



Greenbelt
Essex County's Land Trust

Young Farm Community Garden

Garden Manual

Revised February 2025

About Greenbelt

Greenbelt is a member-supported nonprofit land trust. Greenbelt works within the 34 cities and towns of Essex County, Massachusetts, helping families, municipalities, and organizations realize their land conservation goals. Greenbelt protects natural land and working farms across Essex County forever, helping to conserve healthy ecosystems, clean water, local food supplies, scenic landscapes, and free, accessible places for all to benefit from nature. Young Farm is one of over sixty properties Greenbelt's Stewardship Department actively maintains. All of Greenbelt's properties are free and open for all to enjoy.

Garden History

In 1984 the Young Family donated their property to Greenbelt. Historically, the property had been tended as a dairy farm. In 1985, one of the founding garden members suggested that Greenbelt establish a community garden and retain its agricultural heritage. It wasn't until 10 years later, in 1995, that the garden was finally founded by Greenbelt and a handful of Lanesville residents. In 1996, the garden was expanded to include additional plots in the back garden. Today there are over 40 individual garden plots throughout the garden.

Annual Garden Registration

To obtain a garden plot please reach out to the Land & Trails Manager (Garden Manager) at Greenbelt to check for plot availability. If a garden plot is not available, you will be placed on the waiting list. There is not a fee to join the gardens. Instead, a Greenbelt membership at the \$60 level for one plot and \$110 for two is required when registering for a garden plot. In March, each gardener will receive a renewal email with the membership renewal information. Gardeners must sign and return the garden agreement, acknowledge Greenbelt's waiver form and pay their membership by April 15th. **Gardens will be forfeited** if renewal is not received by then unless other arrangements have been made. Special financial considerations will be considered if needed. There are a number of expenses that Greenbelt pays for at the garden. From staff time, hiring contractors, the water bill and tools and equipment, it costs Greenbelt a significant amount of money annually to run these gardens. Each membership helps offset the cost of running this garden.

Garden Rules (Details about this can be found later in the manual.)

- 1. Dogs are not allowed inside the garden fences & must be leashed at all times.**
- 2. Practice only organic garden techniques.**
- 3. Plots must be planted or cover cropped by July 1st.**
- 4. Garden weeds must be kept to a minimum.**
- 5. Plots must be kept in a reasonable condition.**
- 6. Harvest vegetables before they rot.**
- 7. Only use water for watering garden plots and rinsing tools. Turn off a faucet when you are not actively watering.**
- 8. Keep weeds and organic debris off and away from the fence.**
- 9. Perennial non-fruit bearing shrubs and state listed invasive plants are prohibited.**
- 10. Do not expand the garden into the paths around them and keep paths clear.**
- 11. Any raised bed gardening must be approved by the garden manager.**
- 12. Outdoor furniture is limited to chairs/small tables and must be removed at the end of the season.**
- 13. Please be courteous to our neighbors and keep noise to a minimum.**
- 14. Winterize your garden by the end of November.**

Gardeners that do not follow the rules of the garden will lose their garden privileges.

General Garden Information

Hours of Use

The community garden is open from April 1st. to December 1st. from dawn to dusk.

Parking

Parking is located on the shoulder of High St. in Gloucester. Park parallel to the street. Do not park on the lawn. Vehicles are not allowed beyond the parking area.

Tools and Wheelbarrows

Greenbelt provides community tools and wheelbarrows for gardening. All gardens have access to the tools in the community shed. Please be sure to clean them and place them back in the shed when you are done with them for the day. Contact the garden manger if there are any issues with the tools or if they need replacing.

Compost Area

In the back garden there are two compost areas and are for **community garden waste only**. The first pile is for woody debris, the second pile is for all other garden weeds. A special invasive plant dumping area may be set up for the disposal of invasive plants.

Spring and Fall Community Work Days

There are two scheduled work days each year, one in the spring and one in the fall. Gardeners are strongly encouraged to attend at least one of these workdays. These workdays help Greenbelt offset the cost of running the garden and keep the gardens looking good. They are also a great time to meet and talk with the Garden Manager about your gardening experience.

Plot Information

There is a two-plot maxim for the garden. Gardeners currently assigned more than two plots may be asked to relinquish one of their plots if the waitlist exceeds ten people. Gardeners keep the plot they are assigned from year to year until they decide to leave the garden, reduce the number of plots they are tending to or are asked to leave the garden.

Waiting List

If the garden is full, you will be placed on the wait list. People on the wait list are chosen based in order of when they inquired about gardening. Names stay on the list from year to year until assigned a garden location or until they decide to be taken off.

Garden Rules in Context

Dogs are not allowed within the fenced area.

Service dogs are exempt from the policy. Dogs must be leashed at Young Farm. Please be considerate that this garden is for food consumption. Please curb your dog before entering the property.

Practice only organic garden techniques.

Only organic fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and fungicides can be used. Imported soils must be natural/organic and free of invasive weed seeds. Imported seaweed must be free of plastics.

Plots must be planted or cover cropped by July 1st.

The preservation of garden soil is a primary goal. Exposed soils are susceptible to run off and limits the function of soil microbes. Any fallow garden must be covered with hay or planted with a cover crop like field peas, oats, crimson clover, winter rye or hairy vetch during the growing season.

Garden weeds must be kept to a minimum.

To reduce the spread of garden weed to other gardens, garden plots must be weeded on a regular basis. Any plot that has not been planted in and has weeds growing on July 1st will be forfeited unless other arrangements have been made with the Garden Manager.

Plots must be kept in a reasonable condition.

Gardens must be well kept, free of trash, junk, broken tools/garden posts, old soil bags, etc. Unused gardening items like stakes, fencing or other items used for gardening must be kept in a neat pile, away from the fence line and free of weeds. Individual garden decorations help give the garden a unique look but need to be in reasonable condition

Practice water conservation.

Water is for garden use only. The water for these plots comes from the city's public water supply and is paid for by Greenbelt. Never leave a hose running. Turn off the hose from the spigot when not in use and make sure it is turned off when you leave. Any issues with the water should be reported to the Garden Manager as soon as possible. Practicing water conservation will help protect this limited resource and help keep the water bill as low as possible.

Keep weeds and organic debris off and away from the fence.

Greenbelt spends a significant amount of time and money managing the vegetation around the garden. It is the gardener's responsibility to keep the fence next to their plot clean and free of weeds. Nothing should be leaning on, growing in or thrown over the fence. All garden weeds should be brought to the compost pile and not left against the fence or thrown over it. If you are growing raspberries next to the fence there must be a one-foot space between the fence and raspberry canes.

Perennial non-fruit bearing shrubs and state listed invasive plants are prohibited.

This garden is intended for food consumption and for annual flower production. Nothing should be planted that can be found on Massachusetts list of invasive plant species. Any kind of non-fruit bearing shrub is prohibited from the garden beds.

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/invasive-plants>

Do not expand the garden into the paths around them and keep paths clear.

Gardens plot boundaries are not negotiable and must remain in the location they were in when you were assigned the plot. There needs to be enough space in the paths to allow gardeners and maintenance staff to safely navigate around your plot with wheelbarrows and mowers. Any plants growing outside the garden boundary could be accidentally mowed over. Greenbelt reserves the right to adjust garden boundaries if needed for maintenance or safety purposes.

Any raised bed gardening must be approved by the garden manager.

The use of pressure treated wood for any reason is prohibited. Young Farm is intended to be an “in-ground” garden space. If you find the soil not suitable for in-ground gardening you can meet with the Garden Manager to discuss soil amendments or converting to a raised bed. The purchasing, construction and disposal of the raised beds is the responsibility of the gardener and must be removed when the gardener decides to give up their garden spot or is asked to leave the garden.

Harvest vegetables before they rot.

Rotting vegetables attract pests and can spread diseases. Rotting fruits or vegetables must be removed on a regular basis. If your plot is too successful and you can't handle the production, please consider donating your vegetables or fruits to the local food pantry.

Please be courteous to our neighbors and keep noise to a minimum.

Outdoor speakers are not prohibited but must be kept to a level that doesn't disturb your fellow gardeners or our neighbors.

Outdoor furniture is limited to chairs/small tables and must be removed at the end of the season.

The gardens at Young Farm are intended to be actively farmed and not used as a personal space. We understand that a small table or chair could be helpful when gardening. Any furniture brought into the garden must be approved by the garden manager, lead paint free and removed at the end of each season (November). Special winter consideration can be made for winter storage if necessary. Otherwise, these items will be thrown out at the end of the gardening season.

Winterize your garden by the end of November.

Gardeners must prepare their garden for the winter by removing past growth and cutting back vegetation. Gardens must be “covered” in the winter with either a cover crop, hay, leaves or compost. Cover crops take time to germinate and need to be planted early enough to allow for appropriate coverage. The garden should be ready for planting in the spring in the event that a gardener does not return for the next growing season. The preservation of garden soil is our primary goal. Exposed soils are susceptible to run off and reduce the function of soil microbes. *Gardeners that do not follow the rules of the garden will lose their gardening privileges*

Contact Information:

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<https://www.ecga.org/things-to-do/community-gardens>

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