Garden Rules and Gardener Agreement

A fill-in template for a community garden. Adapt it to your group and have a lawyer review it. Updated November 13, 2026.

Read first. This template follows the kinds of rules that university extension guides suggest (University of Georgia Extension bulletin B1399 and Alabama Cooperative Extension UNP-2193): a fee set by the group, planting by a set date, notice before a neglected plot is reassigned, an application form and waiting list, and a signed release from every gardener. It is a starting point, **not legal advice**. The release or hold-harmless wording must come from your lawyer, insurer or landowner; for an example, see the Model Farm Volunteer Waiver and Guide at urbanaglaw.org/liability-risk-insurance/.

Part 1: Garden rules

Garden name and address _____

Landowner and sponsor (if any) _____

1. Purpose

Why the garden exists and who it serves (for example neighbors, a school, a congregation).

Our purpose is _____

2. Who may garden

Membership conditions, how to apply, and how a waiting list works.

A gardener must (residence, age, other conditions) _____

☐ Application form and waiting list kept by the coordinator

3. Plots

How plots are assigned, how big they are, how many per household and for how long.

Plot size _____

Plots per household _____

Plot term (season or year) _____

4. Fees and dues

What members pay and what the money is used for (water, insurance, tools, supplies).

Fee per plot per year: $ _____

Due by (date) _____

Fee help for members who cannot pay _____

5. Planting and care

Gardeners plant their plot by a set date and keep it weeded and tidy. A plot that is not planted or is neglected may be reassigned after written notice.

Plant by (date) _____

Notice before reassigning a plot (days) _____

6. Shared work

Common areas, paths, compost and tools need shared work.

Work hours per gardener per season _____

Workday schedule _____

7. Water and tools

Use water carefully and put tools back. Report broken tools or leaks to the coordinator.

Water source and rules _____

Tool storage and who holds the key _____

8. Soil, products and chemicals

Follow the garden's soil safety plan and any limits on products used in the garden.

Products allowed or not allowed _____

- ☐ Soil test results shared with all gardeners

9. Children, guests and pets

Children must be supervised by an adult. Guests are welcome with a gardener.

- ☐ Pets are not allowed
- ☐ Pets are allowed on a leash

10. Harvest and donations

Who owns the harvest, whether food may be sold, and how extra produce is shared.

Rules on selling or donating produce _____

11. Safety and respect

No harassment, no unsafe behavior, and report any injury to the coordinator the same day.

Coordinator and phone number _____

12. Decisions and changes

How the group decides, how often it meets, and how these rules can be changed.

Meeting schedule _____

Changes require (for example a majority vote) _____

13. Leaving or removal

A gardener who breaks the rules gets a written notice and a chance to fix the problem before losing a plot.

Part 2: Gardener agreement

One form per gardener. Keep the signed copy with the garden records.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Plot number _____

Emergency contact (name and phone) _____

- ☐ I have read the garden rules and agree to follow them.
- ☐ I understand that the garden or its landowner asks every gardener to sign a release or hold-harmless form, and that I must sign it before I garden. The form is attached (wording supplied by the garden's lawyer, insurer or landowner).
- ☐ I understand that a plot that is not planted by the set date may be reassigned after written notice.

_____ _____

Gardener signature Date

_____ _____

Garden coordinator signature Date

Part 3: Volunteer sign-in sheet

A sign-in sheet with names, dates and tasks helps show who was a volunteer, and for what, if a claim is made. It is one layer, along with insurance, training and clear rules.

Date	Name	Task	Hours	Signature

Related guides: urbanaglaw.org/blog/how-to-start-a-community-garden/ , urbanaglaw.org/liability-risk-insurance/volunteer-liability-community-gardens/ . General information, not legal advice; adapt the template to your state and have a lawyer review the release.