



COVID-19 Safety Guidelines for Community Gardens

This document provides suggested practices for community gardens and gardeners to stay safe and minimize risk of COVID-19 transmission. These guidelines are gathered from a combination of resources including the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov), [WHO](https://www.who.int) and Extension services. **These recommendations do not replace current state and local government public health guidance, which should be followed.** Every community garden is unique and not all recommendations will work for each garden. Use the practices that make sense and adapt others to work for your garden's circumstances.

COMMUNICATION

- Communicate with all gardeners that they are not allowed to come to the garden if they are sick, including displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or if they were exposed. If anyone is displaying symptoms at the garden they will be asked to leave.
Recommended printable COVID-19 symptom signs.
 - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/316129-B-StayHomeFromWork_Poster.pdf
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID19-symptoms.pdf>
- Ensure that all gardeners and the public are aware of safety precautions by communicating through email, social media, newsletters and phone calls.
- Consider posting signs at the garden entrance to raise public awareness about precautions in place and to remind gardeners of garden policies/actions to ensure their safety. Recommended sign:
 - <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/covid19/files/2020/05/best-practices-community-gardeners-covid-19.pdf>
- Clearly and quickly inform all audiences of any policy changes.



PRACTICE DISTANCING & LIMIT GATHERING

- Consider closing the garden to the public. If the garden remains open to the public, consider having a volunteer present to enforce safety guidelines.
- Limit the number of gardeners at the garden through scheduling and communication.
- Maintain social distancing practices for all gardeners including at picnic tables and wash stations. Consider one-way traffic flow in garden rows and other areas to keep people a minimum of 6 feet apart when performing work tasks. (*Increasing distance to 15 feet or more helps to reduce aerosol transmission of the coronavirus.*)
- Limit interactions and time spent in the garden.

To contact an expert in your area, visit extension.msu.edu/experts or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464)

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PERSONAL PROTECTION

- Current CDC guidelines include wearing face coverings (not to be used with face masks needed by health workers). More resources on how to [make and wear a face covering can be found here](#). Ensure all volunteers/gardeners follow the CDC Guidelines for [hand washing](#).
 - [Printable CDC handwashing reminder](#)
- Whenever possible, provide handwashing stations and/or hand sanitizer and require everyone to wash their hands before entering the garden and upon exiting. Consider encouraging gardeners to bring their own paper towel or allowing hands to air dry to minimize contact with shared surfaces.
 - See examples of relatively inexpensive handwashing stations via the sites below:
 - [Virginia Cooperative Extension](#) (see Picture 2 for an inexpensive handwashing set-up)
 - [University of Minnesota](#)
- Consider wearing gloves when touching shared surfaces but remember that wearing gloves does not replace hand hygiene – the outside of your glove can still pick up and pass on diseases. Avoid touching personal items, like your cell phone or keys, when wearing gloves. Be sure to remove your gloves inside out and place them directly in the trash when you're done.

SANITIZE & MINIMIZE CONTACT WITH SHARED SURFACES

- Disinfect high touch areas such as spigots, hose nozzles, railings, door locks, reusable bins and buckets, compost bin handles, shed and gate handles, tables, etc., before and after use. It is important these areas are free from any dirt or debris before sanitizing. (Keep in mind that unofficial visitors may come to the garden.)
- A number of disinfectants are classified as being effective at destroying COVID-19 <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- Bleach is an effective disinfectant: mix 1/2 cup in 1 gallon of water and use as a spray.
- Whenever possible, minimize the use of shared tools and equipment. Encourage gardeners to bring their own tools.
- When using shared tools and equipment (hand tools, wheelbarrows, garden carts, tillers, etc.), ensure that they are disinfected before and after use. For wooden handled tools, spray handles thoroughly with a bleach spray (formulation above) and let sit for 5 minutes.



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