

The Fenway Victory Gardens

Richard D. Parker Memorial Victory Gardens Fenway Garden Society Guidelines & Regulations October, 2023

Michelle Wu, Mayor

Ryan Woods, Commissioner, Boston Parks and Recreation

These guidelines and regulations provide a framework for the practical management of our community Gardens and reflect our mission as stewards of City of Boston park land managed by the Parks and Recreation Department (BPRD) and the requirement that our Members abide by BPRD rules and regulations, which in all cases supersede FGS rules and can be found here:

<https://www.boston.gov/departments/parks-andrecreation/parks-rules-and-regulations>.

Please note these rules and regulations explicitly require dogs to be leashed; prohibit possessing or drinking alcohol, smoking, making open fires, trapping or ensnaring wildlife, the use of firearms or fireworks; and prohibit activity in the park between dusk and dawn.

Membership and Plot Assignment

- Members must be residents of the City of Boston. Proof of Boston residency is required.
- The Members Handbook has additional information for Members and Co-Gardeners, including what constitutes proof of residency, a description of the procedure for revocation and appeal of gardens, and many other essential FGS policies.
- Members must provide the Board with an email address, personal phone number, and residential address and ensure that this information is current and accurate.
- Garden assignments are the responsibility of the FGS Board. As per the FGS Bylaws, this task is the responsibility of the FGS VP of the Park and the Section Coordinators.
- Members may not give, promise, or assign a plot to another person.
- Members must make timely payment of annual dues (or make arrangements for waiver of dues as allowed in the Bylaws) by the due date established by the FGS Board and make payment via a method approved by the Board.
- Members are expected to attend at least one of the FGS semi-annual meetings.
- Members (except for seniors) are required to perform a minimum of 9 hours of volunteer work per year for FGS; this includes work during Community Participation Days, committee work, administrative work, or any FGS Board-approved volunteer activity.

Behavior in the Gardens

- Members, co-gardeners, and guests are expected to work with others in an ethical, responsible, courteous, cooperative, and respectful manner.
- Members, co-gardeners, and guests must not abuse or harass any other Members or visitors to the park. There is a zero-tolerance policy for verbal or physical abuse, inclusive of online communications. Violation of this rule may result in revocation of membership and garden.
- Members may barbeque or grill only on days for which a City of Boston Fire Permit (and/or Health Permit, if applicable) has been obtained by the FGS Board. Only gas grills are permitted. A water source must be available while grills are in operation, and all other applicable regulations per City of Boston ordinance must be followed.
- No open flames (with the exception of grills under the limitations described above) are permitted at any time.
- Members must be present in the Fenway Victory Gardens when the water to their garden is turned on at the spigot.
- Members may drive or park in the Gardens only on the main paths and only to deliver supplies or to transport people with disabilities and, if parking their car, must leave enough space for a wheelchair to pass by their car. Driver must stay in the vicinity of his/her car and the location of the driver's garden plot must be clearly indicated on the vehicle's dashboard. Driver must be prepared to move the vehicle to accommodate emergency or public works vehicles. The maximum parking time is 20 minutes.
- Members and their guests may not play a radio or music at a high volume, and if asked to reduce the volume must do so. A permit from the City of Boston may be required for use of a sound-amplification device.
- Members may not remove anything from another plot without permission of the VP of the Park.

Maintenance of Gardens and Pathways

- Assigned gardeners are responsible for the maintenance of their gardens and adjacent row(s).
- Gardens, fences, and gates are to be kept tended, weeded, free of trash, and in good repair.
- For the safety and security of gardens and gardeners, all gardens must have clear lines of sight through the garden to adjacent rows.
- Rows are to be kept free of plants, weeds, trash, and mud. Wood chips are usually available and should be used to cover mud in the rows. Members may not plant outside of their fence line, nor should plants overhang the fence.
- Each fall, Members should clean up their gardens, removing annuals, pruning perennials, and storing equipment and tools in an orderly and secure manner.
- Wheelbarrows are shared and should be stored on-end in their storage areas when not in active use. They must not be left in gardens overnight.
- Water features (birdbaths, ponds, decorative fountains, etc.) and watering cans and buckets must be maintained in a manner that does not encourage the breeding of mosquitoes. Ponds must either contain fish or be aerated; birdbaths, fountains, and other small water features must be emptied and cleaned weekly. Buckets, watering cans, and similar items must be stored in a manner so that they do not collect rainwater and must be emptied at least weekly.

Allowable Structures and Furnishings Within Gardens

In order to abide by the Boston Parks and Recreation Department rules and regulations, maintain the safety of the Gardens, reduce animal nesting, and maintain an overall orderly appearance, the following standards must be observed:

- Colors of structures and furnishings should be natural wood, dark green, dark brown, terracotta, or black.
- Gardens must have gates that lock. All gardens must be secured and locked except when a Member, cogardener, or their guest is present.
- Gates must open inward from the pathway to prevent blocking paths. Maximum gate height is 5 feet.
- Fences must be made of open wire or chain link to allow for visibility. Maximum fence height is 5 feet.
- Fence posts and gate posts may not exceed 5 ½ feet in height.
- Sharp materials (e.g., thorns, nails) mounted on fences to deter vandalism must not project into the pathway and must be clearly visible to prevent injury to others.
- Trellises, pergolas, and arbors must be open on at least two sides and cannot be taller than 5 ½ feet.
- Exceptions to these height restrictions include installation of bird houses or other wildlife supports mounted on posts/poles and any FGS-approved installation of solar lighting in gardens along rows. Solar lighting must be motion-activated and kept at a low level of illumination. Such lighting is for the express purpose of enhancing safety and security in the gardens and not to encourage after-hours use of the Park. These installations must be reviewed and approved by the Section Coordinator and VP of the Park prior to installation and may never exceed 8 feet in height.
- Umbrellas must be closed when not in use.
- The following structures and furnishings are not permitted:
 - Indoor furnishings (e.g. sofas) and decorative items
 - Soft furnishings and other items that are likely to provide homes for rodents
 - Decks
 - Flags (except US Flags on Memorial Day, July 4th, and Labor Day)
 - Solid gates/roofing
 - Concrete or asphalt foundations or pavement
 - Barbed or razor wire
- Chicken wire and hardware cloth may be used only as secondary lower fencing in order to keep pests/animals out.
- Materials and tools must be stored in an orderly manner. Storage of unused materials must be limited to those items which will be used in the garden within the season. Hoarding large quantities of materials is prohibited. Any materials that create a habitat for rodents will be required to be removed.
- Cold Frames are permitted if they are no larger than 30 inches wide by 30 inches high by 60 inches long. Covers must be structurally sound, anchored, windproof and made of clear UV protect plastic of a durable thickness (5ml) that will not tear easily. Cold frame installation is permitted from March 5- May 15 and October 1 – December 15 only; no exceptions.
- Holiday-themed decorations may only be placed in gardens one week prior to and up to two weeks following a given holiday.
- Use of monofilament line (fishing wire) and other materials (e.g. cobweb decorations) that pose a threat to wildlife is forbidden.

Restrictions On The Use Of Hazardous Materials

- Gardeners may not use or store hazardous or noxious materials in their gardens.
- With the exception of commercially available bagged products, the use of excrement whether from animals, birds, or humans is absolutely prohibited within the Gardens.
- Any use of non-organic herbicides, fungicides, and insecticides is prohibited except with prior approval of the VP of the Park.
- The use of non-organic fertilizers is discouraged.
- Gardeners may not trap, poison, or otherwise intentionally harm wildlife. The use of rodenticides is forbidden.
- The FGS Board, working with BPRD, may institute rodent management programs.
- Found syringes and needles must not be disposed of in trash or recycling. You may ask a Member with a needle disposal kit to dispose of it or you may call the City of Boston 311 line (or contact 311 via their phone app) to arrange for safe removal.

Planting Restrictions

- Shrubs and trees are to be maintained at a maximum height of 5 feet. Members whose gardens have an existing tree that exceeds 5 feet must consult with the VP of the Park as to where the responsibility for maintaining and pruning and possible removal of that tree belongs.
- Planting of new trees expected to grow taller than 5 feet is prohibited.
- Shading or encroaching on a neighbor's garden is not permitted.
- Invasive plant species must be removed in compliance with the state prohibitions on invasive species and disposed of properly (see below). FGS prohibits the planting of invasive plant species and requires the prompt removal of known invasive plants. (A list of these species can be obtained from the FGS website <https://fenwayvictorygardens.org/invasive-plants/>).
- Sale of produce (e.g., vegetables, fruits, and flowers) grown within the Gardens is not permitted.

Composting And Disposal Of Materials

There are five main waste streams that must be kept separate:

- Soft plant materials (those without woody parts, such as flowers, grass, leaves, and vegetables) are to be placed in the designated rows in the compost areas.
- Woody plant materials (tree and shrub trunks, limbs, and branches) are to be placed in designated wood piles in the compost areas.
- Invasive plant species must have the soil removed prior to being placed in plastic bags and placed in the dumpster or trash barrel. These must not be put in the compost.
- Recyclable materials should be brought home for disposal in City recycling bins.
- Trash ('none of the above') should be disposed of in the dumpster or trash barrels (large or bulky items and discarded building materials should be placed in the dumpster periodically provided by FGS or BPRD).

The trash barrels provided by the Parks and Recreation Department can only be used for the disposal of routine trash. They absolutely cannot be used for the disposal of soil, rocks, building materials, or hazardous waste. Members are encouraged to share reusable items with fellow gardeners. Plants and seeds may be placed in the sharing garden in V row. Reusable non-plant materials may be placed in the wheelbarrow yard in V row. If FGS has the ability to recycle metal, there will be a designated, labeled location for it to be placed.

If you have large amounts of wire fencing, fence posts, bricks, recyclables, or other materials to dispose of, please contact your Area Director for guidance.