



Green Village Initiative



# HANDBOOK FOR COMMUNITY GARDENERS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Community Garden: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1 Please read our Handbook carefully
- 2 Check off Gardener Agreements (p. 9)
- 3 Fill out the Community Garden Plot application (p. 10) and return to GVI
- 4 GVI will contact you about your garden plot and Community Garden Captain
- 5 Join the revolution—Grow your own food as an official GVI Community Gardener!



Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants team up with GVI Team Members to clean up Curiale School Garden.

## What are Community Gardens?

GVI's Community Gardens program is a network of organic gardens in Bridgeport dedicated to the nourishment and development of the city. They are gardened and loved by local neighbors. Each year, thousands of pounds of high quality, fresh food is harvested from these gardens and enjoyed at the tables of hundreds of people in our city.

In many cases, these gardens provide healthy, safe opportunities for Bridgeporters to grow food that is otherwise unavailable in the stores of that neighborhood!

## Who is Green Village Initiative?

Green Village Initiative (GVI) is a non-profit in Bridgeport, CT whose mission is to grow food, knowledge, leadership and community, through urban gardening and farming, to create a more just food system in Bridgeport. We believe urban gardeners and farmers in our city are creating a more vibrant future. We support the gardening and farming movement so gardeners can continue to be leaders of positive change in their neighborhoods.

Most of the community gardens are on city-owned land. GVI is the bridge between the City of Bridgeport and our gardeners.

# Who Keeps the Community Garden Growing?

Maintaining a network of prosperous gardens requires the City of Bridgeport, the GVI team, passionate Garden Captains, and community gardeners to work together.

– **Garden Captains** (p. 4–5) are present at every community garden. Captains are responsible for connecting to GVI about their garden and gardeners successes and needs throughout the season. If you are interested in becoming a captain, please ask to apply!

– **GVI** (p. 1) is the bridge between the City of Bridgeport, Garden Captains, and community gardeners. GVI is held accountable for well-maintained, well-used gardens. We at GVI agree to invest available time and resources into gardens that meet our expectations of being inviting, well-kept, and organic spaces and follow our guidelines and policies throughout the season.

*In return, GVI will:*

- **Be a bridge between the City and the gardening community** to make sure there is access to land, water, woodchips and other support.
- **Provide seeds and seedlings each year.** Some seedlings are grown by our team at Reservoir Community Farm; some are donated from other farms.
- **Help recruit volunteers** for garden clean-ups and rebuilds.



Garden Captain Brian finds a praying mantis at Denver Avenue Garden.



Adunale helping with the fall cleanup at Ridge Avenue Garden.



Stella tends her garden plot at Reservoir Community Garden.

- **Purchase and deliver soil and tools** when funding is available, based on Garden needs.
- **Fundraise** for rebuilds, and coordinate rebuilds, when needed.
- **Collect contact information** from people interested in gardening.
- **Conduct free workshops** about gardening, farming, and social justice, open to anyone interested, not just active gardeners. These are opportunities for gardeners to share their knowledge with others.
- **Offer leadership workshops** for gardeners in our network, based on gardeners' interests.

The City of Bridgeport owns most of the land on which community gardens grow and agrees to coordinate with gardens in the GVI network for trash and brush pickup, providing water to gardens, and other necessities, if gardens are safe and well-kept.







Garden Captains at a 2019 meeting. From L to R: I Messiah, Diane Ch., Diane Co. Jennifer, Joe, Brian, Maria, Hector, Charles, & Jaime

## Community Garden Captains Agreements & Roles

Garden Captains set an example as leaders and role models. Each Garden must have a Captain assigned as the main point of contact for gardeners and GVI.

### *Community Garden Captains agree to:*

- Create a Check-in schedule with GVI for the season.
  - This can be a phone call, meeting, or email every other week.
- Honor our registration process and collect contact information for every plot.
  - Assign 1 garden plot per family or household.
  - Keep an up-to-date gardener list and submit a copy to GVI when changes are made.
- Follow up with gardeners who are not maintaining plots; use our guidelines and process for unmaintained beds.
- Recruit gardeners as soon as space is available.
  - Contact GVI for a list of interested individuals on the waitlist!
- Ensure garden plots are well kept and common areas are free of trash and weeds, including fence lines.
- Organize community garden meetings for orientation, cleanups, and other needs.
  - Contact GVI for help recruiting volunteers.

- Enforce GVI’s Water Saving Policy (p. 5–6).
  - Inform GVI of any water leaks immediately.
- Handle gardeners’ disputes and conflicts as needed and use the Conflict Resolution Process (p. 8).

In some gardens Captains have access to two plots in exchange for fulfilling the role of Garden Captain. This is not a requirement; this decision should be made among the gardeners and captain. All Garden Captains receive training and a stipend from GVI.

If you are interested in contributing as a Captain—contact your Garden Captain or GVI for an application!

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## Water Saving Policy in Community Gardens



GVI understands that water is not a limitless resource and strives to save water at all times. Community gardeners are stewards. This water conservation policy is in place at all community gardens.

1. **Water saving** with good gardening practices is important for use of community garden sites.
  - a. **Efficient Watering:** Watering the root area of plants to maximize water intake. Watering plant leaves means water will quickly dry up and be wasted. Remember recent rainfall when deciding how much water to use.
  - b. **Soil Building:** Use of mulch (leaves/straw/grass clippings) to stop water from drying up and promote compost and organic matter that increases absorption of water by the soil around your plants’ roots!
  - c. **Smart Planting:** Choose plants that require less water and can handle dry conditions. Look at Square Space gardening to help your plants shade your soil and save water.
  - d. **Limiting Watering Hours:** We advise not to water your plants during high temperature times of day (10am–2pm). Most of this water will quickly dry up and not be absorbed by your plants.
2. GVI, the City’s Department of Public Facilities, and Aquarion, will work together to ensure that ***water is provided from May to November.***

3. **Rain Gauges** are available for every garden to deter gardeners from using water during times of rainfall.
  4. Garden Captain's are responsible for **observing, reporting and getting involved when something might result in an overuse of water.** Broken pipes, running hoses, or over-watering are the most common ways that water can be wasted. Garden Captains must report challenges to GVI.
  5. **No-Standing-Water Policy** is in effect at every garden. This policy, and training sessions to ensure its implementation, are communicated during monthly workshops for gardeners. During garden visits made by a GVI representative, checks for standing water are made and any standing water is eliminated. Standing water encourages mosquitoes to breed and hurt our communities.
  6. **Communication With City Officials:** Community gardeners should communicate any observations or concerns to GVI. GVI will communicate issues or concerns with the City Parks and Recreation Department.
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Lucrecia with a harvest of fresh chard at Reservoir Community Garden.



Haque helps to stake squash plants at Hallett Street Community Garden.

# SUGGESTED GARDEN SAFETY ACTIONS

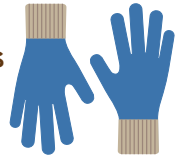
- Wash tools with soap and water



- Wash your hands



- You must wear gloves when in the garden



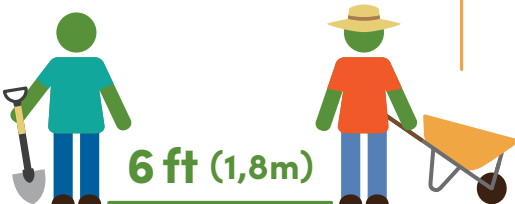
- When in the garden, you must wear a cloth face covering



- Use disinfectant cleaner on gates, shed doors and other frequently touched surfaces



- Stay 6 feet from others



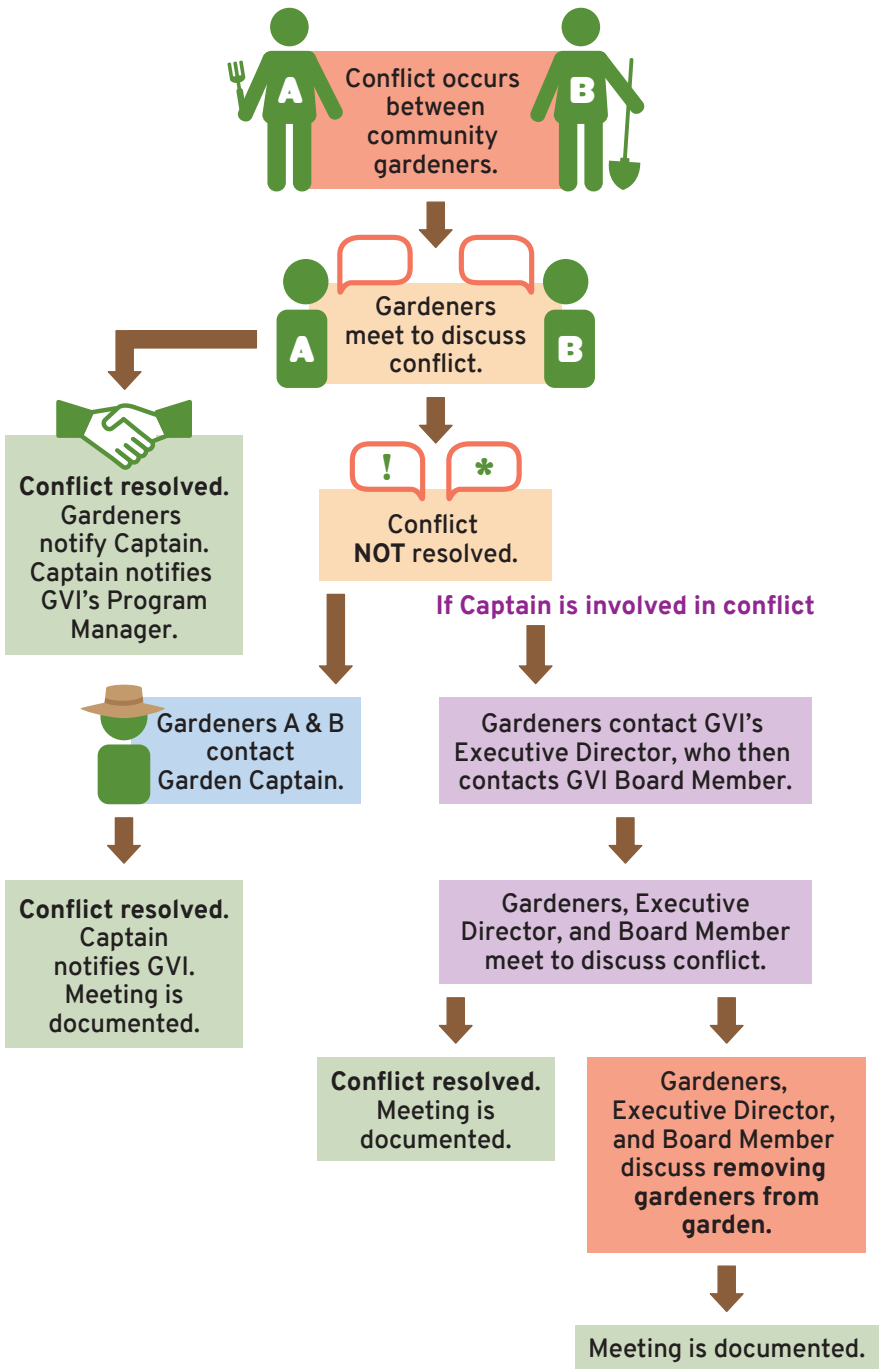
- Avoid using your phone at the garden



Contact GVI if you see someone in the garden who is not following these guidelines. (484) 841-4153



# Conflict Resolution Process



# Community Gardener Agreements

- I will treat others with respect and maintain friendly, positive interactions.
- I will come to all interactions with my Garden's best interests in mind, rather than personal interests.
- I will follow organic growing practices. I will only use organic fertilizers, pesticides or weed control and ask a Captain before using any product about which I'm unsure.
- I will clean up any trash that I see in the garden regardless of who left it there.
- I will respect garden tools and equipment (such as hoses and wheelbarrows,); and keep things tidy.
- I will only compost uncooked fruits or vegetables, without any oils or seasoning of any kind, in the appropriate place.
- I will adhere to the Water Saving Policy and report leaks to my Captain.
- I will never have alcohol or illegal substances or conduct illegal activity in my Garden.
- I will maintain only my plot, unless permission has been given, and my Captain is aware that I have been asked to maintain another plot in our Garden.
- Anyone working my plot will be with me or introduced to my Captain. If I will be out of town, I will introduce my Captain to the person who will temporarily maintain my plot.
- I understand that all Community Gardens must be kept clean and well maintained for the entire growing season; May through October. If they are not, we all risk losing the garden.
- I understand that I must maintain my plot. If I do not it can be reassigned to someone on the waitlist, and I will respond to my Captain's requests to clean out my plot if asked.
- I agree to sign up for the GVI email and newsletter.
- I agree to clean out my plot for winter by the end of October.
- I agree that my garden registration is valid for one year and is renewable October-March.
- I have read and understand the Conflict Resolution Process (p. 8) in this booklet.

*Together, you create your garden's character and vibe.  
Please check off our Agreements before filling out an application.*

## COMMUNITY GARDEN APPLICATION

- I have read/checked off agreements to all Community Gardener Agreements on page 9.
- I have read and agree to both the Water Saving Policy and Conflict Resolution Process.
- I am enthusiastic to be a role model in my community through being a community gardener.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred method of contact:  Email  Phone

Number of Individuals in your household: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a veteran?  Yes  No

Do you currently have a garden bed?  Yes  No

If Yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_ Plot number: \_\_\_\_\_

If No, please tell us your top choice: \_\_\_\_\_

*A map of our gardens can be found at [GoGVI.org](http://GoGVI.org)*

\*Please check other sites you are interested in:

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 155 Denver Ave. | <input type="checkbox"/> 233 Wood Ave.    | <input type="checkbox"/> 75 Ridge Ave.       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 142 Charles St. | <input type="checkbox"/> 274 Hough Ave.   | <input type="checkbox"/> 1469 Reservoir Ave. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 617 Ogden St.   | <input type="checkbox"/> 509 Arctic St.   | <input type="checkbox"/> 62 Pequonnock St.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 749 Hallett St. | <input type="checkbox"/> Johnson Oak Park |  |

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return completed application to:

**Green Village Initiative**  
**135 Clarence Street**  
**Bridgeport, CT 06608**

Or take a photo and email it to us at: [communitygardens@gogvi.org](mailto:communitygardens@gogvi.org)



Green Village Initiative

Growing food, knowledge, leadership, and community

## THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS



[www.goGVI.org](http://www.goGVI.org)