

City of Orange Community Garden 2026 Rules and Regulations

The City of Orange Community Garden (OCG) will be operated on a cooperative basis led by volunteer Gardeners who form the Community Garden Oversight Committee (CGOC). All Gardeners are expected to follow the Rules and Regulations outlined herein to maintain the privilege of leasing a garden plot from the City. For the purposes of this document, “Gardener” is defined as the person who has entered into a Garden Plot Lease Agreement with the City of Orange for use of public property at the Orange Community Garden (OCG). Failure to follow the Rules and Regulations will result in immediate termination of Garden Lease.

Garden plot renewal begins in early December (usually the first week) and ends before the City’s Holiday Closure in mid-December (usually the third week of the month). The new (Garden) year begins January 1 and expires December 31 of each calendar year. Current gardeners have the option of renewing or canceling their Garden Plot Lease Agreement with the City. Gardeners who choose not to renew their Community Garden Plot Lease Agreement must notify the City and clear their plot(s) by the last day of the year. Lease fees are due for all Gardeners during the renewal period. Lease fees are not pro-rated. Unclaimed plots will be reassigned to new gardeners after the December registration and after plots are vacated throughout the garden year. All new Gardeners must pay the lease fees and deposit in full when the Garden Plot Lease Agreement is signed. The City may, as an alternative to a deposit, require gardeners to grant the City the authority to charge a credit/debit card on file should the need for a deposit fee arise.

Rule 1 - Garden plots are assigned by the City of Orange on a first come, first received basis. Only City of Orange residents are eligible to lease plots. Garden plots are limited to one plot per household. Existing gardeners who were previously approved to maintain “two plots” prior to this portion of Rule #1’s enactment are exempt. Proof of residency (current utility bill, etc.) will be required with application and during the annual renewal period. Non-resident Gardeners who were renters prior to January 1, 2012, are exempt. If all current plots are full, the City will maintain a waitlist to track those interested in leasing a plot. As plots become available, the City will refer to said waitlist and contact interested parties in the order requests were received.

Rule 2 - Gardeners may add a co-gardener to their lease agreement. The potential co-gardener must first meet with the co-Chairs then provide proof of residency, review, and sign acknowledgement of rules. Both Gardeners must be City of Orange residents and always adhere to the OCG Rules and Regulations. Existing Gardeners with two plots prior to December 21 will not be allowed to sign on as a co Gardener on another plot at the OCG.

Rule 3 - For the safety of all gardeners, 1) the gate combination may not be shared with any non-Gardener member under any circumstance and 2) any non-Gardener working a plot must be

accompanied by the Gardener assigned to that plot the entire time the non-Gardener is in the Garden. Failure to adhere to part 1 or 2 of rule 3 will result in an automatic termination of plot lease/s. If a Gardener needs help weeding due to illness or injury, they must first attempt to find another Gardener to assist. If a Gardener is getting assistance from another OCG Gardener, they must communicate that information to the co-Chairs in advance. If a Gardener is unable to get assistance from another OCG Gardener, they must contact the co-Chairs for assistance.

Rule 4 - Gardeners and visitors are prohibited from entering another Gardener's plot, except with the Gardener's expressed approval. Children and visitors are required to always be supervised and are expected to be considerate and not disturb or damage other Gardeners or their plants. Each garden plot is available for the sole, personal use of the Gardener to whom the plot is assigned. The Gardener to whom the plot is assigned must work the plot and only use it for gardening purposes. All crops derived from a plot are the sole property of the Gardener to whom it is assigned. The City and the OCG are not responsible for items that are tampered with or stolen.

Rule 5 - If for any reason a Gardener is no longer able to maintain their plot(s), written notice must be given to and acknowledged by the City. Notice must also be given to the co-Chairs. Failure to clear the garden plot within 2 weeks (14 consecutive days) of notice will result in forfeiture of deposit or charge of "deposit fee" if the applicable gardener has no deposit on file.

Rule 6 - The City of Orange, in collaboration with the co-Chairs, shall be the authority on all matters pertaining to who is the current occupant of each garden plot and to where boundaries between garden plots rightly lie. Gardeners are to address all questions, issues, concerns, safety related items, etc. directly to the co-Chairs. The contact information for the co-Chairs is posted on the bulletin board at the OCG.

Rule 7 - Pets are not allowed in the OCG (excluding certified service animals).

Rule 8 - The OCG is a drug, tobacco, and alcohol-free area. Smoking is not allowed in the garden. The growth of marijuana and illegal narcotics is strictly prohibited.

Rule 9 - The OCG is open from dawn until dusk, seven days a week. OCG gates are to be closed at all times. The last Gardener leaving the OCG when no other Gardeners are present is responsible for locking the gate as they leave.

Rule 10 - Furniture used in garden plots must be specifically designed for outdoor use. Furniture that is broken or not deemed aesthetically pleasing by the Community Garden Oversight Committee (CGOC) must be removed. Gardeners may not maintain ponds in plots. Storage bins are allowed in garden plot space but cannot be more than 4 feet wide and 7 feet high.

Rule 11 - The OCG is an organic garden. As such, organic products and natural gardening practices (such as use of vinegar, steam, etc.) are standard. Gardeners must first get the permission of the

co-Chairs prior to using any pest or rodent control spray or substance that is non-organic and would have the ability to damage other gardener's crops. Consult with chairpersons if you have questions about acceptable methods.

Rule 12 - All trees, shrubs, purslane and perennials (such as but not limited to rosemary, lavender, grapes, mint, passion vine) may not be planted directly into the ground. All such vegetation may only be planted in pots with a solid paver under the pot, which extends at least one inch past the base of the pot. Each Gardener is responsible for removing all planted pots upon departure from the OCG. If there is a question about which perennials you want to plant, please contact the co-Chairs. All existing trees and shrubs which were planted prior to December 1, 2021, must be maintained at a height of no more than 6 feet at all times.

Rule 13 - No permanent structures shall be constructed. Trellises and plant supports shall be no higher than 8 feet tall. No Gardener shall carry out any gardening activities in such a way as to unreasonably interfere with the activities of neighboring Gardeners. All gardening activities must take place within your plot boundaries. Do not plant sprawling or tall crops in locations that might interfere with other plots or paths. Harvest only from your assigned plot from within your own assigned plot.

At no time shall a Gardener enter another Gardeners plot, unless express permission has been given by said Gardener. Co-chairs have the right to enter garden plots at any time.

If there are issues regarding one Gardener going into or accessing another Gardener's plot, or a Gardener's trees, trellises, or supports creating too much shade for a neighboring garden, the two Gardeners must try to come to an agreement. If the two Gardeners are unable to agree, the co-Chairs reserve the right to intervene and determine a final decision.

Rule 14 - Fences erected around garden plots must be no higher than 6 ft. and be of such construction that they can be taken down at any time. Fences also should be made of material that poses minimal danger to birds (Mylar is permitted to deter birds but cannot be attached to chain link perimeter fence) and blends in with the environment. Brightly colored materials such as orange or lime green are not permitted on fencing, nor are metallic streamers, neon-colored ribbons or flashers. Fences must allow visual access to the garden plot from the outside.

Rule 15 - Maintain your half of the path around your plot regularly. Paths must be kept free of rocks, weeds, and trash, including encroaching or overhanging plants (e.g., raspberries), compost bins, and structures. If assigned a plot bordering the perimeter of the OCG, the two-foot border between the plot and the perimeter fence/wall must always remain clear.

The Community Garden Oversight Committee (CGOC) or City reserves the right to remove materials obstructing any public path at any time. Gardeners are required to deposit trash, weeds included, and debris in the designated trash bin, as well as ensure their plot area is neat and tidy. The garden trash bin is for trash generated at the garden only. No household waste is to be placed in the garden trash bin.

Rule 16 – If a Gardener has an item to be discarded that another Gardener could use, they should notify the co-Chairs instead of placing the item in the common area. The co-Chairs will inform all Gardeners of item availability and ask interested Gardeners to individually contact that person. This will keep the common area neat. For current Gardeners, dumping items in the common area will result in an official write up. For Gardeners who are terminating their lease, dumping items in the common area will result in forfeiture of deposit or be charged a “deposit fee” if the applicable gardener has no deposit on file.

Rule 17- Any gardener is welcome to post messages or information pertaining to the garden or items of interest about gardens on the bulletin board. The co-Chairs may remove any item deemed not appropriate for posting on the bulletin board.

Rule 18 - Unless you use an automated watering system, unattended watering is not permitted. Before leaving the OCG for the day, Gardeners are expected to check faucets to ensure water is turned off in their plot. Gardeners must notify the co-Chairs immediately if they notice any water issues elsewhere in the garden.

Rule 19 – Hand watering with a garden hose is limited to 15 minutes per plot. Hoses must have a shut off nozzle attached. The City and co-Chairs reserve the right to modify these requirements to comply with state and local mandates.

SERVICE COMMITMENT:

The OCG has been allowed to continue due to the hard work and commitment of dedicated volunteers. The long-term viability of the garden depends on all the gardeners pitching in to do their part. Therefore, each Gardener is expected to attend the Annual Mandatory Garden Meeting and participate in scheduled workdays noted below:

The Annual Mandatory Garden Meeting will be held in the OCG common area on Saturday, February 7, 2026, at noon. Failure to attend will result in 1 additional work hour.

2026 SCHEDULED WORKDAYS:

Saturday, January 17th - 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 11th - 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Sunday, July 12th - 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Sunday, October 11th - 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

REQUIRED NUMBER OF HOURS SERVED:

- For a renewing Gardener or a new Gardener starting between January 1 and March 31, a minimum of 4 hours of service is required.
- For a new Gardener starting between April 1 and June 30, a minimum of 3 hours of service is required.
- For a new Gardener starting between July 1 and September 30, a minimum of 2 hours of service is required.
- For a new Gardener starting between October 1 and December 31, a minimum of 1 hour of service is required.

When attending a service/workday, it is each Gardeners' responsibility to sign-in, check in with co-Chairs for direction and sign out to account for service hours worked. All gardeners are responsible for keeping track of their own work hours. Failure to perform the minimum required hours will result in the forfeiture of the garden plot. The required hours can be split up between multiple service/workdays and co-Gardeners.

The Accountability Committee is comprised of Gardeners who are responsible for ensuring all Gardeners maintain their plots in compliance with OCG Rules and Regulations. A compliant garden shows evidence of BOTH, 1) Active gardening: AND 2) A plot and path/border that are free of weeds, trash, and debris. After an accountability walk through review of each plot is completed, any Gardeners with plots out of compliance will receive an official write up via email regarding non-compliance with a correction deadline. If a Gardener plans to not actively garden because of a soil treatment (i.e. solarizing, breaking down of hot compost, etc.), the co-Chairs must be notified in advance. To maintain a healthy and thriving garden, all six scheduled accountability walkthrough reviews will be unannounced. The accountability walkthrough review months for 2026 are:

- **February**
- **April**
- **June**
- **August**
- **October**
- **December**

COURSE OF ACTION WHEN PLOTS ARE NON-COMPLIANT:

1. An official email notice of non-compliance and the required course of action will be sent from the co-Chairs. City staff will be provided record of this correspondence.
2. If after two weeks the plot is still non-compliant, the City, at the request of the co-Chairs, will send a final letter via email informing the Gardener that they have forfeited their plot.
3. The OCG will then clear the garden plot and the Gardener's entire deposit will be forfeited and any remaining supplies/equipment will be discarded. If the Gardener does not have a deposit on

file with the City, they will be billed the deposit fee at the time of plot forfeiture. Forfeiture based billings, if applicable, will be charged to the Gardener's card on file.

Any Gardener deemed non-compliant on three accountability reviews within a 12-month period will need to vacate their plot(s) immediately and the deposit is forfeited or will be charged the deposit fee if the applicable gardener has no deposit on file. The three non-compliant reviews can include those accumulated in two consecutive lease years.

IMPORTANT: It is the responsibility of all Gardeners to check their email for communications from the co-Chairs and/or the City (which includes checking spam folder for misdirected emails), and to notify the co-Chairs and the City of any new email address. Failure by a gardener to update their contact information will not be considered an excusable reason for failure to maintain plot compliance or take corrective measures after a compliance correspondence.