



Best practice guidelines for community gardens during COVID-19

Community gardens are a key component to neighbourhood food security. While we are in an ever-evolving situation, it is important that community garden coordinators, members and volunteers change the way we organize based on the most recent public health information.

The City of Victoria encourages community gardeners to monitor the following resources for COVID-19 updates:

- [City of Victoria](#)
- [Island Health](#)
- [BC Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)

Public health advice may change, so please check the above resources for the most current information to protect you, your family and fellow community gardeners.

Keeping each other safe in the community garden

Every person entering the garden is responsible for preventing the spread of infection. Here's how you can safely tend the community garden:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth, especially with unwashed hands
- Practice physical distancing of two metres (6-8 feet) always, even if you are not showing signs of symptoms
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay at home if you are sick
- Cough and sneeze into your sleeve and not your hands
- If you are showing symptoms or have been out of the country, please do not enter the community garden – follow current public health advice about when it's safe to do so (ask another garden member to water your plot)
- Garden coordinators will be circulating a garden sign-up sheet as needed – please only visit the garden during your allocated time slot to respect the physical distancing requirements

Tools:

- Gardens should remove all community shared tools for the time being
- Gardeners need to bring and use their own tools
- Gardeners need to take their tools home when they are done for the day
- If using a hose:
 - Bring sanitizing wipes and wipe down what you touch
 - Thoroughly wipe down the hose nozzle BEFORE AND AFTER USE

Instructions for garden coordinators

Signage

Please erect signage at each entrance to the garden (see attached) to inform and prevent members from entering the garden who are showing symptoms or who should be at home according to public health advice (e.g. recently out of country).

Hand washing stations

It is mandatory to provide a hand washing station or hand sanitizer on site. If you coordinate an allotment garden, please have either option available for members. If you coordinate a commons or community orchard, please provide the equivalent for any work parties (please follow current public health advice on allowable numbers of people gathered and always follow physical distancing requirements).

Limit the number of people in the garden at one time

- Create an online sign-up spreadsheet that allocates time slots where garden members can be in the garden (keep in mind physical distancing requirements)
- Contact members/volunteers via telephone if they have difficulty using or do not have access to a computer
- Older adults and persons with severe underlying health conditions may prefer time alone in the garden, or none at all (if they are self-isolating, ask to see if others are willing to water their garden for them)
- Cancel all planned, in-person committee meetings and transition to virtual meetings
- Cancel all large work parties and switch to sequential work parties while practicing physical distancing