GARDENS RULES

1. In order to reserve a plot each year and begin working in a garden, annually each gardener must fill out, sign and return the annual application and waiver agreement form along with payment (checks payable to Cerro Gordo County Extension) to Cerro Gordo County Extension office, 2023 S. Federal, Mason City.

2. Assignment of new garden plots will be awarded on a first come - first serve basis. The Community Garden committee or designee will assign plots and notify participants of their assigned location.

3. The fee is per plot, due in full before the garden season begins. Make checks payable to Cerro Gordo County Extension. *If unable to pay, please inquire about scholarships.*
   ($40 for 20’ x 20’ plot and $60 for 20’ x 40’ plot)

4. Gardeners may only harvest vegetables and flowers from their garden. Perennial and unlawful plants are not allowed in garden plots. Designated perennial areas may be established at some locations and information will be shared with gardeners regarding these areas and guidelines surrounding usage.

5. Each person is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of assigned garden plot. Watering, weeding, harvesting and any other garden related maintenance are all the responsibility of the gardener. If neglected, plots will be subject to reassignment or removal of plantings with no refund of payment. *All stakes must remain where placed and all fencing must remain within the staked garden plot area.*

6. Raised beds are allowed within garden plot.

7. Fencing is allowed but must remain within staked plot. NO EXCEPTIONS. Netting material is not allowed for fencing. *New in 2016, fencing may remain year to year IF MAINTAINED and garden plot is kept clean.*

8. The City has agreed to provide water at no charge. This service is contingent upon tracking your garden harvest. Failure to track may result in assessing a water-usage fee which will be passed on to all gardeners. A scale and tracking document are located in the garden shed. Keys to the water source and shed will be issued each spring by Blue Zones Project office and must be turned in at the end of the growing season.

9. Herbicides and pesticides may be applied in powder or granular form and are limited to the approved list found on the back side of this page. Please adhere to label recommendations when applying.

10. Gardeners are responsible for clearing their plot of all plant material, and other plot materials, leaving the plot as it was found in the spring. Plots need to be cleaned and all debris removed by October 15 unless otherwise notified. *Stakes are to be left in the ground.*

11. Herbicide/pesticide community garden policy and additional information is found on back.

The Blue Zones Project Community Garden Committee is responsible for ensuring that the rules are followed at all times. Forward any questions or concerns to:

John Sjolinder, 423-0844 or sjolinde@iastate.edu
Angela Determan, 424-7180 or adeterman@masoncity.net

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Gardeners that choose to use pesticides need to apply as per the instructions on the containers and with clean water. Be careful not to over apply pesticides, herbicides, or fertilizers as any deviation from the labels could lead to environmental and safety impacts and is a violation of the law.

**Herbicide Chemical use policy for community gardens**

Round-up (non-selective use) herbicide can be used only prior to initial planting or until May 15. Only selective-use herbicides can be used after this date.

- All chemical usage is the responsibility and liability of the gardener.
- All chemicals must be applied by the purchaser
- Chemicals must be poured from the original container with the label/MSDS information available
- Gardener applies to his/her own garden only
- Do not apply any chemicals to common areas
- Do not store chemicals in the shed
- Do not dump excess chemical at the community garden site
- Do not tread through other gardens after application

Always read and follow label directions. Do not spray chemicals when wind speeds exceed 7 mph and/or temperatures exceed 85 degrees. Avoid applying chemicals when adjacent gardeners are in their plots.

**Pesticide Chemical use policy for community gardens**

Use of any pesticide should be selective in that pesticide selection is dependent upon the identified pest. The same basic rules apply to pesticide application as for herbicide application: (see above)

**Avoid using these chemicals in community gardens:**

**Sevin (is not allowed)**

Sevin is the trade name for a widely used synthetic insecticide containing the active ingredient carbaryl. Carbaryl belongs to the chemical class called carbamates. Although Sevin is only moderately toxic to mammals and is still widely used in gardens and landscapes, it is highly toxic to honey bees and many other beneficial insects and mites. Sevin is particularly hazardous to honey bees because the particles of insecticide resemble pollen and can be carried back to the hive.

**Permethrin**

Because it is a neurotoxin, Permethrin is NOT recommended for use in a community garden environment.

**Avoid applying any chemicals for two weeks prior to the anticipated harvest dates. Contact your local extension office for specific information regarding herbicide and pesticide use and application.**

**All fertilizers and natural/organic pesticides must be applied in a manner that the other garden plots will not be affected.**

**Fertilizers:** Gardeners may use compost, composted manure, and natural/organic fertilizers. Chemical fertilizers may not be used.

**Weeds:** Gardeners may apply decomposable mulches such as wood chips, clean straw, and lawn clippings; but they need to be removed at the end of the season. Hand pulling, hoeing, tilling, and natural/organic herbicides are permitted. Synthetic herbicides may not be used.

**Diseases:** Decomposable mulches and natural/organic fungicides are permitted. Synthetic fungicides may not be used.

**Insects:** Hand picking, row covers, trap crops, and natural/organic insecticides are permitted. Synthetic insecticides may not be used.

*Call the Cerro Gordo County Extension office to learn other natural ways to control weeds, diseases, and insects in your garden.*

**BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY GARDENS**

- Stimulate social interaction
- Produce nutritious food
- Reduce family food budgets
- Provide a catalyst for neighborhood and community development
- Create opportunities for recreation, exercise, and education
- Provide opportunities for intergenerational and cross-cultural connections