

RULES AND BEST PRACTICES

CLIFTON PLACE BLOCK ASSOC. COMMUNITY GARDEN

Located at 289-91 Grand Avenue, Brooklyn NY 11238

11 April 2013

The purpose of the garden is to create a green space in our community that satisfies both aesthetic and planting needs of gardeners or would-be gardeners in our community. It offers a venue for members of our community to meet one another, to establish relationships, participate in something civic, and to create something beautiful. It empowers them to directly affect their community.

Annual Dues and Box Distribution

1. No gardener owns or leases a box. Annual Dues (currently \$25) are a membership fee in a social-service organization. This fee is assessed for expenses of maintaining the garden, capital expenditures, future responsibility in taxes and water charges, and the BQLT (Brooklyn-Queens Land Trust) membership fee. An individual that really cannot afford to pay this amount may request an exception of the fee or pay whatever they can. Everyone must pay something. If two gardeners or more work in the same space, only one fee is required.
2. A lottery system exists to distribute boxes fairly. Individual gardeners can exchange boxes with each other at their own discretion, notifying the board of any changes. Rotation of boxes is encouraged. Prior to the lottery, returning members may request to retain their past boxes.

Green Thumb Rules:

3. Follow the four NO's from GreenThumb:
 - A. No casitas (enclosed structures)
 - B. No parked vehicles or unused equipment like refrigerators, air conditioners, supermarket or laundry carts, etc.
 - C. No active play equipment – No slides, swings, merry-go-rounds, see-saws, or any play equipment (liability issues).
 - D. No animals – Goats, pigs, dogs, cats, pigeons and chickens may not be permanently kept in the garden.

Garden Access

4. In becoming a member you are given a key or combination code. You are responsible for such key or code, and it should not to be distributed without authorization or given out freely. The key or code opens the entrance gate lock and the tool box.
5. A key is only given to an active gardener with the condition that it should be returned when the individual no longer participates in the garden.

Box Maintenance

6. The responsibility of the gardener is not only their own box but in the overall maintenance and cleanliness of the garden and participation in special projects. Members are responsible for maintaining and cleaning the sidewalk in front of the garden, including snow and garbage removal.

7. Garden tools are for use in the garden only. Do not take tools for use outside the garden.
8. Any box that is not maintained, weeded or planted within six weeks of the general distribution shall return to the garden's overall jurisdiction and be given to other gardeners, forfeiting the fee paid by the inactive gardener.
9. The Clifton Place Garden observes organic practices. Do not use pesticides, herbicides, inorganic fertilizers, etc.
10. Members should not take things (vegetables, flowers, herbs) from others' boxes without the permission of the gardener who grew it. The members are encouraged to be generous and offer excess crops to others.
11. You can plant anything you want as long as it is not illegal (e.g. marijuana) or any plants that can overtake other plants when not curbed, such as Ailantus and Morning Glory.

Friendly Gardening Guidelines

12. The community boxes are open to all gardeners.
13. Help others in watering their boxes if they look in need of water.
14. Help others in weeding the garden and boxes.
15. Help others with information on planting things.

Garden Membership Volunteer Requirements

16. Each gardener shall volunteer a minimum of 10 hours to work in the general area of the garden for each growing season. These 10 hours can be cumulative, as long as the gardener performs 10 hours in total for the season. Any gardener not fulfilling this requirement will not be allowed to return the following season.
17. As part of the above 10 hours, each garden member will be required to fulfill at least one 5-hour work shift during the season, opening the garden to the public on a weekend day and performing whatever maintenance and chores appear necessary. Exceptions can be made if the gardener performs other services for the garden. If a gardener can't make it to his or her scheduled work shift, it is his or her responsibility to find someone to cover for them.

Garden Open Hours

18. The garden will be open to the public on Saturday & Sunday from 10am to 3pm.
19. The Garden may be open to the public whenever a gardener is present, at the gardener's discretion. This additional open time is encouraged and appreciated, as it improves the garden's image in the neighborhood. Never leave the open garden unattended.
20. Due to the rules of BQLT and Green Thumb the garden shall have a sign on the fence and post the hours the garden will be opened to the general public. Green Thumb asks for 20 hours while only 10 hours is mandatory.

General Rules

21. Children are allowed in the garden only with supervision of a gardener or their parents.
22. Garden members are responsible for the actions and behavior of visitors they allow into the garden.

23. Garden rules prohibit using alcohol, smoking, and illegal drugs within the garden.
24. Any individual in the neighborhood can become a member, as long as he or she actively participates in planting.
25. Report problems to a Co-chair or responsible representative of the garden, including any issue that affects a gardener or the garden and its surroundings.
26. A Co-Chair or responsible representative of the garden will report upcoming events and meetings to the general membership. If you have suggestions for events, please contact the garden co-chairs.

BEST PRACTICES:

1. The garden is private property, open to the public as a convenience and a public service. While it is good for the garden to have the gate open, you are welcome to close it at your discretion, for your safety or the safety of others.
2. If a visitor is causing a disturbance while you are on duty in the garden, you may ask them to leave and lock the gate. If they refuse to leave, leave the garden and call for help.
3. New York City and other urban spaces tend to have high levels of lead and other heavy metals in their native soils. It is best to grow edible crops only in the imported soil of our raised planting beds. Do not eat foods from plants growing in the ground outside the planting beds.
4. Do not eat, or allow your children to eat soil in the garden. Remind children not to touch their mouths with dirty hands.
5. Wash your hands when you finish working or playing in the garden.
6. Peel all root vegetables and tubers grown in the garden. Wash all food well before eating.
7. Unplug the water hose from the black column before you leave, since the underground water system leaks and can waste water. This is both an economic issue and an ecological one.
8. Irrigate your garden in the morning or the evening, to avoid wasteful evaporation in the hottest part of the day. Mulching your garden will help to reduce evaporation.
9. If you leave anything in the garden for others to use, please let them know about it. Otherwise, things tend to accumulate and become messy clutter. Later they become garbage without being used.
10. Pets are welcome in the garden, as long as they behave well. Do not allow pets to walk, defecate, or urinate in planting beds. Clean up after your pet. Based on who is in the garden, use your best judgment about whether your pet should be on a leash.

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Relevant web sites:

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/116478205042647/>

<http://cliftongarden.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.bqlt.org> The Brooklyn Queens Land Trust

<http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/1301/index.htm> NYS Dept. of Health, Tips for Healthy Gardening

What Gardeners Can Do: 10 Best Practices for Healthy Gardening

- 1. Use clean soil and compost.**
If you are concerned about contamination in your garden soil, consider having it tested by a New York State-certified laboratory.
- 2. Use raised beds.**
Build beds deep enough for the roots of your crops, and maintain them by adding compost often.
- 3. Avoid treated wood.**
Railroad ties, telephone poles, pressure-treated wood and some painted wood contain chemicals that can get into soil.
- 4. Maintain soil nutrients and pH.**
Healthy garden soils have a good nutrient balance and a pH near neutral (6.5 – 7).
- 5. Cover (or mulch) soil.**
Use compost, straw or bark mulch in garden beds, and stones or wood chips in paths and non-growing areas. This helps reduce soil splash, dust and tracking of soil home.
- 6. Keep an eye on children.**
Make sure children do not eat soil or put dirty toys or other objects in their mouths. Young children can be more sensitive to certain chemicals in soil, such as lead.
- 7. Leave the soil in the garden.**
Avoid bringing garden soil into your home. Remove soil from garden tools and harvested vegetables while at the garden, and change your shoes before going indoors.
- 8. Wash your hands.**
Wash up after gardening, and have children who play or work in the garden do the same. Consider wearing gloves, and remember to remove them when leaving the garden.
- 9. Wash and/or peel produce.**
Wash vegetables thoroughly – especially leafy and root crops, which are more likely to have soil on them. Consider peeling if appropriate.
- 10. Put a barrier under play areas.**
Separate children's play areas from underlying soil with landscape fabric or other durable material. Put clean play materials such as sand or wood chips on top. Check the barrier over time to be sure underlying soil isn't mixing with play materials.



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See reverse for more about the **Healthy Soils, Healthy Communities** project, or visit us at <http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/healthypoils.htm>