and those being planted later on. Adjust dates according to changes in planting days and or (un)favourable weather conditions.
- Be aware of any pest and disease concerns and record any potential signs.
- Be on the lookout for vandalism and set up measures to try and avoid these mishaps. See [Appendix C](#) for details.
- Try to have a member of the garden committee or a trusted volunteer on site each day to help gardeners with questions and/or concerns they may have. If this is not convenient, have appropriate contact information available on site.
- Have supports and stakes available for gardeners to use when necessary. (I.e., tomatoes and vines)
- Maintain the visual appeal of the site and ensure that gardeners are carrying out proper maintenance on their plots as well. This includes mowing grass in the surrounding area, contributing to compost, and eliminating litter.
- The garden coordinator(s) should have a vacation schedule made so that they are able to take care of each plot that is being left unattended.
- If anyone has decided to withdraw from the community garden the garden plot should be reassigned to a new or existing gardener.
- If a gardener is unable to give proper care to their plot look into reasons why this may be the case and offer them assistance. Try to keep the gardener motivated to continue and let them know that if they are no longer interested in the opportunity, you are willing to reassign their plot for them.
- Ensure that gardens are getting an adequate supply of water and remind gardeners of this on hot days.
- Plan and schedule a mid-season celebratory event.
- Decide on a distribution system in the event that there is excess produce. (I.e., donating produce to the shelter house)
- Consider conducting local garden tours or registering for award-winning events.



Another community garden in Thunder Bay showing off the fruits of their labour at the annual Garden Tour.

Step 5: Wrapping Up

As gardening season winds down, it is imperative to keep everyone motivated and on board with the project so that it is properly closed down for a smooth transition the following year. Make sure everyone feels appreciated and full of pride at their accomplishments so that a suitable clean-up is something they are willing to take ownership over. Don't forget to leave reminders about the following year's community garden sign-up and encourage them to return to help the garden thrive once more. Perform the following tasks in order to end the season on a high note and guarantee a fresh start for the upcoming seasons:

- Develop and hand out evaluation surveys for the gardeners to fill out mid- to late September.
- Host a Harvest Party to celebrate a successful season.
- Announce a scheduled group clean-up day to tidy up garden plots and the rest of the site. This should be scheduled after everyone has harvested their crops. Take out any excess plant waste to use for compost. Plant cover crops.
- Send a sample of your soil to the LUCAS soil testing lab. Check out the "Advice" section for more on the importance of soil testing.
- Clean, mend and store tools for the winter.
- Repair any damages to the site.

- Look into how to prepare your water system for the winter.
- Send out thank you letters to everyone involved in your community garden.
- Write an annual report.
- Perform an evaluation of the project and discuss changes for the following year.
- Don't forget to contact everyone involved prior to the start of the next gardening season so that they're ready for a new year!



Tools & Equipment to Consider

- | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Hand Trowels | • Shovels | • Claw cultivators |
| • Spading Fork | • Spade | • Pruning Tools |
| • Hoes | • Rakes | • Hoses & Nozzles |
| • Sprinklers | • Watering Cans | • Water Barrels |
| • Wheel Barrows | • Labels/Markers | • Plant Supports |
| • Garden Gloves | • Tool apron | • Seeding trays/lights/timers |

Already Involved?

If you are already involved in your own community garden but want to better understand its' Rules and Regulations or how City services coincide with your garden's care the next couple pages are dedicated to just that! Alternately if you have any advice you'd like to offer from past experiences you can contact the Public Health Nutritionist at (807) 625-5968.

List of Possible Resources

Manure

- You don't always have to buy it; check out local stables or farms

Leaves, Grass clippings & Wood chips for Mulch/Compost

- Rake them up yourself or approach power companies, tree service companies and municipalities.

Miscellaneous Mulch & Soil Amendments

- Food processors, coffee grounds, ice, peanut and buckwheat hulls, apple and grape pomace; farmer's spoiled hay and straw, construction companies or straw and topsoil.

Scrap Wood

- Obtain old pallets (to make compost bins), wooden packing crates (great planters). Try to make sure that the wood has not been pressure-treated (green colouring).

5 Gallon Plastic Buckets

- Useful for watering planting, storing items in, protecting new seedlings, and mixing.

Trellis Materials

- PVC (plastic) pipes and old snow fence make for good plant supports.

Free or Inexpensive Seed/Plants

- Check out [Roots Community Food Centre](#) to purchase locally adapted seeds from [Superior Seed Producers](#) and follow Superior Seed Producers on social media to find out about Seedy Saturday usually held in late February. More information may be found in "Additional Resources".

Tools

- These can be found at yard sales, auctions, second-hand stores, or tool-sharing libraries – check out [Thunder Bay Public Library Garden Tool Sheds](#).

Rules & Regulations

Applicable community garden guidelines and objectives are listed under the Thunder Bay Community Garden Collective in [Appendix B](#). This also includes a sample position description for the Garden Coordinator as well as information on group membership.

The City of Thunder Bay recognizes the benefits of community gardens and makes clear its role in the development of a more just and sustainable food system by supporting efforts at the neighbourhood level through its policy statement in [Appendix D](#). The city also requires each garden to register for a Community Garden License annually which dictates the rules and guidelines in order for it to exist. An example of the Community Garden License can be found in [Appendix E](#).



City Services & Garden Care

Thunder Bay's Community Garden Policy in [Appendix D](#) outlines support from Parks & Open Spaces Section for assistance with start-up, water, annual fertilizing and rototilling. A description of the services provided for the formerly mentioned duties will be briefly outlined below.

Access to Water-The City is obligated to provide resources to water as necessary or requested by each site. EcoSuperior also offers 220 L rain barrels to reduce the amount of water used by community members for \$90 as well. They can be reached for more information at (807) 624-2140.

Roto-tilling - The City will provide a motor-driven machine with rotating blades to help break up or till the soil.

Compost Removal - The City will help deal with any decomposed organic matter for use as fertilizer or soil conditioner. Contact EcoSuperior at (807)624-2140 for more information on how to do your own composting. With the City of Thunder Bay's Composter Subsidy program for City residents, EcoSuperior retails composters for only \$45. The City will provide an annual provision of manure to your community garden as well.

Fencing Requirements - The site requires written approval by the City before building and fencing, structures and/or on-site storage. Once approved, these structures must abide by applicable laws and regulation, must not require a permit, and must be portable or easy to transfer.

Advice

Looking for additional suggestions/advice from local officials, local experts and/or community members? This is a great spot to learn more on recommendations for moving forward with your garden as well as first-hand advice from people who have previously gone through the process.

Site Applications

City officials are available to give advice on what to include with your community garden land application. Information they suggest providing with your garden proposal include the following:

- A detailed metric scale map of the property in question, including borders, servicing information, surrounding streets, and nearby buildings.
- A map displaying what the garden site will look like afterwards, including drainage sites, potential parking and landscaping proposals.
- An aerial photo of the site. This can be found on the City website.
- A comprehensive explanation of your project. You can view the [Zoning B-law regulations](#) to make sure your proposal is valid.
- Contact information, including name, address, and phone number.
- Pictures of the site in its current state.
- Sketch elevation drawings of your proposed garden.

Words to Eat By:

- Learn about a sustainable food system.
- Support local farmers.
- Learn about the causes of poverty and food insecurity.
- Get involved.
- Grow a garden.
- Share your food traditions.
- Compost.

The Importance of Soil Testing

Soil testing is an important step in discovering potential contaminants, soil pH, and current nutrient levels in the soil. Without performing this step your garden might not succeed or be used effectively due to unsupportive growth conditions. Outlined below are some examples as to why these details are important not to miss.

pH Levels - Being knowledgeable on your soil's pH is essential to having an idea of which nutrients will be absorbed more readily. The most ideal pH for plants is between 6.0 and 6.5 but some thrive in more acidic or basic conditions.

Potential Contaminants - Potential contaminants include toxic metals and inorganic material. If metals exist at harmful levels the soil must be remediated before food can grow there and be safely consumed.

As previously mentioned, the Lakehead University Center for Analytical Services is a great contact with regards to soil testing and can be reached at (807) 343-8010, ext. 8590. Visit their [website](#) for more information.

“Each soil has had its own history. Like a river, a mountain, a forest, or any natural thing, its present condition is due to the influences of many things and events of the past.”

~Charles Kellogg



First-Hand Advice

How To Be A Good Leader:

Assume Positive Intentions

Be aware of how you come off to people and don't brush issues aside. Make sure to listen to someone's concerns so that you can help address the problem. If people can see that you have positive intentions, they will find you more approachable, working together will be efficient, and issues will be solved quicker.

Respect Others

Make an effort to validate a person's positive thoughts and/or actions without disregarding them. Respect their contributions to create a supportive environment.

Always Communicate

When lines of communication are not open people feel excluded and it's difficult to bring plans together. There is never too much communication when first starting a community garden. Let everyone know what you're having trouble with or what's going well for you so that you're all on the same page.

Listen & Be Patient

Do not dismiss the information that someone is telling you, even if you disagree. You must hear the whole story in order to fully understand what you're being told and there's nothing wrong with not having an answer to their questions afterwards. By being patient and actively listening to a member's ideas and concerns you are developing trust and respect by solving the issue together.

Be A Positive Role Model

If everyone in your group has agreed to something to benefit the garden you have to stand by their decision and respect their wishes. Your position does not give you special privileges as a dictator – rules and guidelines apply to everyone.



Additional Resources

- Watersheds Canada Community Garden Toolkit: <https://watersheds.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Community-Garden-Toolkit-by-Housing-Services-Corporation-r.pdf>
 - Includes step-by-step guidance, planning tools, and practical resources to help communities launch, and sustain successful shared garden projects—from outreach and site selection to design, building, and ongoing stewardship.
- Northern Saskatchewan Gardening Manual: <https://www.nitha.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Northern-Saskatchewan-Vegetable-Gardening-Manual-2020.pdf>
 - Includes lots of detailed information on gardening, including aspects to consider when planting in the north
- Gardening with a Short Growing Season (2009): a book written by a local resident with tips on starting a garden and making the most out of a short growing season.
- Community Garden Best Practices Toolkit: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54d9128be4b0de7874ec9a82/t/66a29b5ba114f50ada32f655/1721932639694/Community+Garden+Toolkit+Food+First+NL.pdf>
- How Does Our Garden Grow? A Guide to Community Garden Success (1997): a book presented by FoodShare Metro Toronto that identifies key topics, greatest lessons learned, and information on useful resources and planting with regards to community gardens.
- The New Northern Gardener by Jennifer Bennett (1996): available at the TBDHU library. Newer editions are available for sale on Amazon.
- Urban Agriculture Garden Guide: Manual for Starting and Designing Urban Agriculture Projects: <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/urban-agriculture-garden-guide.pdf>
- Growing Gardens: A Resource Package on How to Start Your Own Community Garden (2007): <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/Growing-Gardens.pdf>
- Superior Seed Producers (SSP): <https://superiorseedproducers.wordpress.com/about-ssp/>
 - Join in on the festivities of Seedy Saturday sometime between late February and early March to participate in their annual seed exchange and

get educated on how to save seeds. Helps provide gardeners with the opportunity to share their favourite varieties.

- Retail Sales at the following locations: Belluz Farms, EcoSuperior, Roots to Harvest, Kakabeka Depot, and Thunder Bay Feeds.

- Thunder Bay's Roots Community Food Centre: <http://www.rootscfc.org>
 - Provides transformative educational opportunities for youth to engage with local agriculture and cultivate healthy communities.

Appendix A

How to Conduct Your First Community Garden Meeting

To ensure a successful first meeting with potential members and/or volunteers it is important to have everything organized for the allotted period of time. You will want to instill confidence in your leadership of this initiative so making sure the meeting goes smoothly can help with future recruitment. Here are some tips to help with the preparation for the meeting:

- The garden coordinator(s) or the entire steering committee should create an agenda to post to guests so that they are aware of what is to come.
- Choose a location that is accessible to everyone and is close to your target population.
- You will need sufficient seating arrangements, either a blackboard or flip chart, washrooms, and snacks & beverages.
- Set up a welcome table and have guests fill out name tags.
- Decide on whether child care will be available or not.
- Arrange seating in a way that allows for easy communication such as, a large circle of chairs.
- Hand out notepads for guests to take notes with and comment on.
- Send out meeting reminders the day before.

Details of the agenda could include:

1. Welcome and Introductions

- Make visitors feel welcome as they enter the room.
- Incorporate an ice-breaker activity that allows everyone to share their names. It may be useful to have them bring up their interest in community gardening.
- Go through the topics in the agenda and let people know where the bathrooms and snacks/beverages are.

2. Community Garden Overview and Updates

- Go over what the community garden is for, why it is needed and any relevant background information.
- Let people know where you are with the project and the reason for the meeting.

3. Brainstorm and Discuss the Garden

The goal here would be to figure out what people are envisioning for the garden and what they want it to look like. You should also talk about who it will cater to.

Here are some important questions to get people thinking:

- What is the garden's purpose and who will be using it?
- What kind of garden design will be most appropriate?
- Where will the garden be located?
- Who will join the garden committee and what should their jobs consist of?
- Will there be a fee for garden plots? If so, how will this benefit them?
- What will be the most effective way for everyone to stay in contact?
- What will be the name of the garden?
- Where will the funding come from?

4. Steps to Move Forward and Wrap Up

- Create a to-do list and have people sign up as team leads on a particular task.
- Have volunteers sign up to help with asks and sit on committees.
- Decide when the next meeting will be.
- Thank everyone for coming and encourage them to continue spreading the word.
- Hand out minutes following the meeting along with key steps for moving forward and relevant contact information for those involved.

Appendix B

Role of the Volunteer Community Garden Coordinator:

To organize and facilitate a process that encourages and supports individuals and families in the neighbourhood to be involved in a community garden. This would be done in partnership with several organizations using a community development process.

Responsibilities:

- To act as an overall contact for all gardeners of the community garden
- To be available to gardeners to ensure that resources are in place to allow individuals and families to garden
- To assist in conflict resolution within the group
- To include all gardeners in the decisions that are to be made for the garden
- To ensure that garden contracts with money collected (if applicable), are signed and copied and returned to the gardener
- To ensure that gardeners are carrying out the terms of the contract
- To organize and facilitate garden meetings
- To work in partnership with The Thunder Bay Food Strategy, Thunder Bay District Health Unit, City of Thunder Bay

Rights as Volunteer Garden Coordinator:

- To be treated as a co-worker of the partners
- To be trained through workshops initiated by the partners
- To be heard
- To be recognized
- To use your experience as a reference

Commitment of the Volunteer Garden Coordinator:

- The time frame of April 1 to September 30 or as the season directs.
- To honour your commitment and do your best to support the gardeners.
- To respect confidential matters.
- To network with other community garden coordinators through meetings, phone calls or emails.

Community Garden Participation Guidelines:

1. I will have something planted in the garden by May 31st and keep it planted all growing season long.
2. If I must abandon my plot for any reason, I will notify the community garden coordinator.

3. I will provide my own seeds/seedlings and plant them only in my assigned plot area.
4. I will keep weeds at a minimum and maintain the areas immediately surrounding my plot. I will dispose of weeds and plant materials in the designated compost area only.
5. I will remove all annuals from my plot and notify the coordinator by an agreed upon date of any perennials that will need to be avoided in the annual manure and rototilling by the city.
6. I understand that neither the garden group nor owners of the land are responsible for my actions. I therefore agree to hold harmless the garden group and owners of the land for any liability, damage, loss or claim that occurs in connection with use of the garden by me or any of my guests.
7. I will notify the coordinator if I prefer not to have my plot rototilled.
8. The garden coordinator will have a plot in the garden.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or complaints, please contact the garden coordinator.

Your compliance with the above rules will help everyone have an enjoyable and prosperous garden. Failure to comply with above rules during the season may result in a loss of future gardening privileges.

Appendix C

Tips for Preventing Theft in Community Gardens:

As your community garden is a public space there are always going to be concerns about theft. Here are a few simple, inexpensive tips to help prevent theft in the gardens:

1. Install a fence. If the city won't provide the money, find another resource for your fencing. Ornamental fences might be an attractive ask from a community foundation or arts-oriented foundation. TD Canada Trust, Evergreen and Home Depot also provide funding for this kind of "capital cost".
2. A fundraiser in your community garden might bring in more support for the garden from surrounding neighbours. An evening in the garden with food and drink, invite celebrity gardeners to a talk, sell raffle tickets, combine your resources among your fellow gardeners.
3. Make a sign politely suggesting that folks leave your vegetables for gardeners. Some people have the idea that community gardens are open for the public to help themselves. Even a fence doesn't keep people from sometimes helping themselves-the sign could read "Harvesting without permission is theft". A strong message, but it does cut down on the amount of people helping themselves.
4. Get the group together of all fellow gardeners to brainstorm ideas for preventing vandalism and/or fundraising for the fence.
5. Hide your prizes: Most thieves are opportunists and some items prove more tempting than others. Thieves aren't likely to go digging through straw. Yellow tomatoes are as tasty but less tempting than red ones. Plant desirable and easily picked food behind less popular crops. Look for plants with a lot of green foliage that can act as borders/hedges around plots.
6. Keep the plots in good condition: Fallen fruit, overripe vegetables and general disarray send the message that no one cares or that no one is gardening.
7. Harvest fast: Once vegetables and fruits are ripened, don't delay harvesting them. A thief will notice them quickly and leaving it even a day later could mean its loss.
8. Grow more than you need: Consider adding a variety of crops so a thief won't clean you out of an entire season's bounty.
9. More gardeners/less thieves: Think of ways to minimize times when you have no "eyes in the garden," particularly during harvest season. Consider scheduling events or visits and get volunteers to keep watch. A little gift from your garden

harvest can reap great rewards around public engagement and broader support within the community

10. Be philosophical: Expect some thefts will happen. If it feeds someone who really needs it, then it's serving a purpose in a way. Of course, if it's happening regularly, then be proactive about the steps above and consider other methods as you would with any garden pest.
11. If you meet someone who may not belong to the garden or you catch someone stealing (If you feel comfortable confronting them):
 - An easy way to do this is to approach them, greet them, and ask how their garden is doing or if they need help finding their garden plot.
 - If they act uncomfortable or don't give much of an answer, keep the conversation going by asking them more questions about what they like to grow in their gardens (Many people who steal don't really understand what a community garden is... they maybe think it's "the city" growing food and doesn't really belong to individual people)
 - Tell them they can rent a garden plot by contacting the Community Garden Collective at 807-625-5968
 - Report any thefts or concerns to the Bylaws office at 807-625-2644 (taking things from garden plots is considered theft)

Appendix D



Corporate Policy

Policy No. 09-04-21
Effective Date:
10/15/96

SECTION: COMMUNITY SERVICES

DEPARTMENT/DIVISION: COMMUNITY SERVICES / PARKS/DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
-REALTY

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY GARDENS AND INDIVIDUAL
GARDEN PLOTS

POLICY STATEMENT:

The City of Thunder Bay recognizes the benefits of gardening to individuals in the community and that there is a specific value to community gardens for our community as a whole. Some of the benefits include: community-building, increased food security, creation of green space, civic beautification and education.

The City is in a position to act in a support role for community gardens occurring on municipally owned property or for not-for-profit community groups gardening on private property. This policy outlines basic rules for community gardens occurring on municipally owned property, and how the City will provide support to them, or not-for-profit community groups gardening on private property.

In recognition of the interests of residents to develop individual gardens it is the policy of the City of Thunder Bay to make available to individual residents a limited number of variously sized plots of land for which there is no immediate use by the City, on a seasonal basis, for horticultural activities.

PURPOSE:

The City, with this policy, makes clear its role in the development of a more just and sustainable food system by supporting efforts at the neighbourhood level. To that end, the purposes of the policy are:

1. to provide a process and guidelines for those wishing to participate in community gardening on municipally owned property;

2. to provide a process and guidelines for those not-for-profit community groups wishing to apply for City assistance for their community gardening project on private property;
3. to clarify the difference between community gardens and individual garden plots;
4. to keep track of City-owned lands used on a seasonal basis by individuals for horticultural activities;
5. to work towards operationalizing the principles of the Thunder Bay Food Charter which was endorsed by Council May 5, 2008; and
6. to help implement Objective 5.1 of the EarthWise Thunder Bay Community Environmental Action Plan which was adopted by City Council October 6, 2008.

DEFINITIONS:

1. A "community garden" is a property upon which horticultural activities are conducted on a non-commercial basis by persons acting communally on the property as-a-whole, or individually on an assigned-plot basis.
2. An "individual garden plot" is a city-owned property, that has no immediate use by the City, that is licensed for a fee on a seasonal basis to an individual resident for horticultural activities.
3. "Horticultural activities" are those related to the cultivation of:fruits, vegetables, flowers, or ornamental plants.
4. A "not-for-profit community group" is an organization that does not divide its surplus funds to owners or shareholders, but uses them solely to help pursue its goals. A not-for-profit community group exists solely to provide programs and services that are of a public benefit.
5. A "community gardener" is an individual who undertakes horticultural activities in a community garden.
6. A "community garden coordinator" is a community gardener who acts as the contact with the City on behalf of the participants in an individual community garden.

GENERAL

A community garden approved under this policy is not considered an obstruction as defined in Corporate Policy 09-04-63 Risks to the City Created by Others Using City-Owned Land. This policy incorporates and supercedes Policy 09-04-21- Garden Plot Licences.

Community Gardens on Municipal Property

1. Any person or not-for-profit community group that wishes to use municipally-owned property as a community garden must have prior written permission from the City for use of the property.
2. Community gardeners will at all times protect their own safety and the safety of others while engaging in gardening activities.
3. Community gardeners will have rules for the operation of their respective gardens which define, at a minimum: dispute resolution, plot assignments and succession. Copies of community garden rules must be filed with Community Services prior to City assistance being provided.
4. Subject to annual budget approval, the City will support community gardens in any or all of the following ways:
 - once annual roto-tilling, upon request
 - provision of water as necessary or requested
 - annual provision of manure
 - perimeter grass cutting
5. No permanent structures will be erected on any municipally owned property. Temporary fences, structures or storage facilities shall not be erected without the prior written approval of the City. Any approved structures or storage facilities must comply with all necessary laws and regulations, must not require a building permit, and must be easily movable. Prior to the erection of fences or commencement of any digging activity deeper than 30 cm, community gardeners must contact the City to request underground utility locations.
6. Any use of pesticides must comply with the current Ontario Pesticides Act.
7. The garden must operate in harmony with other activities in the area.
8. Community Garden Coordinators must fill out the "Community Garden Application Form" and supply the following information on an annual basis prior to receiving assistance:
 - contact name of the community garden coordinator
 - list of plot-holders
 - garden rules

Community Gardens on private property

1. Not-for-profit community groups may apply for support from the City for community gardens on private property.
2. The community garden coordinator must provide a letter from the property owner granting permission for the coordinator to use the land, and for the City to undertake the activities listed in paragraph 5 below if it wishes to access City resources.
3. Community gardeners will at all times protect their own safety and the safety of others while engaging in gardening activities.
4. Community gardeners will have rules for the operation of their respective gardens which define, at a minimum: tenure, dispute resolution, plot assignments and succession. Copies of individual garden rules must be filed with Community Services prior to City assistance being provided.
5. Subject to annual budget approval, the City will support community gardens in any or all of the following ways:
 - once annual roto-tilling, upon request
 - provision of water as necessary or requested
 - annual provision of manure
6. Any use of pesticides must comply with the current Ontario Pesticides Act.
7. Coordinators of community gardens must fill out the "Community Garden Application Form" and supply the following information on an annual basis in order to receive assistance:
 - contact name
 - list of plot-holders
 - annual permission letter from property owner if on private property
 - garden rules

Individual Garden Plots on Municipal Property

1. Individual garden plots are located on Municipal properties which have been approved for use by the Realty Services Division and for which where there is no immediate use by the City.
2. No permanent structures will be erected on any municipally owned property.
3. Any use of pesticides must comply with the current Ontario Pesticides Act.
4. Applicants for an Individual Garden Plot must complete the application, and pay the approved fee in full before being granted a Garden Plot License.

5. As licenses are renewed in future years, every attempt is made to ensure that the same party is provided full opportunity to renew their license on the same parcel of land.

ADMINISTRATION

The Parks Division and Realty Services Division will be responsible for the implementation of this policy.

REFERENCE:

Corporate Report No. 2010.110 (Parks)

Approved By: Replacing/Amending:

Originating
Department:

Contact: Departmental
Procedures Manual:
Affected Departments: N/A
Date: 05/31/2010

Appendix E



COMMUNITY GARDEN LICENCE

The Licensee is granted a Licence by the City for the following Community Garden _____ in consideration of completing the following registration prior to the commencement of the Growing Season for 20__ (May 1st to October 31st). For every year following the year in which the Licence is issued, the Licensee must register **on or before May 15th**. The City is not obliged to make any demands for the registration, or send any reminders.

The City is not liable to the Licensee for any losses of the Licensee's property or crop, nor for injuries occurring at the Community Garden, however caused.

The Licensee shall indemnify the City against all claims arising from the use or occupancy of the Community Garden by the Licensee.

The City makes no representation as to the fitness of the Lands for the uses intended by the Licensee and specifically makes no representation or warranty as to any environmental pollutant that may be found in the soils. The Licensee agrees to take the Lands in an "as is" condition.

The Community Garden shall not be used for any purpose other than for horticultural activities as outlined in the City's Community Garden and Individual Garden Plot Policy. No buildings or structures are permitted on Municipal Property without the written permission of the Manager of Parks.

This Licence is not assignable. Upon termination of the Licence, the lands shall be restored and left in a tidy condition by the Licensee.

The City has the right to terminate this Licence at any time without notice in its sole and absolute discretion; however, except for emergencies or cases of breach of contract by the Licensee, the City shall endeavour to do so only between growing seasons.

This application must be submitted, along with the following documents, to the Community Services Department, First Floor, Victoriaville Civic Centre, 111 Syndicate Avenue South, Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Documents to be submitted with this form: A copy of community garden rules (including dispute resolution, plot assignments, and succession); Contact name and contact information of the Community Garden Coordinator –the Licensee; List of plot-holders at the time of filing; and if the garden is on private property – an annual permission letter from the property owner.

DATED this _____ day of _____, 20__.

(Witness)

(Community Garden Coordinator)

DATED this _____ day of _____, 20__.

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF THUNDER BAY

Per:

Manager, Parks Division

Distribution list: Realty Services, Community Garden Collective (TBDHU), Licensee