Duke Farms 2020

Community Garden Handbook
Welcome to the Duke Farms Community Garden!

The mission of the Duke Farms Community Garden is to offer members the opportunity to grow fresh, delicious food while connecting with nature and your community. The Duke Farms Community Garden follows organic practices - everything we teach and do is about working in harmony with nature. The purpose of this handbook is to provide guidelines and rules to yield an abundant and positive gardening experience.

A resource list is located on the Community Garden webpage to aid you in addressing any garden management questions or concerns. The Community Garden Newsletter and Facebook page offer additional information and site-specific advice on various gardening topics throughout the season.

HAPPY GARDENING SEASON!
Contact Information

1112 Dukes Parkway West Hillsborough, NJ 08844

Website: www.dukefarms.org/cg

Members Only Webpage:
dukefarmscommunitygarden.wildapricot.org

Email: cg@dukefarms.org

Facebook: Duke Farms Community Garden

Security: 908-243-3600
GARDEN PLOT INFORMATION

Primary Gardener: __________________________________ 

Secondary Gardeners: ________________________________ 

Plot Number & Neighborhood: _______________________ 

Plot Number & Neighborhood: _______________________ 

Plot Number & Neighborhood: _______________________ 

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PLOT REGISTRATION

Anyone who lives and/or works in Somerset County, NJ is eligible to participate in the Duke Farms Community Garden.

Plot sizes & fees are as follows:

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Registration Logistics:

• All registration is done online.

• Garden plot renewals take place between November 3 - 10, annually.

• New plot registration for current gardeners occurs between November 3-December 15, annually.

• Plot registration for the general public begins on January 2.

• Plots are rented on a first-come, first-served basis until no more plots are available. There is no waiting list.

• Returning gardeners are allowed up to 3 plots. New gardeners are restricted to 1 plot.

• In order to renew, gardeners must have met all requirements of the previous year (see pages 3-4).

• Garden plots are for personal use only; no commercial use is permitted.

• Fees are non-refundable.

If you are unable to fulfill your obligations and would like to terminate your agreement with Duke Farms, please contact the Duke Farms Community Garden staff.
GARDENER RESPONSIBILITIES

Duke Farms spans 5 acres and is considered the largest allotment-style community garden in the country. It is a challenge to manage this number of gardeners so strict adherence to our rules and policies, as outlined in this Garden Handbook, is required.

It is the responsibility of each gardener to review the Handbook and contact the Duke Farms Community Garden staff with any questions or concerns.

Primary & Secondary Gardeners

The main name listed in each plot profile is considered the “Primary Gardener”. This gardener agrees to be the designated contact for all correspondence and assumes full responsibility for the other gardeners on the application.

Additional gardeners who work in the plot should be listed as “Secondary Gardeners”. They may assist in completing requirements for each of the garden plots.

All gardeners are collectively bound by the Participation Agreement signed during registration. Please add new gardeners by contacting Duke Farms Community Garden staff before they begin.

Please note: Gardeners who fail to fulfill the following requirements will not be eligible to rent any garden plots at Duke Farms for one year.

Please refer to the Community Garden webpage, newsletter, and Facebook page for garden course dates and volunteer opportunities.
PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

Gardeners are bound to this agreement which is signed online during plot registration. Gardeners are required to fulfill the following obligations annually in order to maintain use of garden plot(s):

1. **EMAIL:** Maintain a valid email address and check on a regular basis. This will be the primary form of communication between staff and gardeners. Any changes in email are to be reported within 3 business days.

2. **CONTINUING EDUCATION:** Attend 1 elective environmental course of your choice through Duke Farms or another suitable vendor. Record title & date in the Gardener Log Book in order to receive credit. NOTE: First year gardeners must complete 3 courses in total: New Gardener Orientation, Introduction to Organic Gardening and 1 elective. See page 5 for more info.

3. **VOLUNTEER:** Complete 4 hours of volunteer time at Duke Farms for your first garden plot, plus 1 hour for each additional plot. Record hours in the Gardener Log Book in order to receive credit. See page 6 for more info.

4. **MAINTENANCE:** Keep your plot(s) weeded, harvested, and well-maintained within plot boundaries. This includes arranging for plot care during periods of absence. After 5 maintenance warnings, garden plots are forfeited and “taken back“ by Duke Farms. See pages 7-12 for more info.

5. **GO ORGANIC:** Use only OMRI (Organic Materials Review Institute), USDA Organic, or garden staff approved organic materials in your plot(s).
6. **PLANTS:** Community Garden plots should be centered around food production. No plants or structures over 5 feet tall are permitted. See page 10 for plant-specific details.

7. **CODE OF CONDUCT:** Please be courteous in the garden at all times. No alcohol or illegal substances are allowed. Do not enter or take anything from another gardener’s plot even if you think they have neglected their plot or you will risk immediate and further loss of participation in the Community Garden. Disputes between gardeners that cannot be resolved will be referred to the Community Garden Coordinator. See page 15-17 for more info.
CONTINUING EDUCATION

Participation in the Duke Farms Community Garden is contingent upon a gardener’s participation in one elective environmental course per year.

- Course may be taken through Duke Farms or another suitable vendor. Duke Farms Programs are listed online at dukefarms.org/calendar.

- It is the responsibility of each gardener to record the title and date in the Gardener Log Book or the online gardener profile in order to receive credit.

- This must be completed by October 31st in order to rent a plot the following year.

NOTE: First year gardeners must complete 3 courses total: New Gardener Orientation & Introduction to Organic Gardening (both offered through Duke Farms) plus one elective.
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Participation in the Duke Farms Community Garden is contingent upon a gardener’s completion of his/her required volunteer hours.

• Each gardener must complete four hours of volunteer time for the first plot, plus one hour for each additional plot.

• It is the responsibility of each gardener to record hours in the Gardener Log Book or the online gardener profile in order to receive credit.

• Half of the required hours must be completed and recorded by August 1st. The remaining hours must be completed and recorded before October 31st in order to rent a plot the following year.

There are three ways gardeners may choose to complete their volunteer requirement. Opportunities will be shared via Newsletter and Facebook.

1. Garden Maintenance
   • Work days held the 1st and 3rd Saturday plus the 2nd Thursday of each month between May and October.
   • Registration is not required. One to four hours.
   • Many pop-up opportunities in addition to these work days will be shared throughout the season.

2. Events
   • Three annual Duke Farms festivals occur in March, July and October. Pre-registration and training are required.
   • Gardeners may volunteer for events in the garden. See page 13 for more info.

3. Giving Garden Program
   • Gardeners may participate in tending to their neighborhood Giving Garden or assisting with the sorting and delivery of donated produce to local food banks. (See page 14 for more info)
MAINTAINING YOUR PLOT

- Garden plots are offered in AS IS condition. Duke Farms is not responsible for soil and overall garden plot conditions, including drainage and other related issues.
- Maintenance surveys will occur between April 15th and October 31st on a weekly basis (see page 11).
- Gardeners must make provisions for plot maintenance during absences.

Materials

- **TOOLS:** Gardeners are responsible for providing tools to tend their plots. A small number of wheelbarrows and garden carts are provided by the Community Garden.
- **WATER:** Available on-site. Hoses must be provided by gardeners.
- **WOOD CHIPS:** Provided by Duke Farms as available for use on pathways.
- **COMPOST/SOIL:** Gardeners must use organic practices in order to improve their plots.
  - All packaged soil and amendments stamped with the OMRI (Organic Materials Review Institute) or USDA Organic label are approved for use in the garden. All amendments without one of these stamps MUST be approved by garden staff before use.
  - Gardeners are welcome to schedule bulk deliveries of compost and soil from approved vendors. Delivery must be scheduled with staff at least 24 hours in advance. Contact garden staff for more information.
  - Use of unapproved materials is grounds for expulsion.
  - A thick layer of organic mulch (straw, dried grass or dried leaves) will conserve soil moisture. Gardeners must provide this for their plot.
• **GARDEN WASTE:** Waste piles are in 3 areas around the community garden (see garden map). Diseased and insect-infested plants should be bagged and removed from the garden.

• **TRASH:** Duke Farms is a carry in/carry out facility.

• **HEIGHT:** There is a 5-foot height restriction for structures & plants.

• **BOUNDARIES:** Stakes that mark plot corners must be left in place. Fencing is permitted as long as it does not pose a tripping hazard or encroach on adjacent plots.

• **WILDLIFE:** Duke Farms makes no claim or guarantee against damage from wildlife. It is each gardener’s responsibility to protect his/her own plots as needed, provided such action meets an organic approach and that it does not affect surrounding neighbors. Small rodent traps are permitted for use within plots.

• **FALL CLEANUP:**
  - Please remove all non-secure materials, including chairs and tools, by October 31st. Fences and other secure items may remain over the winter.
  - If you ARE NOT renewing your plot: The plot must be cleared by **October 31st.** Any materials remaining after that time are considered property of Duke Farms.
The following items are not permitted in the Community Garden:

- Mechanical tillers
- Sprinklers
- Gas powered equipment
- Materials made of PVC
- Treated lumber
- Chemical fertilizers or pesticides
- Manure
- Dyed or treated wood chips
- Insect lures and/or traps
- Plastic weed barriers
- All structures taller than 5 feet

The following plants are not permitted in the Community Garden:

- Invasive plants. Please see the full list posted on the Community Garden webpage
- Trees, shrubs, or any illegal or poisonous plants
- Castor beans, *Ricinus sp.*
- *Cannabis sp.*
- Sunflowers (all varieties)
- Currants, gooseberries (*Ribes sp.*)
- Shiso/Perilla (*Perilla frutescens*)
- Raspberries, blackberries, mint, tansy, Jerusalem artichoke or comfrey are only allowed to be planted in pots
- Perennials other than blueberry, strawberry, asparagus, rhubarb, and assorted herbs and flowers are not permitted
- Plants taller than 5 feet should be avoided or trimmed to 5 feet
MAINTENANCE WARNINGS

Gardeners are expected to keep their plots weeded, harvested, and well-maintained throughout the season. Maintenance violations include boundary and height infractions, pest infestation, rotting produce, non-permitted materials/plants and excessive weeds (25% coverage, 12-inch or higher or weeds going to seed).

Plot boundaries between neighbors, pathways bordering plots (which includes 1/2 of the pathway between plots), plot edges and fencing must also be kept free of weeds.

Gardeners are allowed 4 maintenance warnings (over the course of the entire season) before the plot is reclaimed. Between April 15 and October 31, if a plot is not in compliance with these basic expectations, the following will occur:

- **1st-3rd notices:** Email notice is sent and gardener has one week to bring the plot into compliance as stated in the notice.

- **4th notice:** Final email notice is sent. Garden plot must be cleaned up within one week and maintained for the remainder of the growing season. If not in compliance in one week or at any other point during the growing season, the gardener receives a 5th notice.

- **5th notice:** Plot is reclaimed by Duke Farms; email notification of reclamation is sent and gardener has one week to remove personal belongings. Any materials remaining after one week are considered property of Duke Farms.
Personal Hardship

It is your responsibility to effectively communicate with the Garden Staff so that we can help you overcome any hardships or shortcomings that are preventing you from successfully maintaining your plot.

In the case of personal hardship, volunteers may tend to your plot in your absence. Please contact the staff to request this assistance so your plot is not flagged with maintenance warnings.

Assistance

The staff of the Community Garden are available for personal garden consultation throughout the growing season. Feel free to find a staff member or garden volunteer at any point or email us to arrange a meeting.

Seasoned gardeners or docents are available to serve as “Garden Mentors”. Please contact the staff to inquire about this program.
GARDEN PROGRAMS

In addition to offering a space for growing food, Duke Farms Community Garden is an educational space where both new and seasoned gardeners can learn about growing organic food in a sustainable, eco-friendly manner.

We encourage our members to get involved in the many educational and community-building opportunities we offer, including:

• Annual Seed Swap
• Neighborhood Meetups
• Opening Day Celebration
• Tomato Giveaway
• Summer Potluck
• Fall Harvest Community Day
• Giving Gardens (see page 14)
• Garden Workshops (count towards Continuing Education requirement)
• Over 30 garden courses annually

Please check the garden webpage for dates and registration info.
Giving Gardens

The Community Garden is divided into seven garden neighborhoods: Tomatoville, Cauliflower Corner, Turnip Town, Garlic Grove, Cucumber City, Rutabaga Ridge and Broccoli Boro. The neighborhoods were formed to encourage community building among garden neighbors.

Within each neighborhood is a “Giving Garden”, a plot maintained to grow organic produce to be donated to local organizations in need. Each neighborhood Giving Garden has a Coordinator who will work with volunteer gardeners to prepare, plant, harvest and maintain the neighborhood Giving Garden. Please contact your neighborhood Coordinator to volunteer. No experience needed!

Produce from the Giving Gardens (as well as excess produce from personal plots) may be left in the coolbot located in the “Donation Station” shed. Volunteers will sort, weigh and deliver produce every Monday from late May through October. No experience is needed to participate in the donation program!
OPERATION & CONDUCT

Following these rules and responsibilities ensures the safety and well-being for all our gardening participants and visitors. Please report any inappropriate behavior to garden staff. In the event of an emergency, contact Duke Farms Security directly by calling 908-243-3600.

Guidelines

Neither Duke Farms (DFF) nor the Duke Farms Charitable Foundation (DDCF) will be responsible for any accidents, injuries, damages, theft, damage to, loss of, or replacement of any belongings, equipment, materials, tools or plantings. As a member of the Duke Farms Community Garden, you therefore agree to hold harmless and indemnify DFF and DDCF for any liability, damage, loss or claim that occurs in connection with use of the garden by yourself or any other gardeners or guests. There is no security for personal belongings. Failure to follow any garden or public area rules and regulations, after reasonable attempts to notify Gardener, may result in loss of your garden plot(s). The Gardener will not be eligible for any refund or reimbursement for any seed, plantings, or other materials left at the gardening site. By renting a plot, you acknowledge that you have read and understand the above Statement and will abide by the Duke Farms Community Garden Operation & Conduct Guidelines.

Hours of Operation

The Duke Farms Community Garden is open year-round, sunrise to sunset, seven days per week.

Parking

There are two designated gravel parking areas adjacent to the Community Garden. Please keep in mind that Saturdays and Sundays during the spring and summer months are high visitation days at Duke Farms and the Community Garden parking lot is used for overflow visitor parking.
Security & Theft
The Community Garden gates are locked to prevent members of the general public from entering. Codes are changed each year and will be emailed to gardeners. Please do not share the combination code with others. The gates are to remain closed AT ALL TIMES to prevent theft as well as to prevent wildlife from entering.

1. Duke Farms has a zero tolerance policy for theft. If you are caught in another person’s plot without their explicit permission, your garden plot privileges will be revoked immediately. Each plot is private property. Rotting produce or weediness does not mean you are allowed to enter, even if you are harvesting for donation.

2. Report non-working gate locks to staff via email. Don’t assume we are aware of the issue.

3. Call security immediately at 908-243-3600 in the event of theft or damage to file a report.

4. Please report any suspicious activity to security immediately at the above listed number.

5. Do not let anyone into the garden who you do not know.

Safety
Drive carefully and slowly through the Duke Farms parking lot, observing posted speed limits of 10 mph and being aware of pedestrians. Please do not bring anything into the garden that will compromise the safety or enjoyment of the gardeners such as radios, BBQs or pets (excluding service animals). Participants will hold Duke Farms harmless for any and all illnesses that may arise from consuming food produced on Duke Farms’ property.
Behavior

• Be courteous and kind in the garden at all times. Inappropriate behavior, or failure to follow the instructions, will be grounds for expulsion from the garden at the discretion of the garden staff.

• Duke Farms is committed to managing a garden community that is free of unlawful discrimination and harassment. Inappropriate verbal, written or physical actions will be considered harassment, and will be grounds for expulsion at the discretion of the garden staff.

• Remain on designated wood-chipped paths. Cutting through other gardens is inappropriate and considered trespassing.

• Gardeners are expected to supervise guests or children at all times and are responsible and liable for their conduct.

• Tobacco, alcohol and illegal substances are not permitted on Duke Farms’ property.