



## Garden Guidebook

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## History

### **Monrovia Community Garden** *(located at Colorado and Magnolia)*

In late 2017, Monrovia heard a call from community members who have expressed interest in having a Community Garden. Whether it was a desire to have their own garden plot, or engage in a shared community project, residents of all ages asked the City to explore the possibilities of creating a garden space that would offer a variety of gardening activities for beginners to experts.

In early 2018, the City Council echoed the need to study the possibility of establishing a Community Garden Program here in Monrovia. Coupled with the findings of the Parks Master Plan process, which identified Community Gardens to be the third highest priority of survey respondents, an assessment process began to review the feasibility of establishing a Community Garden Pilot Program.

Over the course of several months, community garden models along with best practices were explored; in conjunction with the essential perimeters needed in identifying a successful garden location.

During the review process, City staff mentioned the Community Garden efforts with community members from Mountainside Communion Church (Mountainside) located at the northwest corner of Colorado Blvd. and Magnolia Ave. Simultaneously, Mountainside was looking to start a Community Garden Project on their property for the community's use.

Both parties came together with a similar vision; to launch a community garden pilot program that would incorporate private raised beds for rent, educational workshops, community engagement, and public demonstration gardens for all of the community to enjoy. The initial plan was presented to the City Council in a Study Session in early November 2018.

Incorporating the feedback garnered at the Study Session, the City and Mountainside worked together to finalize site plans, program components, and refine the role of the Garden Director.

On November 20, 2018 the City Council approved a three-year agreement and then approved it as a city program officially in 2022 for another three years with Mountainside for the management of the Monrovia Community Garden Pilot Program. Each year a report and assessment is given to the City Council.

**Monrovia Community Garden South** (*located by MODA and Station Square*)

After 5 years of community gardening and educational programming success at the first Monrovia Community Garden, the City of Monrovia desired to expand the program. Monrovia Community Garden South is the second community garden being built in Monrovia utilizing a nonprofit/public partnership model - combining the expertise of Food ED (Food Exploration & Discovery) and the City of Monrovia.

Food ED's mission is to empower all ages to think and act sustainability in their neighborhoods and ecosystems through reimagining outdoor education in gardening, composting, and volunteering. The City of Monrovia offered a vacant lot located near high-density housing and a local middle school. They will transform this vacant lot into a thriving garden with raised beds, storage, proper fencing, and a compost program.

A grant from Lots of Compassion is helping fund the build for Monrovia Community Garden South along with another grant from Raw Inspiration.

With this public/non-profit collaborative model, and support from the community, we look forward to many years of community gardening and growing success!

**Plot Assignment and Garden Program**

Applications for raised garden bed plots are available on an annual basis. Chosen applicants will be notified by September of each year of their acceptance. Those selected must confirm their spot within 2-3 weeks of receiving notification or the plot will be given to another applicant. Plot fee is \$60 annually, which assists in paying for maintenance fees and water bills. The \$60 is collected within two weeks of notification. For Monrovia Community Garden (located at Colorado and Magnolia), checks can be made payable "Monrovia Community Garden." For Monrovia Community Garden South (located near MODA and Station Square), checks can be made

payable to “Food ED”. Once fees are collected and appropriate forms signed, plotholders will receive their plot number and combinations to locks from the Garden Director/Coordinator. Fees are non-refundable. If needed, scholarships may be made available for those who qualify.

Plotholders are required to attend orientation, 1-2 Monrovia Community Garden workdays/volunteer meetings a year *and* 1-2 educational gardening or food related classes offered through the Monrovia Community Garden program each year. These classes are offered as part of the Monrovia Community Garden program and are also open to the public.

Plotholders who are experts in certain areas may inquire about teaching classes with the Garden Director/Coordinator.

If applicants are not chosen for the plots when all plots are assigned, they will be placed on a waitlist.

Plots are assigned for a 12-month cycle, which runs through from October to October. Renewal is not automatic and is based on respecting the garden rules and practices outlined in this guidebook. All plotholders must reapply. Applications will be open to the community every 12 months, beginning each summer with current plotholders.

When a plotholder no longer wants the plot before the 12-month timeline:

- (1) Plotholder must notify and establish a timeline for turnover with the Garden Director/Coordinator.
- (2) Plotholder may not assign their plot to another individual. All plots are assigned by the Garden Director/Coordinator.
- (3) Plotholder needs to leave the garden space in reasonable condition. They must remove all structures and other non-plant materials unless arrangements are made with garden leadership.

### **Garden Hours, Access, Parking, Visitors and Pets**

**Garden Hours:** The garden is open sunrise to sundown year-round and one hour after sundown in winter.

**Access:** Only plotholders with access codes may enter behind the fences and the gardening shed.

**Parking:** Parking is available on site in the parking lot by the gardening shed or the parking lot in the alley by the dumpster for Monrovia Community Garden; for Monrovia Community Garden South, parking is available in the parking structure for the train and on the street; the top two floors have no fee.

**Visitors and Pets:** Visitors and children under 18 *who are noted on the signed waiver* are welcome inside the fenced areas as long as they are accompanied by the plothead. Dogs are not allowed behind the fences, but well-mannered dogs on a leash may be tied outside of the garden on the fence while the plothead is working. Please make sure that your dog does not obstruct the entrance or walkway. The public is welcome to visit the public demonstration garden at Monrovia Community Garden (*at Colorado and Magnolia*). Minors should be accompanied by an adult in the public demonstration garden.

### **Gardening Plot Care, Watering, and Maintenance**

**Gardening Plot Care:** Plothead(s) commits to maintaining 1 raised garden plot as assigned annually. This provides *between* 12 and 21 square feet of garden space per plothead.

Year-round gardening and maintenance of the assigned garden space is the plothead's responsibility. Garden space is defined as a raised bed(s) and the pathway that surrounds that plot.

A plothead cannot give garden space to others or garden in other people's assigned plots. Co-gardeners are allowed as long as the primary plothead is with them or is on the initial registration list as a family or household member gardening in the plot. They also must sign a waiver.

After assignment of plot(s), the following steps must be taken:

- (1) Garden space must be weeded and planted within 2 weeks of plot assignment.
- (2) Active gardening reflects what is needed in each season: weeding and planting, vegetable rotation by season, summer maintenance and drought awareness, harvesting, etc. See planting calendar on page 8 for tips on what to grow.

(3) No composting of food scraps in garden beds as this will attract pests and rodents. Use composting bin (located at Colorado and Magnolia) for food scraps. See compost instructions on page 10 for more details.

(4) No growing structures higher than 3-4 feet allowed. Tires, railroad ties, and treated lumber are not allowed in garden beds. No structure (tomato cage or pea trellis) can block sun from a neighboring plot. Trellises must be approved by the Garden Director/Coordinator. Additionally, no shrubs, berry bushes, or trees may be planted in plots.

(5) Organic methods only. NO synthetic chemicals including: pesticides, insecticides, herbicides, weed killers, and fertilizers. Please refer to acceptable pest/disease care on page 9. *Organic fertilizers are allowed.* This includes: compost, fish meal, composted manure, diatomaceous earth, biochar, and others. Please talk to the Garden Director if you have questions about what is organic or what you can apply to your boxes.

(6) If vacations or other circumstances prevent the plothead from caring for the plot space, they must arrange for someone else to care for their plot(s) in a way consistent with garden standards in the guidebook. You must notify the Garden Director/Coordinator and the person taking care of the plot must sign a waiver.

(7) Monitoring plot use: Garden Director/Coordinator and Garden Leadership Team monitor plots throughout the year. When a garden space is untended, the plothead will be contacted and asked to take care of the space by a certain date. If the Garden Director/Coordinator or the Garden Leadership Team contact a plothead about an untended garden space two times in one year and it becomes untended a third time, the Garden Director/Coordinator reserves the right to reassign the garden space. Additional protocol on being a considerate neighbor can be found on page 11.

(8) Please clean and dry the tools used before placing them back in the shed. This will assure they last longer and are ready for others to use.

(9) Have fun taking care of the garden!

**Water:** Water is on an automated drip system. Please do not disconnect or move the drip hose in your plots. Hoses are available; please treat carefully. Always use a nozzle that will allow the hose to turn off when not in use. Turn off water at the end of time in the garden and coil hoses, placing them back in the gardening shed. Water responsibly. Report water leaks to the Garden Director/Coordinator immediately. Water at the base of the plant to avoid soaking leaves which can lead to disease.

**Pathways and Sidewalks:** Please keep garden pathways inside and adjacent to garden plots safe, level, tidy, clear of weeds, and free of obstacles. This care includes any city sidewalk surrounding the garden; if there is debris, dirt, weeds, or tools on the sidewalk, please clean them up. Do not expand your garden space beyond its designated area.

**Garbage:** Pack it in; pack it out. Do not leave any trash, weeds, or debris in garden space. There are trash bins next to the garden shed. Place chopped up plant trimmings and compostable food waste can go in the compost bin at Monrovia Community Garden (Colorado and Magnolia). Place weeds and larger debris in the green waste bin.

### **Structures**

**Fences:** The fences around the garden are maintained by the Garden Director/Coordinator and the Garden Leadership Team. There may be grapes or other vines grown on these fences. Community members may take produce growing on the fence; however, the fences remain a barrier for the community at-large and individual ploholders. No personal fences may be erected around individual beds. Pest management will be controlled by the Garden Director/Coordinator or in accordance with the organic methods listed in the guidebook.

**Locks:** Ploholders will be given codes to the locks on the fenced garden areas. Ploholders may bring their own tools. Ploholders will be given the code to the gardening shed as well in order to access tools. Ploholders are responsible for making sure the gardening shed is locked up and equipment is returned to the shed each time the shed is entered. Lock codes are confidential and should not be shared.

**Gardening Shed:** The gardening shed is accessible to ploholders. The gardening shed equipment is for the community garden and should not be taken off-site at any point. Shed and tools shall be kept tidy by all members.

### **Plants, Mulch, and Suggested Planting Calendar**

**Plants and Seeds:** Seeds and sometimes starter plants will be made available in the garden shed. Ploholders may bring in their own vegetable and flower seeds and starter plants as long

as they are not an invasive species. Please read the seed packets and notice germination time, spacing for plants, and seasonal varieties.

**Restrictions:** No cannabis (marijuana) plants of any kind will be permitted as well as no tobacco, peyote, or any other kind of smokable plant; mint, blackberries, and dandelions are invasive and are not allowed. Additionally, cactuses and other plants with thorns are prohibited in order to ensure the safety of those visiting and maintaining the garden space.

**Crop Rotation:** Rotate families of crops to avoid disease. Do not plant the same plant family in the same spot. Here are a few examples of plant families:

- *Nightshade family:* tomatoes, peppers, eggplants
- *Allium family:* onions, leeks, shallots, chives
- *Cole family:* radishes, turnips, cabbage, broccoli, kale, mustard greens, cauliflower, brussel sprouts
- *Legume family:* beans and peas
- *Gourd family:* squash and pumpkins
- *Goosefoot family:* purslane and Swiss chard,
- *Apiaceae family:* carrot, celery, cilantro, fennel, parsnip, dill

**Mulch:** Refrain from using dyed mulches in your garden plot. Dyes contained in mulch can cause harm to plants and pets. Some dyes and packaged wood chips have added herbicides, and some wood is sourced from recycled, treated wood that can add toxic substances to a raised bed. These substances can be transferred to anyone who eats plants or vegetables grown where these mulches are used. We recommend using rice hulls, the outside “husks” of rice grains, which can be found at feed stores, or garden straw found at many nurseries. Please also *do not* use hay, as hay can contain weed and grass seeds.

**Tips for Suggested Vegetable Planting Calendar:** If you are planting vegetables, consider rotating your crops after each harvest. An example of crop rotation is to grow leafy greens, nitrogen-replenishing legumes such as peas and beans, or less-demanding root crops like radishes and carrots *after* heavy-feeding plants like corn, tomatoes, or squash.

\*Note: Feel free to experiment and have fun planting! You can grow flowers and vegetables on your own timeframe as well and do not need to plant all of these different items. Sometimes the best way to learn is just to jump in and try something! These are just tips for your reference.

**January:** Due to frost, this is a good time to make a plan for the year and begin some starters inside. Best not to plant in the ground, unless Monrovia has temperatures above 40/45 degrees at night.

**February:** February is a good month to start planting the following in plots: onions, salad greens and lettuces, carrots, beets, parsnips, radishes, spinach, purple beans. Plot holders can start tomatoes, cucumbers, summer squash and some herbs in containers.



**March:** March one can plant in the soil directly the veggies listed in February, as well as tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, summer squash, and herbs. (Keep in mind, if it is a colder year, you might still need to wait to directly sow in ground.)

**April:** All warm season crops (peppers, eggplants, basil, tomatoes) may be grown now as well as corn.

**May:** All melons and all squash/pumpkins can be grown now as well as beans of all kinds.

**June, July, August:** Enjoy the harvest - it's getting hot and will be hard to plant in the summer unless established starters are obtained. Continue to weed and take care of plants.

**End of August:** Begin to plant cool season starters in a shaded, cooler location. This includes: cabbage, broccoli, kale, chard, fava beans, leeks, shallots, onions.

**September:** Plant turnips, parsnips, radishes, beets and carrots as long as they are getting good watering.

**October:** Great time to plant cabbage, broccoli, kale, cauliflower, and chard. If one wants to grow potatoes, this is a good time for those as well. Onions, garlic, and shallots can be planted now too.

**November:** Beginning of November is a good time to plant peas, onions, shallots, garlic and fava beans as well as the veggies listed in October. It will start to get cool soon, so make sure plants are established.

**December:** Keep an eye on your plants, but not a great time to plant.

Keep invasive, vining, and spreading plants confined to your assigned garden plot. Keep in mind, ***mint is an invasive plant*** and will take over your plot. Snap peas, trellising beans, and other vining plants must be contained. And you can grow more in your plot if you trellis them.

## Pest and Disease Control

There are many different common gardening issues that arise. Consider taking a picture of the issues you are facing and communicating the matter to the Garden Director/Coordinator, Garden Leadership Team, or your local nursery expert. Below you will see a few common problems and remedies. This is by no means an exhaustive guide, but listed are a few matters you may face in the garden. *\*Please do not use any organic dust products with Rotenone.\**

### Diseases:



**Blight:** Common on tomatoes and potatoes. Dark brown spots on leaves appear first that may look like brown rings. Leaves will also turn yellow and die eventually. If it is happening slowly, the plant will not produce as much fruit, but fruit is edible. Try treating it properly with Copper Fungicide if early blight is the issue. Late blight is almost always a lost cause.



**Mildew:** There are different types of mildew, which appears as a white powdery substance on the plant. Remedies

include mixing 2 parts milk to 3 parts water and spraying on the plant. Neem oil spray is also a possibility.

**Blossom end rot:** This is often an issue of watering at the right depth. Check your watering system. You can also see if the product "Rot stop" will work as well.



### **Pests:**



**Aphids:** These tiny insects are sometimes hard to see. They spawn very quickly. There are a few ways to get rid of them. You can attempt to water blast them off. But this will also get rid of beneficial insects. Ladybugs are great for gardens and eat aphids making for a beneficial natural remedy. You can also use a Neem Oil spray on them.

**Tomato hornworms:** These large worms need to be picked off and put in soapy water to kill them.



**Mealybug:** These bugs protect themselves with a dust/lint coating. They almost look like mildew or fungus. They need to be treated with Neem Oil.

**Leafminer:** This is a pest that leaves winding paths around the leaves. Their damage is mostly cosmetic, but if on lettuces, they should be picked off.



## Composting

Plot holder must process the plant material generated within their assigned space by composting it or removing plant waste. If removing weeds, please place them in the green waste bin. If trimming plants or removing plants after harvest, or even rotting veggies, those can be placed in the Compost Bin provided by LA Compost located at Monrovia Community Garden (located at Magnolia and Colorado). Please do not put diseased plants in the compost bin either; those can go in the green bin. Plot holders and community members can also bring items from home to compost. Here are helpful tips from LA Compost of what you can put in the compost bin:



**Please do not put the following in the compost:** Citrus, animal feces, sawdust from treated lumber, glossy or coated paper, stickers on fruit and veggies, coffee filters/tea bags (unless they are compostable), meat, fish, and dairy.

### Considerate Community Gardener Policies

#### Visitors, including children (even the furry ones):

**Visitors:** Visitors are allowed to visit plots as long as they are with the plot holder.

**Children:** Children are allowed as well under supervision. Children using tools in the garden must be under direct and constant supervision of a parent or responsible adult. "Direct" means to be within sight and voice distance.

**Pets:** Well-mannered, leashed dogs are allowed to be tied up on the fence outside the gated areas. Please do not obstruct the gate or walkways. Pets will remain permissible unless complaints are received. Please scoop and remove poop. DO NOT PUT POOP IN GARDEN OR COMPOST. It must go in a trash bin.

**Other Considerations:**

- Do not take produce from other garden plots without permission.
- Smoking and vaping, foul language, alcohol and firearms are prohibited in gardens.
- Loud radios and music on your phone are prohibited. There are people conducting business in the building, and/or neighbors around the property. Any music needs to be played through headphones.
- The community garden cannot be used to conduct personal commerce.
- Plotters may not utilize paid labor to perform plot maintenance.
- You will receive a plot number. Do not alter or change your number or decorate the wood or metal on your raised garden bed plot.
- Political signage is not allowed in individual or communal areas of any Community Gardening Program managed space.
- See Garden Rules for other policies.

**Disputes, Disagreements, and Resolutions:** Use common courtesy and resolve differences in a neighborly way. For problems with fellow gardeners, stay calm and polite, and listen carefully. Usually a solution is within reach if both parties feel heard.

**Complaints:** If you would like to file a complaint, please do so by emailing the Garden Director/Coordinator at [info@monroviacommunitygarden.org](mailto:info@monroviacommunitygarden.org). If a complaint is filed, the Garden Director/Coordinator will review the matter.

If complaint is found to be valid or if at any point the Garden Director/Coordinator sees the guidelines or rules are not being followed, the following protocol will be followed:

- 1) Meeting with the Garden Director/Coordinator with a verbal warning.
- 2) Written warning regarding the matter will be given to the plot holder as well as put on file.
- 3) If the matter is not resolved in the time allotted in the written warning, the plot holder may be asked to leave the program.

- 4) NOTE: The Garden Director/Coordinator reserves the right to ask a plotholder to leave the program in the event of circumstances without going through the protocol as well.

### **Public Community Garden Space**

The Garden Director/Coordinator and Garden Leadership Team are responsible for growing and maintaining the public demonstration garden at Monrovia Community Garden (*located on the corner of Colorado and Magnolia*). The demonstration garden will feature educational signage informing the community of what is growing and how it is grown. There will be manicured paths and benches where people may enjoy the garden as well as use the space for educational classes on plantcare and gardening. Classes will also be throughout the year on gardening, plantcare, watering, preserving and much more! Stay tuned at [monroviacommunitygarden.org](http://monroviacommunitygarden.org) for the latest information.