

Keeping Food Safe & Healthy: Best Practices for Community Gardeners

The two most important practices in the garden this summer are:

- ❖ **Physical distancing among non-family members.** Maintain distances of 6 feet apart at all times.
- ❖ **Hand washing.** Washing hands frequently with soap and water will help stop the spread of human and plant diseases.



Best practices for community gardening:

- **Do not garden if you are sick or you may have been exposed to coronavirus.**

Protect the health of your fellow gardeners and stay home if you are not feeling well, especially if you have a fever or cough, or if someone in your family is sick.

- **Maintain physical distancing.**

- **Wash your hands when you reach the garden.** Before starting work in your plot, wash your hands with soap and water at the [handwashing station](#). Wash your hands **before** donning gardening gloves. If you choose to use disposable gloves, wash your hands before putting on these gloves too. Glove use of any kind is **no substitute for hand washing**. The CDC notes that alcohol hand sanitizers are **not effective** when hands are dirty or greasy; use soap and water for hand washing at the garden!

- **Wash reusable gardening gloves after each use.**

- **Avoid touching your hands to your face, especially your eyes, nose or mouth when in the garden.**

While there is no current evidence that you can get COVID-19 from high-touch garden surfaces such as spigots, tool handles, etc. avoiding hand to face contact is an important health standard.

- **As an extra precaution, wear a face covering.**

- If you smoke while at the garden, wash your hands before returning to work.

- **Keep garden tools clean.** While there is no evidence that garden tools spread human diseases, they certainly do spread plant diseases.

- **Bring your own tools to the garden.** After use, and when you get home, rinse tools with clean water, then wash with soap and water and dry with an old rag. This will help keep tools in good condition and help prevent spread of disease. After cleaning tools at home, wash your hands with soap and water.

- **If you use community garden tools,** wash them with soap and water before returning them.

- **Take care with watering.** If you bring a watering hose, store it in your plot; do not store hoses along fence lines or leave them connected to the spigot. Or water by hand. Use of row covers and mulch will help keep weeds at bay while retaining soil moisture. Hope for regular rain showers!

- **Keep your plot in good order.** Remove trash or debris and compost items as necessary.

- **Wash your hands as you are packing up to leave.** Plan to ‘wash in’ and ‘wash out’ of the garden. After gathering tools and other materials into your vehicle, remove your gardening gloves (put those in your vehicle too) and wash your hands with soap and water.

- **Follow your garden’s rules.** Make sure you know, and follow, the rules that your garden has set, including rules about number of gardeners allowed at one time, handwashing practices, etc.

- Once home, wash our hands with soap and water. **Rinse produce with clean water before eating or preparing.** This is one food safety practice that is always in season.

