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## **District of North Vancouver Operational Guidelines for Community Gardens on District-Owned Lands**

### **Definition**

For the purposes of these guidelines, a **community garden** is defined as a piece of District-owned property (or other public land) where people collectively grow and maintain edible or ornamental plants for the personal use of its gardeners or partner community organizations.

The District of North Vancouver recognizes community gardening and other forms of urban agriculture as an important recreational activity that can contribute to increased food security, community development, public space enhancement, environmental sustainability and social inclusion. The District perceives community gardening as essentially a community-driven process where resident groups initiate interest, generate funds, manage and operate community gardens.

### **District Responsibilities**

The District of North Vancouver will, where appropriate, facilitate and enable the development of community gardens by:

- Assisting interested groups in identifying suitable land for the development of community gardens;
- Providing access to information on the development and operation of community gardens;
- Collaborating with the North Shore Community Gardens Society or other District-wide umbrella organizations in working towards urban agriculture goals.

### **If a suitable District-owned site is identified for a community garden, the following conditions apply:**

- The garden is developed and maintained at no cost to the District;
- A garden site must be approved by District staff. The plan must include the layout of plots and indicate any proposed structures or fences;
- A non-profit Society (the “Society”) must agree to develop and operate the garden according to a Licence to Occupy Agreement that specifies the period of use, management and maintenance responsibilities.
- The District may terminate the License to Occupy Agreement at any time upon thirty (30) days written notice;
- The District assumes no responsibility for water service interruption.
- An ornamental perimeter garden must be provided between the community garden and the street to create an attractive buffer with the neighbourhood;
- No locked barriers to general public access to the site can be erected;
- Garden practices shall comply with all District policies and by-laws;
- Although located on public property with the prior approval of the District, community gardens are operated by volunteers from the community;

### **Operations**

#### **1. Assignment of plots**

- A maximum of one plot will be considered for any one DNV resident or user group.
- Administration of membership lists, collection of fees and other day-to-day management of the garden will be the responsibility of the managing Society.

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## 2. Garden Maintenance

- Gardeners are expected to control the spread of noxious weeds in plots and adjacent pathways, and to prevent the spread of plant diseases, through natural means (no pesticides, no herbicides in accordance with relevant District by-laws).
- Gardeners will adhere to relevant DNV water conservation policies.
- Recyclables and refuse will be disposed appropriately.
- Careful and proper maintenance of compost bins is expected.
- The managing Society will adhere to guidelines to mitigate against human-bear interactions published by the North Shore Recycling Program in the brochure: “5 Simple Steps to Making Compost in Bear Country.”
- Garden pathways should always be kept clear.
- Picnic table and benches may be installed in the public areas only with permission from the District.
- Pets are not allowed in the garden.
- The managing society is responsible for ensuring that the garden is maintained according to these standards.

## 3. Garden Programming

The managing Society of a community garden should seek to enable one or more of the following:

- A community development program that encourages the involvement of local community organizations, schools, youth groups, seniors groups or others, particularly those with no access to their own private gardening space.
- An environmental enrichment program that offers demonstration activities to encourage urban agriculture outside of community gardens.
- Strategies to enhance urban biodiversity and understanding of local food production;
- Strategies to enhance the vitality of public spaces.
- Construction of a percentage of garden plots that incorporate enhanced universal accessibility features to accommodate wheelchairs, strollers and senior gardeners who have mobility restrictions.

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**District of North Vancouver**  
**Voluntary Urban Agriculture Design Guidelines for District-Owned or Privately-Owned Lands**

### **1. Application and Intent**

These guidelines are intended to provide guidance on the design of urban agriculture installations where they are proposed in (1) private developments or (2) District-owned sites. The guidelines may be used by District staff in assessing development applications and providing guidance to applicants. They may also be used by District residents to help guide the formulation of urban agriculture proposals. The use of the specifications listed below is subject to discretion of District staff.

**Urban Agriculture** is a broad term referring to a range of activities for the growing of plants for food and other related uses, within or surrounding cities and towns. The goals for encouraging urban agriculture include providing opportunities for recreation, and contributing to increased food security, community development, public space enhancement, environmental sustainability and social inclusion.

**These guidelines address two components of urban agriculture as they apply to private development sites:**

- Shared garden plots
- Edible landscaping

The provision of the features described in these guidelines should be compatible with other objectives for common outdoor amenity space and general landscaping needs.

### **2. Uses**

Shared garden plots and edible landscaping are most appropriate where residential uses are proposed in multiple dwelling developments but could also be used for herb gardens and other forms of food growing associated with restaurants, grocery stores, and in common outdoor spaces for other uses including offices, schools or community centres.

### **3. Design Considerations: Shared Garden Plots**

Shared garden plots can best be provided as part of consolidated common outdoor space. Where this is not generally provided, opportunities for food growing could be considered in private outdoor spaces: patios, balconies and roof decks. The incorporation of garden plots should enhance the overall design of common outdoor spaces and should be considered as one of the variety of programmed uses of such spaces.

#### **3.1 Siting and Access**

- (a) Garden plot areas should be located to maximize sunlight access; this may include locating garden plot areas on rooftops, where possible.
- (b) Where garden plots are located on higher rooftops, they should be located in wind screened areas and without negative impact to views and building heights.
- (c) There should be direct access via elevator from loading areas at grade to garden plots located on a roof or podium, in order to provide easy access for wheelbarrows and hauling larger items, such as soil.
- (d) In any case where shared garden plots are located on rooftops it is the sole responsibility of the proponent to ensure structural integrity of the building in question.
- (e) Some garden plots should incorporate enhanced universal accessibility features to accommodate wheelchairs, strollers and senior gardeners who have mobility restrictions.
- (f) Plots should be located as far away from vehicle traffic as possible, when located in a ground level courtyard.

### **3.2 Co-locating with Other Amenities**

(a) The design of garden plot areas should encourage social interaction by balancing a variety of different uses in the common outdoor space.

(b) Consideration should be given to co-locating with: a covered outdoor space for shelter; an outdoor children's play area; outdoor seating areas for rest and social interaction.

### **3.3 Number and Size of Garden Plots**

(a) Where a consolidated common outdoor amenity space is provided, garden plots should be provided for 30% of the residential units that do not have access to private outdoor space of more than 100 square feet.

(b) Garden plots should be a minimum of 24 square feet (ideally 3 feet by 8 feet), not including plot dividers, for maximum growing potential.

(c) Large, undivided planting areas equal in square footage to individually separated plots may be provided in cases where individual plots are not desired or suitable.

### **3.4 Design of Garden Plots**

(a) There should be a maximum reach of 18 inches from the perimeter to the middle of the plot.

(b) Garden plots should be integrated into the overall landscape design and could be accommodated in flexible, non-rectilinear forms.

(c) Soil depth should be a minimum of 18 inches and should be made up of soil appropriate for growing a variety of food plants.

(d) Soil should be tested for toxins (heavy metals, salinity and hydrocarbons) prior to being used in garden plots.

(e) The height of garden planters should be a maximum of 2 feet for easy reaching into planter beds. Plots with enhanced universal accessibility features should have a height of 2.5 feet.

(f) Toxic materials, such as pressure treated wood, should not be used where they will come into contact with soils that are growing food.

(g) Protection of the roof membrane and soil drainage issues must be taken into consideration, and is the sole responsibility of the proponent.

### **3.5 Support Facilities**

(a) Hose bibs should be provided within 20 feet of any garden plot.

(b) A storage room or shed should be provided for tools; consideration should be given to providing smaller, personal storage for individual gardening tools.

(c) A composting facility that is rodent-resistant, provides the ability to turn compost, and is of sufficient size to match garden capacity should be provided.

## **4. Design considerations: Edible landscaping**

Edible landscaping, the use of ornamental plants that also produce edible fruits, nuts, etc., is encouraged in areas that are easily accessible for harvesting, and that are protected from potential contamination. Edible landscaping can be incorporated as part of landscaped areas.

### **4.1 Stewardship**

Edible landscaping that may drop fruits and berries should be conveniently located in high pedestrian traffic areas fully accessible to residents to ensure that food is harvested without delay and to avoid attracting rodents and pests.