

# ISU COMMUNITY GARDEN

## POLICY GUIDE

Last updated  
FY21

## Introduction

Welcome to the policy guide for the ISU Community Garden!

We are excited to have you join us. Gardeners are required fill out a current season application form found at the [Sustainability Webpage](#) attend a garden policy review session, and sign a [Garden Release Form](#) before participating in any capacity in the ISU Community Garden. All gardeners must do this complete process at the beginning of each garden season.

## Definitions

**“Garden Staff”** will refer to the Office of Sustainability staff (including students) and the Garden Steering Committee

**“Gardeners”** will refer to all other ISU Community Gardeners including the Steering Committee

## Executive Summary

- ◇ The ISU Community Garden is an organic garden. Non-organic pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers are not allowed. Garden Staff may need to use non-organic chemicals to control serious weed issues.
- ◇ Gardeners are required to keep their plot(s) weeded, planted, harvested, and well maintained. All paths surrounding the plot(s) must be chipped and weeded through the garden season.
- ◇ Gardeners must notify the Garden Staff if they unable to maintain their plot(s) or paths. After notifying Garden Staff, Gardeners are required to follow the flag system.
- ◇ Gardeners must donate at least 10% of the harvesting produce. Gardeners are required to record their donations on the sheets provided.
- ◇ Gardeners must volunteer 4 hours per month in the ISU Community Garden. Gardeners can choose from a variety of volunteer opportunities.
- ◇ Gardeners are prohibited from planting perennial plants in the soil within their personal plot(s). Gardeners may plant perennials in containers within their plot(s).
- ◇ All tools must be completely cleaned before they are returned to the shed. No garden tools may be taken off the ISU Community Garden property.
- ◇ Removing anything from another garden plot(s) without permission is stealing and will result in termination.
- ◇ Report any issues to the Garden Staff immediately. In instances of fear for personal safety or emergency health concerns call 911 or ISU Police at 812 237 5555.
- ◇ It is encouraged that all Gardeners carry/wear their garden badge and or garden t-shirt. If you are suspected to be trespassing in the ISU Community Garden, your badge will prove your innocence.

## Warning & Termination System

**The following system will be followed when any Gardener is not in compliance with Garden Policies.**

Warnings will be issued when violations are found. When a gardener corrects the violation, they will be returned to good standing and any further violations will start with a Warning 1. If a gardener commits a serious violation, they can be subject to immediate termination. Serious violations include but are not limited to and are up to the discretion of the Garden Staff, the use of non-organic pesticides, tilling, destruction of property, sexual harassment, and theft.

### Warning 1

When a Gardener is not in compliance with any of the policies, they will be sent an email notifying them of the non-compliance issue and will be given one week to correct the issue by the date of the email. If a Gardener does not have email, they will be called in place of an email.

### Warning 2

If the issue has not been corrected or addressed within one week of warning 1 being sent, a phone call will be made to the gardener. The gardener will then be given five (5) days to correct the issue. In addition to receiving a phone call, a non-compliance flag will be placed in the violators plot.

### Termination

If the gardener has not complied with the two notices then they are in non-compliance of the garden policies and will be terminated from the garden and must relinquish their plot(s). The plot(s) will be covered with gardening plastic to prevent the spread of seeds and the plot(s) will go back to the ISU Community Garden for reassignment. Any non-organic material found in the garden (planters, cages, etc.) will be removed and stored outside of the alley shed until the end of the garden season. The owner of these items has until the end of the garden season to retrieve the non-organic items.

**If there are extenuating circumstances that will not allow you to tend to your plot for a long period of time, please notify the Garden Staff. We would be happy to temporarily maintain your plot or assign it to another gardener temporarily.**

## Garden Checks

The Garden Staff will perform garden checks during the first two weeks of June, July, August, and September. There will be a final Garden Check when the garden is closed for the season, which typically occurs at the end of October. The follow list contains possible garden check violations, all of the violations are at the discretion of the Garden Staff. A violation of any of the following can result in a Warning 1 (see Termination Policy):

- Weeds must be under control (not overgrown or sprouting seeds) both in the garden and the surrounding paths.
- There cannot be any perennial plants rooted into the ground. They are acceptable in pots, see the Annual, Perennial, Biennial Herbs Policy.
- Paths around the perimeter of garden plots must be chipped, all gardeners adjacent to an unchipped path can receive a Warning 1.
- Produce should be harvested within a week of ripening. If produce cannot be harvested in that timeframe, the flag system needs to be used.

Tilling is prohibited by all gardeners, see the Tiller Usage and Soil Health Section.

## Tiller Usage & Soil Health

Tilling is prohibited in the ISU Community Garden. Garden soil becomes layered over time into a pattern that plants need and rely on for optimal health. Every tilling event destroys this layering, and the micro and macro organisms that live in the soil. These tiny creatures are needed for healthy soil. Adding a compost layer on top of the soil accomplishes many of the same goals as tilling. It prevents weeds, softens the soil, and adds nutrients.

In extreme cases of a weed infestation the small cultivators can be signed out. The Garden Staff must approve cultivator usage. They will be locked by a chain and unlocked by a garden shed attendant, the garden manager or by a house employee. After use and returning the cultivators to the shed, they must be in working condition and cleared of all debris from the garden. The cultivators must be in the good condition for each gardener's use. Failure to sign them out and in and returned in good condition will result in termination. Any cost of repairs can/will be charged to you.

## Garden Service

The ISU Community Garden is able to operate at no cost to its gardeners because we rely heavily on volunteer work. It is required that each gardener record a minimum of 4 hours of volunteer work in the garden a month.

In order to make this easier to track and easier for gardeners to volunteer, we ask that you sign up for one or two positions for the season. If you sign up for one position (or more), you will be able to obtain the 4 hours of required volunteer time a month. You will need to record your time on the volunteer sheets located in the Communication Box on the deck. It is the gardener's responsibly to work and record their own hours. Monetary or in-kind donations can replace volunteer hours.

## Volunteering

Below are the approved garden volunteer positions, please let us know if you need accommodations or have another way to volunteer:

- ◇ Volunteer to help keep the Garden Shed organized and swept every 2 weeks.
- ◇ Assist with mowing and/or weed eating around the greenhouse, fences, trees, and other areas.
- ◇ Help with a volunteer event: Sycamore Service Saturdays, Donaghy Days, Garden Work Days, Other Special Garden Work Days, etc.
- ◇ Adopt a common area to maintain such as Blackberry / Raspberry / Blueberry Beds, Strawberry Bed, Herb Beds or any other communal beds.
- ◇ Pick up trash around the garden, compost area and other public areas
- ◇ Help pick plots that are flagged for donation, by picking produce, watering or weeding using the flag system.
- ◇ Donate seeds, plants, or garden equipment.
- ◇ Pull weeds in and around any wildflower area, path(s) and common pathways.
- ◇ Volunteer to help other gardeners that may need help with their paths, garden plot(s) and picking produce.
- ◇ Food forest maintenance as needed and announced days to offer help.

## Donations

All gardeners are required to donate 10% of their produce. Donations can be left in the bins on the back porch Monday-Friday, these bins will be picked up daily by Infinity House. Gardeners must weigh and record their donations with the scale and donation log which will be located in the Gardner Community bin.

If you would like to donate to another charity or individual that is perfectly fine. Gardeners may wish to donate produce to any place that supports food distribution locations that may assist with food insecurity. These gardeners are still required to weigh and record their donations.

## Flag System

Keeping plots clear of weeds, picking ripened veggies, the removal of over ripe/rotting produce, maintain healthy plants and good stewardship of paths are all good gardening practices. All of this helps manage pests (insects, rodents, and other scavengers), plant diseases, excessive weeds, weed control throughout the garden and the occasional human thief. Moreover, the commitment to a sustainable world makes it hard to watch good, organic produce go to waste when it could be feeding the hungry in our community. The Flag Policy helps achieve these goals.

**\*not understanding the flag system is not a valid excuse for not maintaining a garden plot\***

Gardeners are responsible for placing flags in their own plot(s). When the flags are placed, an email or phone call should be sent to the Garden Manager or Garden Coordinator so they know and understand the type of assistance that is needed. Below is a guide related to the assistance of the flags to the various colors, and their meanings:

### Blue Flag

For assistance with picking ripe produce to be delivered to a donation site by the Garden Coordinator and/or a volunteer.

### White Flag

For assistance with watering due to gardeners absence of more the 5 days.

### Red Flag

For assistance needed for maintaining the weeds or path maintenance by the Garden Coordinator and/or a volunteer.

### Non-Compliance Flag

This is the largest flag and will be placed in a plot if the gardener is determined to be in non-compliance. This flag will remain in a plot for 5 days. After five days the plot will be covered with gardening plastic and the gardener will be terminated.

## Miscellaneous Policy

### Annual, Perennial, Biennial Herbs

Perennial plants rooted into the ground are not allowed in gardeners' plots. Only annual herbs may be planted in the ground in gardeners' plot(s). If gardeners choose to grow herbs, they may keep any and all herbs in above-the-ground pots within their plots.

The garden maintains specially designated permanent "communal beds" that are available for gardeners to harvest perennial herbs from. Please contact the Garden Manager or Coordinator for more details.

### Garden Equipment and Sheds

Garden equipment is available to be used by all Gardeners. Each gardener and co-gardener(s) will have access to a key for the Garden Shed as they need. All gardeners and co-gardener(s) will be given the code at the beginning of the season. No gardener should share the code to the Garden Shed with anyone other than their selves and their co-gardener(s).

Gardeners only have access to the Garden Shed, not the Alley Shed. Gardeners are responsible for all and any tool or piece of equipment they remove from the shed. If the tool or equipment is damaged during use, the Gardener using it is responsible for repairing or replacement costs. Per this policy, all gardeners and their co-gardener(s) are responsible to clean the tools in their plots before any tools and/or equipment are placed back into the Garden Shed.

### Fall Gardening

Fall gardening is allowed, keep in mind that the water will be turned off and access to the shed will be limited. The Garden Staff must be notified if you plan to garden in the fall.



## ISU Community Garden Steering Committee

Steering Committee members will serve two year terms. Members may serve no more than four terms consecutively. Gardeners can apply to be on the steering committee every fall. Current Steering Committee Members will review applications. Gardeners must have one year of experience at the Garden to apply. Further guidelines are currently being developed now. They will be added once agreed upon.

### Current Steering Committee Members (End of Term)

Patti Weaver – Co-chair (2022)

Julie Porter - 2022

Garrett Hurley – Co-chair (2022)

Lori Vancza – 2022

Cayle Moreo – 2022

Dr. Mary Howard-Hamilton - 2022

Dr. Jim Speer – 2022

Yvonne Russell – 2022