



ENCORE PARK
COMMUNITY GARDEN.
A project of The Stewpot of First Presbyterian Church of Dallas

Encore Park Community Garden Rules and Guidelines

Our Encore Park Community Garden (“EPCG” or the “Garden”) and the programs and activities it hosts (the “EPCG Program”) empower people of all ages and incomes in the City of Dallas to grow and eat healthy, organic, local food by providing access to land, resources, education, and administrative assistance. The Garden is a shared space, where EPCG users (the “Gardeners”) need to be considerate of other Gardeners and their plants. In addition to tending your own assigned plot (“Plot”), Gardeners are expected to participate in the day-to-day upkeep of the Garden, periodic community work-days and events, and in decisions regarding the Garden and the EPCG Program.

The following are the standard guidelines (the “Guidelines”) that apply to the Garden and all Gardeners. **Please read them and understand them thoroughly. Violations may lead to the forfeiture of your plot, without the return of your plot fee(s) or any deposit(s).**

1. Garden Management

- (a) The EPCG Program is intended to foster an inclusive and participatory decision-making process. This includes decisions impacting the Garden and its Gardeners relating to issues such as Garden projects, the Guidelines and other policies, and Garden fund spending.
- (b) Day-to-day operations of the Garden are the collective responsibility of all Gardeners. To coordinate specific key responsibilities, EPCG maintains a leadership committee (the “EPCG Committee”). Without limiting paragraph (a) above, the EPCG Committee has complete authority to interpret the Guidelines and make decisions regarding their application, including any waivers or exceptions.
- (c) Gardeners under no circumstances will be entitled, directly or indirectly, to any refunds, any direct, incidental, consequential, punitive, or other damages, any other forms of compensation from the EPCG Program or FPC, or to obtain any injunction, specific performance, or other equitable remedy, as a consequence of the forfeiture of the Gardener’s Plot pursuant to the Guidelines or the Gardener’s termination from participation in the EPCG Program.

2. Reserving a Plot

- (a) Interested Gardeners should submit a Plot Application to the EPCG Committee for each annual growing season between October 15 and November 15 of each year.
- (b) A goal of the EPCG Program is to reflect the diversity of the people living and working in downtown Dallas, serving (i) Gardeners living in the Downtown Dallas neighborhood (“Neighborhood Gardeners”), (ii) Stewpot clients (“Stewpot Gardeners”), and (iii) members of First Presbyterian Church of Dallas (“FPC Gardeners”).
 - (A) The EPCG Committee will initially reserve 50% of available Plots for Neighborhood Gardeners, 25% for Stewpot Gardeners, and 25% for FPC Gardeners that do not qualify as a Gardener from another category.
 - (B) Depending on the number of interested Gardeners from each category, the EPCG Committee reserves the right to make additional Plots available to interested Gardeners from other categories to ensure that the Garden is utilized and the EPCG Program objectives are realized.
- (c) Each Gardener selected by the EPCG Committee is entitled to one Plot. Gardeners may not alter the dimensions of the Plot.

- (d) Plots will be awarded to interested Gardeners by a lottery system. Preference for awarding Plots at the start of each growing season will be given to Gardeners participating in the EPCG Program during the prior growing season that fulfilled all of the requirements under the Guidelines.
- (e) Each Gardener will be responsible for paying, at the start of each annual growing season (i) a Plot use fee equal to \$75.00; and (ii) a clean-up deposit of \$25.00. Gardeners utilizing one of the Plots with automatic irrigation will also pay an additional fee of \$25.00.
- (f) Each Gardener must submit to the EPCG Committee a completed EPCG Use Agreement with the fees and deposits required in paragraph (e) above.
- (g) Each Gardener must plant his or her Plot by the deadline for the applicable growing season in the table below. If the Gardener fails to plant the assigned Plot by the applicable deadline, (i) the Plot will be given to another interested Gardener on the waitlist, and (ii) the Gardener's plot fee and clean-up deposit will not be returned.
- (h) At the end of each growing season, each Gardeners is responsible for clearing his or her Plot of all plant material and leaving the plot as the Gardener found it at the start of the growing season by the deadline for the applicable growing season in the table below. The clean-up deposit (or a portion of the clean-up deposit) will be returned to the Gardener upon Gardener's satisfaction of the requirements in this paragraph (h).

Growing Season	Planting Deadline	Clean-Up Deadline
Spring Growing Season	February 15	N/A*
Fall Growing Season	N/A*	November 30

- * Subject to the requirements in these Guidelines to utilize and maintain your plot throughout the Growing Season.

3. Gardener Involvement

- (a) Garden care and maintenance is the collective responsibility of all Gardeners. In addition to tending your own Plot, each Gardener is also required to contribute at least 6 hours per season as a volunteer to Garden Activities (either individually or through scheduled group work days) to tend common areas or other projects that benefit the whole Garden. Examples of "Garden Activities" include weeding common areas, mulching pathways, planting or weeding donation beds, pruning back trees and bushes, or organizing social events.
- (b) Each Gardener must (i) attend the mandatory meetings at the start of the Spring Growing Season and the Fall Growing Season, or (ii) arrange to send someone as a proxy at the mandatory meeting if the Gardener is unable to attend.
- (c) A primary goal of the EPCG Program and the EPCG Committee is to grow produce in donation plots for donation to the Stewpot and other local charities. Gardeners are encouraged to assist in maintaining the donation plots.

4. Safety

- (a) The use of rebar in any plot for staking, trellising, or other uses is prohibited.
- (b) Gardeners must keep pathways clear of hazards, including tools and excessive plant growth beyond the assigned Plot.
- (c) The EPCG Program will provide a limited number of common tools for use by Gardeners. Any common tools not in use by the Gardener should be locked away in the designated place.
- (d) Gardeners should help to ensure that irrigation controls are secure from public access.
- (e) Lockers are available for personal property while a Gardener is working at the Garden; however, (x) Gardeners should not leave personal property in a locker over night, and (y) EPCG is not liable for lost or stolen property. Gardeners should not leave personal property other than permitted stakes or plant-supporting structures at their Plots when they are not in the Garden.

- (f) **Liability waivers are required for all Gardeners, guests, and volunteers**, and must be submitted to the EPCG Committee before any Gardener, guest, or volunteer enters the Garden.
- (g) The Garden is open from dawn until dusk, seven days a week.
- (h) For everyone's safety, Gardeners are encouraged to make use of the buddy system at all times, and are discouraged from working in the Garden unless a second person is also present.
- (i) Gardeners should always lock the gate behind them—it should not be propped open at any time.
- (j) Children are welcome in the Garden but anyone under the age of 15 must be accompanied by an adult and must be supervised at all times.

5. Gardening Practices

- (a) A primary goal of the Garden and the EPCG Program is to create and nurture a healthy soil and environment. **Chemical herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers are not allowed, and Gardeners using un-approved chemical weed killers, fertilizers and/or pesticides will lose their gardening privileges and any fee(s) or deposit(s)**. Gardeners can review the EPCG Organic Standards upon request if you have any questions.
- (b) Gardeners may not maintain plantings or plant-supporting structures that impede the security of the Garden or impede adjacent Gardeners' access to sunlight by the nature of their height, material, or density.
- (c) Gardeners may not grow plants that will take multiple growing seasons to produce food without the prior approval of the EPCG Committee.
- (d) The Plots are intended for personal and household use only. Gardeners may use produce grown in a Plot for commercial purposes with the prior written approval of the EPCG Committee.
- (e) The use of power tools in the Garden that require the use of gasoline is prohibited.

6. Water Use

- (a) **Each Gardener is responsible for watering his or her own Plot**. Gardeners may arrange for other Gardeners or volunteers to water their plots.
- (b) Gardeners should comply with all City of Dallas watering restrictions. To help conserve water, each Gardener should try to water his or her Plot before 10:00 am or after 4:00 pm.
- (c) Gardeners will not overwater his or her Plot. **No running hose should be left unattended**.
- (d) Gardeners are encouraged to use straw or leaf mulch in their Plot to help conserve water.
- (e) Any damaged, leaking, or otherwise malfunctioning irrigation or other watering equipment should be reported to the EPCG Committee immediately.

7. Weeds and Trash

- (a) Each Gardener must control the weeds and trash in his or her own Plot and adjacent pathways during the growing season. Generally, excessive growth of weeds in any Plot will not be permitted, and all weeds taller than six inches in height or twelve inches in width should be removed.
 - (i) Plots will be inspected regularly, and the EPCG Committee or its designee will notify any Gardeners of any Plot that does not meet the requirements of paragraph (a) above.
 - (ii) **If the Gardener fails to remove excessive weed growth from his or her Plot within seven days following written notice, the Gardener will forfeit the Plot (and any fee(s) or deposit(s)), and the Plot will be cleared.**
- (b) It is the responsibility of each Gardener to notify the EPCG Committee if the Gardener is no longer able to tend his or her Plot, or if the Gardener will be absent for more than two weeks but less than three months.
 - (i) If a Gardener will be absent for more than two weeks but less than three months, the EPCG Committee will work with the Gardener to determine an alternative, such as a temporary substitute Gardener, acceptable to both parties.

- (ii) The Plot of any Gardener who is away for more than three months will be forfeited.
- (c) Recycling and composting receptacles will be available at the Garden, and Gardeners are expected to separate their waste into the proper receptacles.
- (d) Gardeners are encouraged to help maintain common areas and regularly pick-up any litter and remove any weeds.
- (e) If a Gardener leaves personal property at his or her Plot after the termination of their participation in the EPCG Program, the EPCG Committee can remove and dispose of the abandoned property as it deems appropriate.

8. Composting Practices

- (a) Gardeners should place appropriate vegetative material into designated compost piles.
 - (i) Gardeners should not place weed seeds and/or weed materials in the compost piles.
 - (ii) All other plants go in compost piles and must be chopped to the size of your hand.
- (b) Please read the posted compost system instructions for more information on acceptable composting practices.

9. Community Behavior

- (a) Gardeners should harvest ripe produce regularly to avoid unnecessary waste and reduce garden pests and vandalism at the Garden.
- (b) Gardeners may not enter other Plots, use another Gardener's tools or supplies without permission, or harvest another Gardener's produce without permission. **Stealing of any kind will result in immediate loss of gardening privileges and forfeiture of the Gardener's Plot and any produce.**
- (c) Disrespectful or abusive language or destructive behavior (including vandalism) may result in the immediate loss of all gardening privileges, and forfeiture of the Gardener's Plot and any produce.
- (d) When a conflict arises with another Gardener, the Gardeners should try to resolve the issue collaboratively. If the Gardeners are unable to resolve the dispute or conflict, please contact EPCG Committee to find a solution.
- (e) No pets are allowed in the Garden. Only service animals are permitted in the Garden.
- (f) Gardeners may not grow any plants considered illegal under state or federal law.
- (g) Gardeners may not carry, use, or store firearms in the Garden.
- (h) Smoking and the use of any tobacco products in the Garden is prohibited.
- (i) Gardeners may not consume or use alcohol or illegal drugs while on the Garden premises. Gardeners may not bring alcohol or illegal drugs onto the Garden premises.
- (j) Gardeners may not start any fires of any kind (including a barbeque grill or other cooking fire) in the Garden except in approved locations and with the prior approval of the EPCG Committee.
- (k) Gardeners may not play music or the radio loud enough to be a nuisance to other Gardeners or to the Garden's neighbors.
- (l) Gardeners will be responsible for the conduct of any children and/or guests, including making sure the children and/or guests do not damage or interfere with the activities of other Gardeners on other Plots or otherwise engage in inappropriate conduct. Violations of the Guidelines by guests of a Gardener will be treated as violations by the Gardener. **Gardeners should ensure that any guests sign the appropriate waiver before entering and/or working in the Garden.**

10. Non-Discrimination

- (a) The EPCG Program will not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national, or ethnic origin, religious, marital status, age, sex, sexual orientation, or disability in its membership, Garden events, and the administration of its programs and activities.
- (b) Gardeners shall not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national, or ethnic origin, religious, marital status, age, sex, sexual orientation, or disability.