

2015 GARDEN MANAGER MANUAL
HELENA COMMUNITY GARDENS

- I. Organizational Background and Structure
 - A. The Board of Directors of Helena Community Gardens (HCG)
 1. The Board
 - a) The Board is made up of interested members of the community. It meets once a month, and is always interested in bringing on new members, but Garden Managers (GMs) are not required or expected to be Board members. Please feel free to attend Board meetings if you are interested and available.
 - (1) The Head Garden Manager (HGM) is typically a Board member.
 2. Committees
 - a) There are a variety of committees with a revolving cast of characters. Board members and non-board members are welcome to serve on the various committees. If you have a special talent, interest, or area of expertise, in addition to garden management, you are welcome to participate in an appropriate committee.
 3. The Coordinator is a part-time paid staffer that assists the Board.
 - B. Garden Managers
 - A. Obligations
 1. Garden Managers are expected to attend monthly GM meetings. The time and place will be standardized every spring, by consensus. Please make every attempt to attend these meetings, as we are all in this together, and pooling our time, resources, and experience through frequent communication makes it easier on everyone.
 2. Each GM should provide, in the fall or spring, an itemized list and budget of wants and needs for the upcoming gardening season.
 3. It is highly recommended that each GM conduct a pre-season garden meeting with their prospective gardeners. The Coordinator will assist you if necessary.
 4. Please make an effort to get to know your gardeners, and make yourself available to them.
 5. The GM shall administer and coordinate a gardener volunteer program (the "Green Card Program") within their garden, with the help of the Coordinator and the HGM.
 - B. Resources
 1. The Head Garden Manager is not necessarily a manager of a specific garden, but rather an administrator and facilitator. When in doubt, or if you need assistance, please contact the HGM as soon as possible.
 2. HCG employs a part-time Coordinator. The Coordinator is a very valuable asset, as they schedule meetings and events for HCG as a whole, and more importantly for GMs, they are responsible for assigning plots, collecting plot fees, and processing the necessary paperwork. Please keep in close contact with the Coordinator, and treat them well. If you make their job easier, they will make your job easier.
 3. The Board. If you have any concerns, problems, needs, or issues, please feel free to bring them to the Board, formally or informally.
 - C. Benefits
 1. GMs may have a free plot in the garden that they manage. You also get to take charge of whatever garden improvements you would like to see. The HGM and the Board will make every effort to assist and support you as necessary if you take the initiative.
 - D. Interpersonal Responsibilities
 1. Internal
 - a) The GM of each garden is responsible for making a first attempt at addressing and resolving conflicts and issues among gardeners. If you need help, or are

2015 GARDEN MANAGER MANUAL
HELENA COMMUNITY GARDENS

uncomfortable dealing with a particular situation, the HGM and the Board will be happy to step in.

- b) Please document in writing, or by email to the HGM, any problems or issues with individual gardeners, and the actions you have taken to resolve them. Keep the HGM and the Board apprised of all incidents, conflicts, actions, and steps taken towards resolution.
 - (1) Formal incident reports will be made available for serious infractions and/or injuries, and it is important to fill them out, but please **do not hesitate** to contact emergency services or law enforcement if appropriate.
2. External
 - a) The GM is also the ambassador to the neighborhood and garden property owners and should work with them to address issues, ideas, scheduling, and concerns, and make every effort to include the neighborhood at garden events.
 - b) The GM may administer and coordinate outside volunteer groups, and even recruit them, with the help of the Coordinator and HGM.
- E. Safety, Security, and Access
 1. While individual gardeners have shared their contact information with HCG, it is not for general distribution. It is imperative that you use the "bcc" function when mass-emailing gardeners. Do not distribute any email addresses, phone numbers, etc. without permission. Ask the HGM or Coordinator if you need help with this.
 2. The GM should be mindful of the security of the garden. Some gardens have locked gates, others do not. This is at the discretion of the GM and gardeners. Locks will be made available as requested.
 3. The GM should be mindful of the physical safety of the garden. Human, environmental, and physical hazards should be identified and mitigated as soon as possible.
 4. The GM should work to improve physical and financial access to the garden as necessary, and make recommendations to the HGM and Board to that effect. **Free and reduced-cost plots and supplies are readily available for those who need them.**
- F. Infrastructure and Resources
 1. Physical
 - a) The GM should monitor the physical condition of shared fencing, sheds, water systems, pathways etc. and undertake maintenance and repairs with the help of the HGM and Board, and the property owner, as appropriate.
 - b) The GM should maintain an inventory of all shared tools and equipment, make sure that they are available for all gardeners to use, and attempt to limit misuse and pilferage.
 - c) Some large equipment is also available, including a rototiller. Please ask the HGM.
 2. Natural
 - a) Water Conservation
 - (1) Monitor water use, and educate gardeners about appropriate conservation methods. Water is one of HCG's largest expenses. Overwatering is a serious issue, and should be dealt with immediately. Basic methods include drip irrigation, soaker hoses, mulching, hand watering, and watering only in the early morning or late evening. **Unattended oscillating bow-type sprinklers are not allowed, and gardeners shall not water the plots of others,**

2015 GARDEN MANAGER MANUAL
HELENA COMMUNITY GARDENS

intentionally or unintentionally. Shut the water off immediately and notify the offending plot holder.

- (a) Exception: A gardener may water the plot of another gardener using allowed methods and with the permission of that gardener.
- (2) Coordinate water system operations with the property owner.
- b) Soil Fertility and Conditions
 - (1) Monitor soil fertility and conditions. Testing is available, and inexpensive, but may be of limited use in long-established gardens. Educate gardeners about improving soil fertility. Mulching, composting, co-cropping, cover cropping, and avoiding over tillage and compaction are some basic methods for improving it. **Synthetic fertilizers are not allowed and their use may be grounds for revoking a plot.**
 - (2) GMs may wish to implement a formal composting system for their garden.
- c) Weeds, Pests, and Unwanted Crops
 - (1) HCG has a strict "organic only" policy. Educate gardeners about organic control methods. **Gardeners observed using non-organic weed and pest control methods may have their plot revoked.** Some "organic" methods, such as rotenone application, are also discouraged. When in doubt, contact the HGM.
 - (2) HCG has a semi-flexible "annuals only" rule. Planting perennials is generally discouraged, particularly in the case of persistent perennials such as horseradish or Jerusalem artichoke. When in doubt, ask the HGM.
 - (3) If a plot is neglected or abused, give the gardener two weeks notice to rectify the situation. Notify the HGM. If the situation is not resolved within two weeks, the plot will be reallocated.
 - (4) **Problem plots (weedy, rocky, poor soil, poorly maintained) may be issued to interested gardeners for free. Please consult with the HGM.**