

GIBSON RANCH **COMMUNITY GARDEN** *and* **FOOD FOREST**

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GIBSON RANCH COMMUNITY GARDEN AND FOOD FOREST GUIDELINES AND GARDENER RESPONSIBILITIES



**Prepared by:
County of Sacramento Regional Parks**

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OVERVIEW

This document outlines the community garden guidelines and gardener responsibilities, for the Gibson Ranch Community Garden Program. These Guidelines are the governing document for the Gibson Ranch Community Garden Program. Gardeners participating in the Gibson Ranch Community Garden Program are subject to all garden guidelines and gardener responsibilities contained herein.

REGIONAL PARKS

The County of Sacramento Department of Regional Parks is responsible for plot registration, garden inspection, policy review and enforcement, approval of common space plantings, organization of volunteer projects and other types of 'hands-on' activities.

Coordinator:

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The County of Sacramento Department of Regional Parks has developed the included guidelines and responsibilities for the Gibson Ranch Community Garden and Food Forest. The Gibson Ranch Community Garden operated and maintained by its community gardeners and overseen by the County of Sacramento Department of Regional Parks (REGIONAL PARKS).

The REGIONAL PARKS is responsible for interpreting and enforcing the Community Garden Guidelines and Gardener Responsibilities.

This document may be updated without notice and as necessary by REGIONAL PARKS.

Any repeated violation of the guidelines or failure in the performance of an individual gardener's responsibilities constitutes a breach of the registration agreement. Failure to abide by these guidelines and responsibilities may lead to a revocation of plot registration, denial of permission to garden within the County's community gardens, and forfeiture of plot registration fees.

Who May Garden

Gibson Ranch community garden plots are available to County of Sacramento residents; however, consideration will be given to non-residents, but only if open plots are available after May 1 of each year. Each gardener agrees to participate as a member of the garden community. This includes, but is not limited to, assisting in caring for equipment, contributing time toward general maintenance of the common areas, and participating in group workdays.

REGIONAL PARKS reserves the right to close plot registration at any time even though plots may be available.

There is no limit on the number of renewals or limit on number of years a gardener can have a plot in the garden if the gardener is in good standing.

No more than one garden plot will be assigned to any one street/mailling address.

REGIONAL PARKS assigns all plots. A plot can only be tended by the gardener(s) to which it is assigned. Absentee gardening is prohibited - plots may not be registered to someone "in name only."

Sharing a plot is allowed. Gardeners sharing a plot must abide all Gibson Ranch Community Garden Program guidelines, policies, and procedures. Gardeners that have a plot cannot share an additional plot with another gardener. Gardeners sharing the plot are required to do 2 hours each of common area garden work each month. Working on personal plots or pathways around your plot does not count towards the required monthly common area work.

Vacant Plots Accessible to People with Disabilities

If plots that are accessible to people with disabilities are not being used by May 1 of each year, the plot may placed on the open plot list for those on the waiting list to use until a person with disabilities requests the plot(s), or the plot may be deemed a common area by the REGIONAL PARKS for the remainder of the season. Gardeners from the waiting list and temporarily using plots accessible to people with disabilities will retain their place on the waiting list for the next available plot. Use of plots accessible to people with disabilities is temporary as the temporary gardener can be replaced at the end of the year if a person with disabilities requests the plot(s).

Visitors to Gibson Ranch Community Garden

All visitors to Gibson Ranch community garden are required to follow and abide by the Gibson Ranch Community Garden Guidelines.

Hours Of Operation

Hours of operation for community gardens are dawn to dusk. There is no camping in the garden.

Registration Fees and Processes

The annual registration fee is \$XXX for a 20x20 plot or \$XXX for a 20x10 (limited to availability). REGIONAL PARKS may waive the annual registration fee upon written request for good cause shown. Good cause may include, but is not limited to, severe economic hardship.

REGIONAL PARKS will assign plots and process registrations for all gardens in the Gibson Ranch Community Garden Program.

Annual registration fees are used to sustain garden operations and activities. Annual registration fees will be refunded on a pro-rated basis prior to May 1 of each year.

Annual registration fees are **not refundable** after May 1.

Mid-year registrants: Gardeners who register for a garden plot after July 1 will pay 100% of the cleaning deposit fee and 50% of the annual registration fee which covers the remainder of the current calendar year. Gardeners must then re-register for the next year at the 100% plot price.

Garden registrations are renewed annually. Registration materials are handed out in January and/or e-mailed to current gardeners at the beginning of each year. If a plot is not registered by the due date, an attempt will be made to contact the gardener to confirm that they will be gardening the coming season. However, any plot not completely registered (forms and fees paid) by the due date is subject to being made available to new gardeners. Gardeners are responsible for providing REGIONAL PARKS with current contact information, including home address, email address and phone numbers (work, home, or cell).

Cleaning Deposit

In addition to the annual registration fee, a cleaning deposit of \$XXX per plot is required. This deposit will be returned when the plot is vacated and left clear of weeds, debris, and plants.

Giving Up Your Plot / Deposit Refunds

When a gardener decides to give up a plot, they should contact REGIONAL PARKS as soon as possible so the plot can be quickly reassigned. Gardeners must contact REGIONAL PARKS for plot inspection once plot has been prepared to be returned. REGIONAL PARKS will determine if the plot is in "refundable condition." Refundable condition is defined as: no weeds, plants, stakes, wire, or trash in the plot. Healthy crop plants (and their supporting structures) within their normal growing season may be allowed to remain.

All soil amendments will remain in the garden; no soil may be transferred to another plot or taken offsite; nor shall raised beds be removed from the garden plot.

If the plot is in refundable condition, the County will issue a refund check in approximately one month's time. If a plot does not pass inspection, a gardener will have one week to clean it up. Upon re-inspection, if the plot is still not in refundable condition, the deposit

will be forfeited. Plots vacated due to eviction and/or abandonment are not eligible for a deposit refund.

Moving to a New Plot

A gardener in good standing may move to a different plot if one is available. REGIONAL PARKS approves and coordinates all plot reassignments.

Plot Abandonment

Any plot that appears abandoned due to extended inactivity of one month or greater during the active growing season may be reassigned following a 21-day Notice of Abandonment. A Notice of Abandonment will be mailed to the registered gardener via certified mail. If the registered gardener fails to respond to the notice within 21 days of the notice's delivery, the garden plot will be considered abandoned.

Personal property (personal garden tools, decorations, etc.) must be claimed by end of the calendar year or one week after submitting a request for deposit refund, whichever is sooner. Any items left behind one week after submitting a request for deposit refund or January 1, whichever is sooner, become the property of the garden. Plots vacated due to eviction and/or abandonment are not eligible for a deposit refund.

If you are unable to care for your plot for an extended period, please consider giving it up so that someone else can use it. In special circumstances, where illness, injury or other commitments will only be for a few months and have a known ending date, other arrangements may be made if approved by REGIONAL PARKS. Vacationing gardeners are not exempt from weed and other maintenance rules, or compliance deadlines. Gardeners are encouraged to contact REGIONAL PARKS before leaving on extended vacation so it is known the plot has not been abandoned.

Communication with Gardeners

Gardeners can use e-mail, postings, letters, phone calls, or newsletters to communicate with fellow gardeners. Gardeners can post general notices on the garden bulletin board or in the designated posting area. The County reserves the right to remove any notice at any time for any reason.

REGIONAL PARKS will e-mail notices of major significance (events, violations, fee deadlines, etc.) to the gardener's last known address whenever possible. Because mailed notices may include time-critical items such as registration or weed compliance deadlines, it is the gardener's responsibility to keep REGIONAL PARKS informed of any changes in mailing address, email, or phone.

Workdays

Gardeners are responsible for volunteering a minimum of **XXX** hours per month necessary to maintain the common areas of the garden. Including the perimeter of the garden, landscaped areas along streets fronting the garden, Gibson Ranch Food Forest, parking area for Gibson Ranch Community Garden, and portions of the park area that the garden may be located within. Work on personal plots does not count towards required work, nor does weeding the pathway around the gardener's own plot. REGIONAL PARKS can also provide garden projects for gardeners who cannot make scheduled workdays.

Vacation Notice

Gardeners that will be on vacation or unreachable for long periods of time must notify REGIONAL PARKS of their absence and plan for their plot to be watered and taken care of in their absence. Plots registered to gardeners on vacation should not be watered by another gardener unless by prior agreement.

Harvesting Produce

No produce should be picked from another gardener's plot at any time.

Produce Not For Sale

All produce, edible plant material, and medicinal herbs and plants grown in Gibson Ranch community gardens will not be sold, except as part of a "Special Food Project" approved by REGIONAL PARKS.

Community Garden Appearance

- Gardens must be actively and obviously used for growing crops, herbs or flowers, and must be maintained year-round (inside the garden and outside the garden). At no time shall grass or weeds be over 4" tall.
- Plots shall be maintained per "Plot Appearance" below.
- No flimsy shade structures will be allowed onsite – shade structures must be approved by REGIONAL PARKS.
- Pathways must be free of weeds, tools, hoses, and maintained in good condition.
- All garbage will be contained in a small can; all garbage will be taken off site.
- Piles of junk and debris are not allowed onsite; project materials must be used within the current growing season.
- Vines on fencing and perimeter plants must be maintained and not create a hazard or a nuisance. Vines will not spread on the ground more than 6" from the fence.

Plot Appearance – Year Round

- All plots must be kept free of weeds, diseased and dead plant matter during the year.
- Personal compost bins are not allowed in a plot. A community compost bin will be created onsite.
- Plastic containers, Clay or ceramic pots may be used in a plot, but the pots may not cover more than 10% of the plot.

Plot Appearance – Winter

- All diseased, dying or end of season plantings will be removed by November 15 of each year.
- All plots will be kept free of weeds during non-planting months.
- A winter garden must be maintained with a cover crop, new winter garden, or straw / leaf mulch.
- Carpets and plastic are prohibited in the garden to cover a plot or as a weed barrier during the off growing season.
- All tomato cages and stakes must be stacked on the plot or in a specified area of the garden at the end of the growing season.

Use and Care of the Garden

Gardeners are responsible for caring for community garden plots, common areas, and areas along the street outside of the garden year-round – including during winter. Regular care includes watering, harvesting, and the prompt removal of weeds, spent crop plants, and diseased plants. Insect problems and infestations must be addressed at once to stop their spread to other plots.

The County of Sacramento reserves the right to hold special events at the gardens in its program. Such events may include opening the garden to the public. All events will be monitored by County of Sacramento staff to protect the Gibson Ranch Community Garden Program participants' plots from damage.

Paths

Paths adjacent to each plot are the joint responsibility of the gardeners on both sides of the path. Paths must be kept clear, level, and free of obstructions (tools and hoses) and free of plants. Please note that herbicides are not allowed (see "Chemicals" section). You may not extend your garden beyond its official defined boundary. Your garden plants must not extend into or over paths.

Dust and Noise Control

Dust

Dust must be contained on site. To reduce dusty conditions, water down the work area and keep the area under a light mist as needed to keep dust from becoming air borne and so there are no visible dust emissions offsite.

Noise

- Equipment Noise – Use noise making equipment (tillers, shredders, lawn mowers, line trimmers, etc) only between the hours of 9:00 am – sunset.
- Other Noise – No amplified music will be allowed without approval from REGIONAL PARKS. Keep personal music players turned down so others cannot hear them.

Chemicals

The Gibson Ranch community garden is an organic garden. Inorganic chemical fertilizers, insecticides, pesticides, and herbicides are prohibited. Gardeners using these materials will be prohibited from gardening within the County's Community Gardens.

Only under extreme conditions will herbicides be used outside of the limits of the garden plots to control problem areas; this will ONLY be done by the REGIONAL PARKS under controlled conditions. Dates of spraying will be posted in the garden and will depend on weather conditions.

Composting

Composting areas are available in the garden. Useable plant matter from the garden shall be free of seeds, and seed heads, and shall not be diseased or harbor insects; unusable plant material will be bagged and tied shut. All useable plant matter shall be cut to 6 inches and placed immediately in the compost bin. **Do not** place any compostable materials alongside of the compost bin; all materials must go inside the bins otherwise it

must be bagged. All fresh vegetables scraps shall be buried in the compost bin and not left on top of the pile.

Trash

Trash must be picked up and disposed of promptly. Gardeners must bag all trash or place it in a container. Since gardens do not have trash pickup service, gardeners are required to remove any trash they create and/or bring to the garden. Recycle plant containers in a designated area.

Water

Water is provided by the County of Sacramento. Timers and drip irrigation may be used but must be paid for by each gardener. This includes all modifications to the faucets or hose bibs. Faucets must be available to other gardeners as well.

Gardeners are responsible to be water conservation minded. Do not leave water turned on while you are not in the gardens. Make sure the faucet is turned off when you leave. Any water that is left on unattended may be turned off by any gardener. Each gardener must take care not to drag hoses and tools over other gardener's plots.

If there is an emergency such as a broken water line, turn off the water to the garden then contact the County Operator by dialing 311.

To prevent mosquitoes, standing water is not allowed in community gardens; this includes, fountains, water gardens, bogs, water in containers of any size used for starting plants or any other type of wet environment that could sustain mosquito breeding.

Tools

Garden tools may be kept on-site in a tool shed or tool locker. Please return them promptly when you are through using them, in a clean condition and organized manner. All tools and equipment are used at the gardener's own risk. Gardeners should report missing or broken tools to REGIONAL PARKS. Personal tools may be stored in the shed or tool locker, but they are there at the owner's risk.

Personal Items in the Garden

Gardeners may bring personal items into the garden at their own risk. The County of Sacramento is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal items in the garden.

Leaving the Garden for the Day

When leaving the garden for the day, check with other gardeners to let them know that you are leaving and if they need tool shed; don't assume that they will lock the shed. Turn off water faucets, lock the tool shed, and scramble the lock combinations if you are last one to leave the garden.

Prohibited Plants and Other Materials

Garden plots are intended to be used to produce vegetables, plant bearing fruits, edible seeds, herbs or other plants used for cooking, edible extraction products, fermentation, or ornamental/beneficial floral production

Prohibited Plants Within Garden Plots:

- Trees (all species)
- Marijuana, hemp, tobacco or any other plant used in the production of a controlled substance.
- Needle bearing catus and succulents.
- Plants that produce scrambling thorny stems (exception: roses)
- Plants that at maturity will grow beyond the boundary of the garden plot and cannot be maintained to remain so, or to such a height that the plant(s) blocks the accessibility of sunlight or impedes access to another garden plot.
- Plants that propagate by means of rhizomes or stolons.
- Plants that produce an odor that is deemed to be foul or obnoxious to other people.
- Plants that can create a safety hazard or possible damage to the garden infrastructure.
- Plants grown from genetically modified seeds or from seeds containing prophylactic or growth enhancing coatings.
- Plants grown from license protected seeds.
- Plants bearing poisonous fruit or berries
- Plants listed as invasive
<https://calinvasives.ucdavis.edu/>
- Weeds listed as noxious
https://wric.ucdavis.edu/information/info_spec_weed.htm

Prohibited Materials within Garden Plots

- Pressure treated or chemically treated lumber
- Ground coverings not otherwise manufactured for use in gardens.
 - *Clear plastic film only may be used to solarize a garden plot. Plots covered in plastic for solarization may remain covered up to 8 weeks maximum.*
- Tires
- Plywood, oriented strand board, composition board and particle board
- Sheet metal
- Landscape materials such as wood chips, wood fiber larger than 1/16 of an inch in diameter, decorative bark, rocks, pebbles, sand, and polished glass beads.

Items Brought Into the Garden

Items intended for use within the garden weighing over 50 pounds or 3'X3'X3' (1 cubic yard) in size must be approved by REGIONAL PARKS before they are brought into the garden. This includes, but is not limited to, concrete, bricks, soil, rock, wood chips or mulch, lumber, or metal objects. All deliveries must be approved by REGIONAL PARKS.

Personal Safety in the Garden

All gardeners should be familiar with their fellow gardeners and should recognize others in the garden that are visiting or volunteering. It is recommended that gardeners be aware of all others in the garden and that gardeners notify others when they are leaving the garden.

Appropriate safety equipment should be worn when working in the garden and using power equipment, including but not limited to, shoes or boots, gloves, eye protection, and ear protection. Tools and equipment are used at the gardener's own risk.

Plot Fencing, Trellises, and Other Structures

Plot fencing is subject to REGIONAL PARKS approval. Approved plot fencing will be temporary only, not in excess of 48" in height, open wire and post construction only, and is not to be constructed of permanent material (i.e., concrete). A trellis not more than six feet tall adjacent to paths may be used on two sides of a plot. Trellises must not be constructed so that they block sunlight from other plots at any time. Both fences and trellises must be easy to remove and must be removed when a gardener gives up the plot. High-rise towers, walls, or any construction or assemblage of materials that encloses a plot or intrudes on another's plot are not permitted. Only one side of a plot can have vertical trellis-like, open, airy structures for supporting climbing vegetables, vines or flowers. Poles, stakes, cages and light wooden trellises are permitted.

Shade Structures in Community Gardens

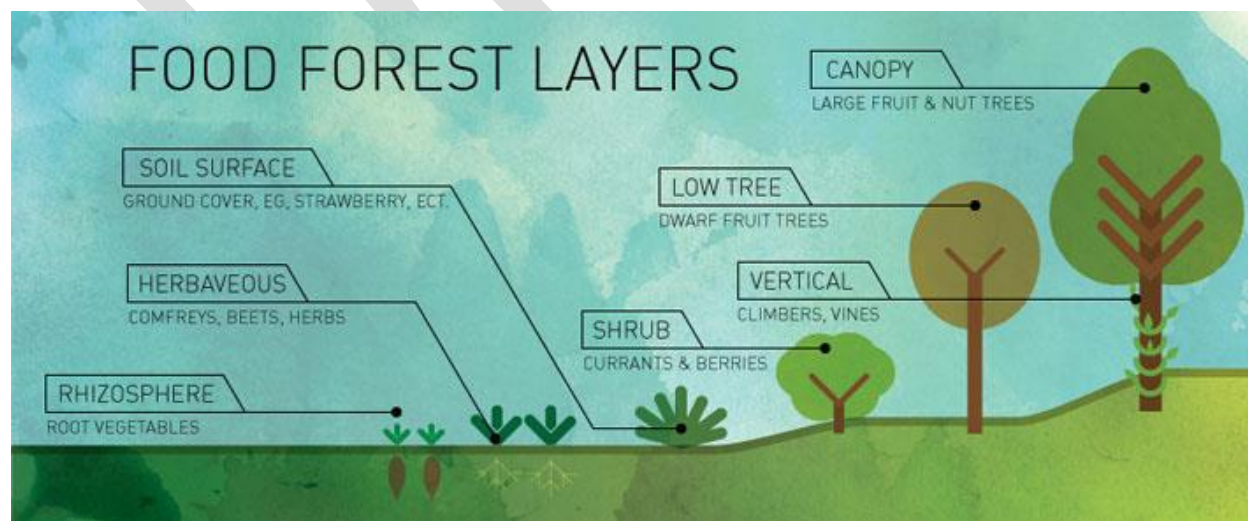
Shade structures in the garden will be limited to those approved by REGIONAL PARKS.

Vehicles in the Garden

Private vehicles are not allowed access to Gibson Ranch Community Garden outside of designated parking areas. Contact REGIONAL PARKS to arrange assistance with deliveries.

GIBSON RANCH FOOD FOREST

The Gibson Ranch Food Forest is adjacent to the Gibson Ranch Community Garden, and is open to the public. Gardeners who participate in the Gibson Ranch Community Garden can work on projects in the Gibson Ranch Food Forest to help meet their required monthly volunteer hours, but should coordinate and get prior approval from REGIONAL PARKS for all work completed in the Gibson Ranch Food Forest.



<https://sustainableamerica.org/blog/seattles-first-food-forest/>