

Rock Creek Park Community Garden Guidelines

Garden Season Year 2015

A. Guidelines pertaining to the use of Rock Creek Park lands for the purpose of gardening:

1. The United States shall not be held liable for the loss, damage, or liability arising from the use of these lands under this special use permit.
2. The National Park Service does not charge for the use of the community gardens.
3. Gardeners will comply with any instructions from representatives of the National Park Service and the United States Park Police.
4. Only one plot is to be assigned per household while there are other applicants waiting for garden space.
5. The community gardens are subject to the laws, regulations and policies of the National Park Service and Rock Creek Park.

B. Guidelines pertaining to plants and planting:

1. Gardeners must use organic gardening methods. These methods include making soil improvements by adding NPS-approved compost, purchasing seeds and plants that are healthy and disease resistant, undertaking companion planting for insect control, and using NPS-approved mulch for weed control.
2. The garden area is only to be used for growing herbs and vegetables for household use, educational purposes, or to be donated to charity. Commercial gardening is prohibited.
3. No woody stemmed plants, trees or shrubs (including rose bushes) are to be planted in or adjacent to the garden without written approval from the Superintendent of Rock Creek Park.
4. Existing trees within approved garden boundaries are to remain unless the tree poses a threat to the safety of people.
5. Removal of natural materials without prior approval from the Rock Creek Park Superintendent is prohibited.

C. Regulations pertaining to maintenance of garden area:

1. All materials brought into the site for gardening purposes will be stored so as not to create a public hazard, visual intrusion, and/or habitats for rodents, or as defined by the Superintendent of Rock Creek Park.

2. Gardening is permitted only within assigned plots. Where practical, borders of flexible metal or plastic edging, which is easily removed, are permitted. Bricks, logs, tree sections, timbers, and other heavy materials are not permitted without prior written approval from the Superintendent. Structures, such as fences, decks, arbors, patios and terraces, require written approval from the Superintendent of Rock Creek Park.
3. No stones or other debris shall be thrown or piled on grassy areas.
4. Garden walkways shall be maintained by the permittee at all times in an orderly and weed-free condition.
5. No pesticides, herbicides or rodenticides may be used in the community gardens without prior approval from the Rock Creek Park Superintendent.
6. At the end of the garden season, all plots will be cleared of excess materials and cleaned up in a manner satisfactory to officials of the National Park Service.
7. Gardeners are responsible for removal of all waste they produce. Matter suitable for compost may be composted at each garden.
8. National Park Service sheds and tool boxes should be repainted NPS brown by the permittee, as needed.
9. The permittee shall not burn any material whatsoever on parkland, including, but not limited to, trash and debris.

D. Regulations pertaining to overall operation of garden area:

1. The permittee shall ensure that all activities undertaken by it or its members pursuant to this permit shall be within the boundaries of the land area assigned for use by this permit.
2. The permittee shall ensure that each of its members is informed of the conditions of this permit.
3. The permittee shall be responsible for all maintenance and operational costs, and shall assume full responsibility for activities undertaken by the garden association and its members within the boundaries of the land area assigned.
4. The permittee does not have the authority to extend garden plots outside the authorized garden area set by the National Park Service. The permittee must seek approval from their Executive Committee and the Superintendent of Rock Creek Park in order to change plot sizes. That pertains to decreasing or increasing the size of a garden plot.
5. Parkland outside of the boundaries of community garden is managed so as to protect the natural, historical, and recreational features of the land. No dumping, cutting of vegetation, and collecting of soil or other resources are permitted outside the community garden.

6. The permittee and its members shall immediately surrender to the Superintendent of Rock Creek Park any relics or historic objects found on parkland either within or outside of the boundaries of the land area assigned for use by the garden's Special Use Permit.
7. The Permittee shall ensure that the assigned land area is maintained to meet standards established by the National Park Service and must not detract from or negatively impact the high public value and integrity of the national park system.
8. The permittee shall maintain a list of people interested in membership and undertaking gardening activities within the permitted area. The list shall be kept on a first applied, first admitted for membership basis. The permittee shall make the waiting list available for inspection by the Superintendent upon request.
9. The permittee shall advertise availability of association membership and the application procedures on the established NPS bulletin board. Other public methods of advertising (such as via website or newspaper) may also be used.
10. The permittee shall provide the Superintendent of Rock Creek Park with a list of members which identifies member names, addresses, telephone numbers, and plot assignments during the permit renewal period.
11. The land identified shall be used as a vegetable garden. Flowers can only be used as companion plantings for organic gardening purposes and encouraging beneficial insects. Up to five percent of the whole garden or individual plots may be flowers. Perennials, shrubs and roses are not allowed, as shrubs spread seeds to natural areas and roses can require intensive chemical spraying.
12. The permittee agrees to be fully responsible for management performance, use, and safety within the permitted park area. The permittee hereby agrees to accept responsibility and assume liability for any claims arising directly from the actions of its members connected with the use of the permitted area.
13. Each permittee requesting permission to operate at identified community garden sites will have their by-laws on file with the Superintendent of Rock Creek Park.
14. The permittee shall provide the Superintendent of Rock Creek Park with an annual report at the end of each gardening season. The report should provide number of gardeners, number of applicants unable to get plots, and number of hours spent by the association's administrative staff.
15. The permittee shall ensure that all deliveries of materials are made within the boundaries of the permitted area. Materials shall not be stockpiled for any longer than two weeks.

16. The Superintendent of Rock Creek Park may inspect the garden site at any time and may, without advance notice, inspect the permittee's records in order to assure compliance with the terms of this permit. Everyone in the garden community is required to have and to maintain proper documentation pertaining to exceptions to the rule.
17. The Superintendent of Rock Creek Park may add conditions to this permit as needed.
18. "Superintendent" means the Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, or any duly authorized representative.