

GARDEN PLOT FAQs

I'm not a garden plot gardener. May I pick/collect produce, flowers or seeds during the growing season or after the garden plots close for the season?

- No, during the growing season only garden plot gardeners, who have rented and paid for a plot, may pick/collect their own produce, flowers and seeds. Violators will be ticketed.
- Also, once the garden plots close for the season, access is not permitted and trespassers will be ticketed.
- (Leftover produce is collected at the end of each growing season and donated to *Loaves & Fishes*, a local food pantry.)

How much does it cost to rent a garden plot?

- Please visit the Park District's [Garden Plot webpage](#) for fees.

How many garden plots are available?

- 413 Full size plots, approx. 29' x 18'
- 87 Half size plots, approx. 14.5' x 18'
- 8 Raised plots, approx. 4' x 20' (Use of a raised garden plot requires a doctor's note.)

When can I register for a garden plot?

- Priority Registration, which is for the previous year's gardeners, in good standing, begins in late February. Priority Gardeners are notified about early registration by email.
- Open Registration for the general public (residents and non-residents) begins in mid-March.
 - See the [Spring Program Brochure](#) or the [Garden Plot webpage](#) for the registration dates.

How do I get Priority Registration each year?

- Priority Registration is available for resident and non-resident gardeners in good standing from the previous gardening season. Gardeners that properly maintain their plots and clean up at the end of the season are considered in good standing and receive Priority Registration.

What if I miss Priority Registration?

- If you miss Priority Registration you will have to wait until Open Registration begins in March to rent a plot. We do not "hold" plots for Priority Registration gardeners.

Where do I register and pay for a garden plot?

- At the Alfred Ruben Riverwalk Community Center, 2nd floor, 305 W. Jackson Ave, Naperville, IL 60540, Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm.

Can I register online?

- At this time we only offer online registration during Priority Registration.
- Online registration is not available for Open Registration which begins in mid-March.

Can I register for two plots?

- Yes, but you must wait until the first day of Non-resident registration to rent a second plot.

Do you offer a senior discount?

- Yes, for anyone that is 60 years or older.

Do you have an organic section?

- Yes, we do. The far west end of the Community Garden Plots is designated for organic gardening.
- Approximately 43 plots are available in the organic section.

Do you charge more for organic plots?

- No, we do not. Please visit the Park District's [Garden Plot webpage](#) for fees.

Where can I see a map of the garden plot locations?

- During registration a large map of the garden Plots will be available at 305 W. Jackson Ave, 2nd floor, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- You may also view the [Garden Plot map](#) online.

Are there any forms I need to sign?

- Yes, two forms are required. A [Registration/Waiver form](#) and a [Garden Plot Agreement form](#).

Can I register my spouse, partner, mother, father, or child?

- If they live in the same household, yes. Both forms mentioned above must be signed and dated; if the forms are not signed and dated we will not be able to register them.
- *Please note: If you pay for the plot, and have a different email than the person registered for the plot, you will receive all the emails regarding the plot, not the person who is registered.*

Is there a place where all the garden plot rules are listed?

- Yes, within the [Garden Plot Guidelines](#) and the [Garden Plot Agreement form](#).

How long is the gardening season?

- The season depends on when the garden plots are able to open in the spring. The opening date typically occurs in mid-April, but soil and weather conditions dictate when the park district can prepare the plots for the season.
- The closing day is on a Monday in mid-October.

When can I garden?

- Except for dates when the garden plots are closed or have limited access, you may garden in your plot, seven days a week, between sunrise and one hour after sunset.

How do I find out when the garden plots are open for the season?

- All updated information regarding the Garden Plot Opening and Closing Day, as well as closures (fireworks) and limited access days, will be communicated through:
 - The Naperville Park District's Weather Cancellations & Facility Closure [Rainout Line](#).
 - The Naperville Park District's [Garden Plots Facebook page](#).

Why are the Garden Plots sometimes closed or open but with limited access?

- Certain events that take place downtown, such as the 4th of July Fireworks, require closing of the garden plots.
- Other events, such as a parade or race, limit entry into the garden plots due to the parade or race routes.

Can I still garden on limited access days?

- Yes, but you may need to visit the garden plots at an alternate time or use an alternate route to access the plots. The City of Naperville provides race and parade route maps that you can view beforehand.
- Be sure to have your Parking Permit with you; event personnel may ask to see it.

How do I know which plot is mine?

- Each plot is identified by a painted wooden stake in the center of the plot. These stakes have the plot number/letter on them. A flag is placed at the corner of each plot. These flags are shared by adjoining plots.
 - Full-sized plots are identified by one number plus a letter.
 - Half-plots are identified by one number plus two letters.
 - Raised plots are identified by one number plus one or two letters.

Where do I park?

- You may park in the parking lot near West Street.
- Or if you want to be closer to your plot you may park along the interior roads, but only on the west side.
- Parking on the plots and in grass areas is prohibited.

Is there something I should display that shows I'm a registered gardener?

- Yes, once you register you will be given a Parking Permit.
- The parking permit must be displayed on your car's dash or hang it from the rear view mirror every time you visit your garden.

Can I use my Garden Plot parking permit during special events?

- No, your Garden plot parking permit is only for tending to your garden. Violators may be ticketed.

Are the plots tilled?

- Yes, a local farmer and the park district tills the soil each spring. However, you may want to till your plot again before you plant.

Can I use a rototiller in my garden plot?

- Yes, you may use a rototiller or hire someone to till for you.

Do you offer no till plots?

- No we do not. There is no additional land available to designate as a no-till area and the Park District cannot convert an existing area to no-till without affecting gardeners who don't want this option.

Does the Park District add any amendments to the soil?

- No, but gardeners who rent a plot may use the manure, leaf mulch and pine mulch available onsite. See the [Garden Plot map](#) for locations.

I'm a first time gardener. Is there anyone that can answer gardening questions for me?

- Yes! Each year the park district offers a basic gardening and an organic gardening workshop. These are offered in April in the evening. Check the latest [Spring Program Guide](#), Nature/Adult section, for more details.

- You can also ask a Master Gardener. During the gardening season Master Gardeners are available to answer questions, every Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday from 8 am – 10 am, in their plots, 1D, 2D, 1E, and 2E,.
- You can also call or visit the [Master Gardeners Help Line](#), which is provided by the University of Illinois Extension Office.

May I place items in the aisles?

- Nothing should be placed in the six foot aisles, which are mowed by Park District staff. However you may spread a thin layer of grass clippings in the aisles if they are muddy.

How do I water my garden?

- There are water spigots located throughout the plots. You will need to bring your own watering cans or buckets to transport water to your plot.

What if I go on vacation or out of town?

- You are required to keep your garden plot weeded even if you are out of town. Please make arrangements with a family member or friend to weed and water for you.

What happens if my garden plot is weedy?

- If your garden plot is weedy you will be notified by Park District staff through an email or phone call. You will have a certain amount of time to weed your plot.
 - No more than 1/3 of your plot may be covered with weeds 12" or taller.
 - Gardeners will be contacted by the Park District if their plot is weedy.
 - Once contacted for the *1st time, gardeners have 2 weeks/weekends to remove weeds* from their plot. If your plot is still weedy after two weeks, your garden plot will be mowed.
 - Gardeners placed on the weedy list for a *2nd time will have only one week/weekend to weed*. If your plot is still weedy after this week, your garden plot will be mowed.
 - If your plot is placed on the weedy list for a *3rd time* it will automatically be mowed.
 - *Please note: Once your plot is mowed you cannot continue to garden in it and you will not receive Priority Registration for the following year, even if you agreed to have it mowed.*

Can I use plastic sheeting in my plot to limit the weeds?

- No, only fabric landscaping material is allowed in your plot. Biodegradable types of fabric landscaping are preferred. Any fabric left at the end of the season must be removed. (Plastic sheeting gets caught in our equipment and can cause damage.)

Can I use herbicides, fungicides and pesticides in my plot to keep the weeds and pests under control?

- You may use synthetic/organic products in the regular plots.
- In the organic plots you may only use organic control methods.

Can I use a mower or weed whacker to keep the weeds down?

- Yes, you may use a weed whacker and/or mower in your plot.
- Use of the equipment cannot disrupt neighboring garden plots and must be used in a safe manner.

Where should I put the weed and other organic waste from my plot?

- Large yard waste dumpsters are available throughout the plots. At each dumpster site we also provide green garbage and blue recycling bins. These collection bins are for onsite generated items only.

Can I dump leaves from home in my garden plot after the season closes?

- No, once the garden plots close for the season your rental/access expires. Manure, leaf mulch and pine mulch are made available onsite by the park district for gardeners to use during the gardening season. See the [Garden Plot map](#) for locations.

What should I do if I have lots of extra produce?

- Consider donating it to [Loaves & Fishes](#), a local food pantry. There is a collection stand at the east end of the plots (off the parking lot and near the Idea Gardens) where you can leave extra produce.

Is the general public allowed into the garden plots to collect produce for themselves during the gardening season or during the annual gleaning day?

- No, vegetables, fruits and flowers grown in the garden plots belong to the gardeners who grew them. On the annual gleaning day, any remaining produce is collected and sorted for donation to [Loaves & Fishes](#), a local food pantry.

I've heard that pumpkins get composted in the garden plot each year. Is this true?

- Yes, the Park District is part of S.C.A.R.C.E.'s [Pumpkin Smash](#) annual event which collects pumpkins for composting instead of sending them to the landfill. This event takes place every year on the Saturday after Halloween. Rather than shipping the pumpkins to a composting facility, we place the pumpkins directly into the soil to help replenish nutrients and water.

What should I do if someone steals produce from my garden plot?

- If you see vandalism or theft taking place, and want someone to respond right away, you may dial 911. Get a license plate number if you can. You will need to remain in the garden plots until the Naperville Police arrive.
- If you discover missing produce or items after the theft takes place you may call the Naperville Park District Police, at 630-601-0925, to file a report. Again you will need to stay onsite until a Park Police officer arrives or if you get voicemail leave a message with your contact information and a Park Police officer will follow up with you at a later time.

Where can I find more information about the garden plots, registration and the gardening season?

- **GARDEN PLOT WEBPAGE**, <https://www.napervilleparks.org/gardenplots>
- **PRIORITY REGISTRATION information:**
 - In late February, all Priority Gardeners will receive an email from the Park District regarding how to register early.
 - The Park District's Garden Plot webpage, <https://www.napervilleparks.org/gardenplots>
 - The Naperville Park District Garden Plots **Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/Naperville-Park-District-Garden-Plots-137495489657127/>
- **OPEN REGISTRATION dates:**
 - Open Registration for the general public (residents and non-residents) begins in mid-March.
 - See the [Spring Program Brochure](#) or the [Garden Plot webpage](#) for the registration dates.
- **GENERAL ACCESS INFORMATION: Opening/Closing Day, closures (Fireworks) or limited access days:**
 - The Naperville Park District's *Weather Cancellations & Facility Closures* **Rainout Line**

- Call 630-883-4242 or visit <https://www.napervilleparks.org/cancellations>
 - *Sign up for Email and Text alerts!*
- The Naperville Park District Garden Plots **Facebook page:**
<https://www.facebook.com/Naperville-Park-District-Garden-Plots-137495489657127/>

