



Val Vista Community Garden Rules

Revised December 2025

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I. Mission and Rules Overview

The Pleasanton Community Garden at the Val Vista Community Park is intended to be a beautiful, safe, and peaceful place for Pleasanton residents to cultivate flowers and vegetables. The rules outlined in this document are designed to ensure the following:

- Safety of the community garden and its gardeners
- Beauty of the community garden
- Fairness and equity among the gardeners
- Individual responsibility

The City of Pleasanton ("City") reserves the right to modify these rules at any time.

II. Community Garden Participation and Eligibility

Pleasanton residents 18 years or older may apply and participate in the Val Vista Community Garden Program. Proof of age and residency will be required during the initial onboarding and the annual renewal cycle to ensure ongoing compliance. Interested residents may apply by emailing the City staff. Only one (1) garden patch is allowed per resident or per household.

III. Patch Assignments and Fees

A. Patch Assignments - New Gardeners

1. All new gardeners must complete the following items during initial registration to successfully license a patch: (1) Patch License Agreement, (2) submit proof of residency, and (3) pay the annual fee and deposit by the registration deadline. Prospective gardeners who do not complete these items will forfeit their gardening privileges and their patch will be reassigned to a new gardener without the right to an appeal.
2. New gardeners will receive (1) key to access the gardens and common areas. Replacement keys will be replaced for a \$30 key replacement fee. Gardeners may not make additional copies of their key.
3. New gardeners must begin gardening within two weeks of the date they are assigned their patch, or their license automatically becomes void.

B. Patch Assignments – Returning Gardeners

1. All returning gardeners must complete the following to keep using their assigned patch: (1) submit a completed License Agreement, (2) submit proof of residency such as a government-issued photo ID, lease agreement, utility bill issued in the last three (3) months, or similar documentation, and (3) pay the annual fee by the registration deadline. Returning gardeners who do not complete these items will forfeit their gardening privileges and their patch will be reassigned to a new gardener.

2. A license to garden will be issued on an annual basis from January 1 to December 31 to the Primary Gardener. The Primary Gardener is the individual listed on the Application and/or Licensee.
3. Gardeners in good standing may join a 'transfer waiting list' to move into a more desirable patch.
4. Gardeners may not use a vacant patch or other non-common areas without written approval from City staff.
5. Gardeners who relinquish their patch may not directly transfer the patch to another gardener. City staff will reassign patches that become available.

C. Waiting List

1. Prospective gardeners may contact City staff to add their name to the waiting list. When a patch becomes available, prospective gardeners will be contacted in order of the waiting list.
2. The community garden waitlist will be reviewed annually, and waitlisted gardeners will be asked to confirm their interest status. Waitlisted gardeners who do not respond by the deadline will forfeit their spot and be moved to the bottom of the waiting list.

D. Surrendering Patch

1. Gardeners may surrender their patch during the annual renewal or at any other time by emailing City staff.
2. Once the gardener has communicated their intent to surrender their patch, the gardener has up to 14 calendar days to clean-up their patch. In the event the patch is determined to be abandoned or neglected, the deposit will be used to cover the cost of having the patch cleared.
3. Successful surrendering of a patch includes the following: (1) weeds are cleared, (2) plants and personal materials are cleared from the patch, (3) structures have been disassembled and removed, and (4) key is returned to City staff. The City may keep part or all of the deposit if the patch is not completely cleared and/or the key is not returned.

E. Fees

1. Fees will be as follows:

<u>Val Vista Community Garden Fees</u>	
Large Patch (12' 6" x 1' & 12' 6" x 8')	\$159
Small Patch (10' x 10')	\$89
Refundable Deposit	\$125
Late Renewal Fee (up to 14 calendar days after due date)	\$25
Late Renewal Fee (14 to 30 calendar days after due date)	\$50
Replacement Key Fee	\$30

2. Annual fees will only be prorated if acquiring a patch after June 30 of the calendar year. Except for the Refundable Deposit, fees are non-refundable.
3. A one-time refundable deposit will be required upon initial registration. The deposit is refundable only if the garden patch is completely cleaned and weeded, personal items are removed, garden structures are removed, and key has been returned. See "Surrendering Patch" for more information.

4. Full payment of the total annual garden fee is to be paid by the assigned deadline. If paying by check, checks must be made payable to the City of Pleasanton.
5. A late fee of \$25 will be issued if the gardener pays between 1 and 14 calendar days following the deadline. A late fee of \$50 will be issued if the gardener pays between 14 and 30 calendar days following the deadline. If more than 30 days late, see Terminations section.

IV. Gardener Etiquette and Patch Responsibilities

A. Gardener Etiquette

1. Gardeners are expected to conduct themselves in a safe, respectful, and courteous manner towards their fellow gardeners and the public.
2. Gardeners who have conflicts with their fellow gardeners should make attempts to collaborate on resolutions. If no agreement is reached, the gardener should contact City staff for assistance.
3. Minors under 18 years of age must always be supervised while in the garden.
4. Gardener's guests are welcome; however, guests must comply with the Val Vista Community Garden Rules.
5. Obscene or offensive language or conduct is not permitted.
6. Personal vehicles are not permitted in the garden area or on park pathways.
7. Proper bathroom facilities (located nearby) must be used.
8. Smoking, alcoholic beverages, marijuana, or illegal drugs of any kind are strictly prohibited in the garden area.

B. Garden Patch Maintenance

1. Patch maintenance and cultivation is the sole responsibility of the Licensed Gardener. Family and friends are welcome to assist with routine maintenance, cleaning, and upkeep.
2. The entire patch must be cultivated, or areas not planted must be covered with a cover crop or weed suppressant to reduce weeds.
3. Gardeners must use organic and sustainable gardening principles. See *Section F – Gardening Materials, Tools, and Equipment* for more information.
4. Gardeners must keep their plants, tools, equipment, containers, and all personal items within their designated patch space to avoid encroaching onto neighboring patches, pathways, aisles, or common areas.
5. Gardeners are required to report any pests, disease, or problem to City staff.
6. Gardeners may not pay for someone else to garden their patch.
7. Gardeners shall not dig more than a maximum depth of 12" in their own garden patch nor use stakes, posts, or poles larger than 1".
8. There exist underground pipes beneath the Community Gardens. If a pipe breaks, City Parks staff will not be responsible for returning the garden to its previous state. Gardeners will have to repair the raised beds, soil, and plants after a repair.

C. Common Areas and Garden Pathways

1. All gardeners share the responsibility to keep the common areas, pathways, and aisles between their assigned patch free of weeds.
2. Gardeners equally share the responsibility to keep the pathways, areas surrounding their patches, and aisles between their assigned patches free of weeds. Patches must be cleared of weeds 3' in either direction. Neighboring gardeners are highly encouraged to connect with each other to schedule cleanings. Neighboring gardeners who do not share this responsibility equitably may receive a written notice.
3. Piles of pulled up weeds and plant trimmings should be removed from patches within (3) weeks or less.
4. All plants, planters, planter boxes, materials and trellises must be placed inside the patch perimeter. Plants must not overhang into the common areas, aisles, walkways, neighboring patches, or any fencing. Overgrown plants must be trimmed back.

D. Watering

1. Any watering system should be turned off when not in use. Flood irrigation or laying down a garden hose, without a proper attachment, at full volume on top of the soil is prohibited.
2. Water conservation methods should be utilized by all gardeners whenever possible, including mulching with straw, leaves, or grass clippings and using soakers or drip irrigation hoses.
3. No alterations to the irrigation system are permitted and irrigation may not be left on when the gardener is not present.
4. Unattended and/or uncontrolled watering is not allowed. All gardeners are authorized to turn water off if it has been left unattended. Leaky water hoses and other leaks must be reported to City staff immediately.
5. The use of timers is prohibited.
6. "Y" or "T" connections may be installed on water spigots to allow for shared gardener use.
7. Hoses should be tidied up and returned to their original location after use. For safety reasons, pulling hoses across neighboring patches or walkways is discouraged.
8. Stagnant water is not allowed, and gardeners are responsible for disposing of stagnant water in their patches. All gardeners are authorized to dump stagnant water.
9. During declared droughts, the City may enact water restrictions.
10. Should a water line break, gardeners should contact City staff, or the Library and Recreation Department at 925-931-5340. If after business hours, the Police Department non-emergency line may be contacted at 925-931-5100.

E. Structures

1. Trellises and other structures must be functional, orderly, safe, and contribute to the community garden's visual continuity. Structures must be in use for an appropriate gardening function for at least 3 months out of any 12-month period. Structures not used for an appropriate gardening

function for at least 3 months out of any 12-month period must be removed.

2. Natural materials such as unpainted wood are recommended when developing structures within garden patches. Chemically treated wood products are prohibited in any garden site.
3. Any new garden structures which exceed 3 feet in height must be pre-approved by City staff. Gardeners are encouraged to work with City staff on structures to remain compliant.
 - a. Trellises or other garden structures must not exceed 7' in height and must not cause shade on any neighboring patch and are subject to staff approval. Structures which result in shade on a neighboring patch will be asked to be removed.
 - b. A PVC trellis or other garden structure that is 3 feet or less in height is permitted. Neutral colors are required and subject to staff approval. Any new PVC trellis or structure exceeding 3 feet in height is not permitted. Any pre-existing PVC trellis or structure must be replaced with permitted material upon its deterioration.
4. No concrete footings are allowed when installing trellises or other structures. Gardeners who violate this rule are required to remove all installed concrete.
5. Fencing must be pre-approved by City staff. Any new and pre-existing patch fences will be allowed, but must meet the following conditions:
 - a. Made from material that allows for patch visibility, no industrial fencing is allowed.
 - b. Does not shade neighboring patches.
 - c. Be secured, safe, tidy, stable, and in good repair.
 - d. Be free of protruding nails, wood, aged parts, rusty, or other materials that may cause injury.
 - e. No gates should be installed.
 - f. No water spigots enclosed in individual patches.

F. Gardening Materials, Tools, and Equipment

1. The Val Vista Community Garden adheres to the principles, concepts, and practices of organic gardening. Only products approved and labeled by either the [U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Organic Program](#) or by the [Organics Materials Review Institute \(OMRI\)](#) are permitted in the Community Garden.
2. The Community Garden sheds hold tools to be shared with all gardeners. Items left in the sheds will be intended for community use.
3. Gardeners may keep a 20-gallon container with a lid within their patch to store personal supplies and tools. However, gardeners may not use containers that previously contained toxic chemicals for storage, watering, or other gardening purposes. All other tools must be kept off site.
4. When not in use, garden carts and wheelbarrows must be returned and locked to the designated area.
5. Gardeners may keep a home compost bin up to 13 cubic feet in size within their patch. No other storage containers will be allowed.
6. Only organic products may be used for fertilizer or weed control.

G. Planting and Harvesting

1. Patch preparation for the spring season should be started by April 1 and be fully prepared by April 30.
 - a. If a patch will not be planted, the gardener must notify City staff and may potentially lose their patch. In this instance, the gardener will be added to the end of the waitlist.
2. If no winter crop is planted, the gardener must complete the following by November 30 to ensure weed maintenance: (1) clear patch of weeds and dead or unsightly plant materials; and (2) cover the patch with 4" mulch or cover-crop.
3. Only plants, vegetables, flowers, berries, and herbs may be grown in the patches.
4. The following plants are strictly prohibited:
Trees (any kind), mint (any variety), blackberries, shrubs over 2' high, perennial and woody vines (including grapes), cannabis (marijuana), bermudagrass, opium poppy, peyote, salvia divinorum, tobacco, coca, jimsonweed, hemlock, and any invasive, toxic, noxious, cannabis¹ controlled plant or any invasive plant listed by the [California Invasive Plant Council](#). Contact City staff if unsure whether a plant is invasive or not.
5. Produce or harvests from community garden patches is primarily for family or personal consumption. Excess food may be shared with family, friends, and neighbors.
6. Produce may not be sold for commercial profit.
7. No plants or vines shall be attached to the garden fence as they can damage the fence and encroach public spaces.
8. Plants with rhizomes or "tubers" must be placed in a pot or separate container to avoid spreading to neighboring patches. Existing plants or crops must be moved into an appropriate receptacle.
9. Crops must be harvested and not left on the ground to rot.

H. Waste

1. Gardening debris, green waste, and personal trash generated while at the community garden must be disposed of appropriately. Remember, pack it in, pack it out.
 - a. If available, trash may be placed in black bins.
2. Gardening debris/green waste may be placed in the green waste wooden boxes that exist in the East and West Garden.
3. Gardeners must have green waste area and trash in bins in an orderly and tidy fashion.
4. Dumping of any kind is strictly prohibited and enforced according to local laws.

V. Gardener Expectations, Violations, and Termination

¹ Cannabis / marijuana remain illegal under the federal Controlled Substances Act (see Title 21 U.S.C.) and Pleasanton Municipal Code §6.18.030.D.

A. Gardener Expectations

1. Only individuals who have approval from the City may garden in a patch.
2. Gardeners must close and lock all gates after finishing daily activities.
3. Gardeners may access the community gardens from 7 a.m. to Sunset.
4. If a gardener foresees being away from their garden longer than three weeks, they must arrange to have their patch maintained while they are gone. City staff must be notified of any arrangements.
5. Key access should be limited to the gardener and any individual assigned with taking care of patches during vacations or absences longer than three weeks.
6. Gardeners are required to attend two annual community clean-up days, one in spring and one in fall/winter. Dates will be provided as early as possible.
 - a. In the event where attendance is not possible, the gardener must propose a task which will aid in the maintenance or upkeep of the community garden. Proposed tasks must be approved by City staff and a before and after photo must be submitted as proof of completion.
 - b. Gardeners who miss one meeting and do not propose a task within 14 days of the community clean-up days will receive a written notice.
 - c. Gardeners who miss two days lose their garden patch privileges and their patch will be forfeited.
7. Gardeners are highly encouraged to attend Garden Meetings (dates to be determined) to stay up to date on rules and garden news.
8. Pets are not allowed in the garden area. Individuals with disabilities that use service and/or support animals are welcome and allowed access.
 - a. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a service animal generally as a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks directly related to a person's physical, sensory, psychiatric, or other disability. Support animals are animals of any species that are not trained to perform a specific task related to an individual's disability, but the animal's owner derives a sense of well-being, safety, or calm from the animal's companionship and presence.
 - b. Service and support animals must be focused on assisting the individual with a disability and not be disruptive or a threat to the public's health and safety. This means that if you have a service dog: it is current on its vaccinations, you maintain a current rabies tag, and you have a dog license if you are a Pleasanton resident.
 - c. Your service and support animal must be always under your control AND on a short leash or in a carrier (unless these devices interfere with the animal's work, or the person's disability prevents use of these devices). Service and support animals must be trained to eliminate outdoors. Additionally, your service and support animal CANNOT be disruptive or aggressive.

9. Gardeners are required to notify City staff of any graffiti, theft, or vandalism.

B. Violations and Written Notices

Violation of any Val Vista Community Garden Rules will subject the offending gardener to a written violation notice from the City. The following list outlines the notification and response periods:

1. **Written Violation #1:** the City sends the first violation notice via the e-mail on file. Gardeners have **30 days** from the date of the e-mail to bring their garden patch to compliance.
 - Second Notice (same violation): If, after 30 days the garden patch remains in violation, the City sends a second and final notification by email and postal mail. Gardeners will have 15 days from the date of the e-mail to bring their garden bed into compliance.
 - Third Notice (same violation): If a gardener fails to comply and rectify the violation, following the second notice, they will forfeit their garden bed and all associated fees with no refund.
2. **Written Violation #2:** the City sends the second violation notice via the e-mail on file and postal mail (optional). Gardeners have **15 days** from the date of the e-mail to bring their garden patch to compliance.
 - Second Notice (same violation): If, after 15 days the garden patch remains in violation, the City sends a second and final notification by email and postal mail. Gardeners will have 15 days from the date of the e-mail to bring their garden bed into compliance.
 - Third Notice (same violation): If a gardener fails to comply and rectify the violation, following the second notice, they will forfeit their garden bed and all associated fees with no refund.
3. **Written Violation #3 – Forfeiture and License Agreement Termination:** If a gardener fails to maintain their garden according to the rules and receives a third (3) notice within the same calendar year or renewal period, the License Agreement will be terminated and revoked, with the garden patch released back to the City.
 - Termination and revocation will be effective fifteen (15) days after written notice by the City is provided to the gardener/licensee.
 - The Gardener will have 30 days to collect any garden materials and personal items, which may be moved offsite. Any uncollected items will be disposed of after 60 days.
 - Gardeners who have their license agreement terminated will also forfeit their fees.

C. Termination

The City may, in its discretion, terminate this Agreement and revoke the Patch License Agreement at will, with or without cause. Notice of this termination and revocation shall be effective fifteen (15) days after mailing written notice provided by the City to the Licensee at the address of the Licensee set forth above. The following violations will be cause for immediate License Agreement termination, garden patch forfeiture, and loss of all paid fees:

1. *Theft of tools or equipment.
2. Theft of produce, crops, or plants.
3. *Vandalism of tools, equipment, or City property.
4. *Cultivating of illegal or prohibited plants.
5. *Offensive conduct including, but not limited to, threats, intimidation, violence, racial/ethnic slurs, and sexual harassment.
6. *Use of alcoholic beverages and drugs of any kind, or smoking, in any area of the Val Vista Community Gardens.
7. Receiving more than 3 written notices for the same violation within two (2) years.
8. Failure to pay renewal fees by the agreed upon deadlines, including extended deadlines.

*These violations may be reported to the Pleasanton Police Department.

Guests are subject to the rules and those guests who violate these rules will also lead to the License Agreement termination, garden patch forfeiture, and loss of all paid fees for the associated gardener.

VI. City Oversight

The City of Pleasanton reserves the right to modify, change, or alter the above rules and regulations at any time in the interest of the community.

The City will provide the following to all gardeners:

- An enclosed garden space and provide the patch space agreed upon in the License Agreement.
- Water during hours of operation, hoses, hose nozzles, and at least one (1) wheelbarrow.
- Bi-monthly green waste and trash removal service. Gardeners are encouraged to clean out their patches ahead of this service. Unless otherwise notified, this service will occur six (6) times per year during the months of: January, March, May, July, September, and November.
- Staff support to aid in the daily operations of the Val Vista Community Garden.