



## Procedure summary for tenant-led community gardens at Toronto Community Housing (TCHC)

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### Purpose and scope

The procedure:

- Establishes clear rules and processes for tenant-led community gardening on TCHC properties.
- Supports safe, equitable, and well-managed access to community garden spaces. It also outlines the role of staff in monitoring and enforcing the rules.
- Applies to all tenant-initiated outdoor, rooftop, and indoor gardens on TCHC property. This includes allotment, collective, beautification, and composting gardens.
- Does not apply to staff-led gardens, third-party agency gardens, or non-gardening activities occurring in garden spaces.

### Community garden types and participation

TCHC supports several types of community gardens:

- Allotment gardens with individual plots;
- Beautification gardens focused on non-food plants;
- Collective gardens managed jointly by participants;
- Indoor gardens;
- Rooftop gardens; and
- Composting systems.

Participation requires tenants to be in good standing with Tenancy Management. Good standing with TCHC means a tenant is in compliance with their lease obligations, specifically regarding legal and behavioral standards. To learn more about participation

requirements, you can read the [Community Garden Policy \(PDF\)](#). Participants are also required to complete a Gardener Application Form and a Community Gardening Agreement each year.

Allotment garden plots are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. TCHC uses a waitlist maintained by the Community Services Coordinator (CSC). Each household may hold one plot for a maximum of three consecutive years, with renewals subject to availability and waitlist demand.

Beautification and collective gardens are shared spaces. Those participation limits are based on site capacity.

Accessibility needs may be accommodated through the application and renewal process.

### **Application and approval process**

1. Tenants must apply by completing a Gardener Application Form and signing a Community Gardening Agreement, available [online](#).
2. The CSC reviews applications to confirm eligibility, completeness, and compliance with policy requirements, verifies tenancy status, and assigns plots where applicable.
3. Approved tenants are notified within four weeks of the application deadline. They may begin gardening once approval is confirmed, and the gardening season opens.
4. The Community Gardening Agreement requires the tenant to sign it once a year during their gardening term (maximum of three years).

### **Gardening season and use rules**

The gardening season typically runs from May 1 to November 14, weather permitting. Garden access is limited to designated hours between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Tenants must maintain their plots and participate respectfully in shared spaces. Failure to begin gardening by June 15 may result in plot reassignment due to abandonment.

### **New community gardens process**

1. Tenants may propose new community gardens by submitting a Community Garden proposal form on the TCHC [website](#). A minimum of five tenants from separate leases is required to apply.
2. Proposals are reviewed by Facilities Management, Risk Management, and other TCHC departments to make sure they meet safety and accessibility needs, as well as other guidelines of the Community Garden Policy. Final approval is at TCHC's discretion.
3. If approved, the site is added to the inventory of community gardens. Tenants must then follow the standard application and management process.

### **General restrictions**

- Pesticides and prohibited plants are not allowed in any community garden.
- Produce is for personal use only and cannot be sold or distributed without written authorization.
- Height limits, clear pathways, and [Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design](#) principles must be respected.
- Smoking, alcohol, illegal drugs, and pets are prohibited in garden spaces. Service animals are allowed.

### **Plot abandonment and termination**

According to the [Community Garden Policy \(PDF\)](#), TCHC retains the right to revoke garden use at any time. Particularly in emergencies or where required by law. Where possible, TCHC will provide notice and attempt to minimize disruption to gardeners.

Abandoned plots are reassigned to tenants on the waitlist. If a gardening agreement is terminated, all items must be removed. Any unclaimed materials become TCHC property.

## **Addressing breaches**

Breaches of garden rules are categorized as minor, major, or severe.

- **Minor breaches** are expected to be resolved by gardeners or garden committees.
- **Major and severe breaches** are handled by TCHC staff using a progressive enforcement process. This may include warnings, suspension, or removal from gardening privileges.
- **Severe breaches** result in immediate removal. They may involve additional legal action.

All decisions related to breaches are final.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

**Engagement CSC:** oversees application intake, approvals, site readiness, signage, plot assignment, compliance monitoring, and dispute resolution.

**Tenant gardeners and garden committees:** Responsible for maintaining gardens, following rules, resolving minor issues, and reporting serious concerns.

**Volunteer Garden Coordinators:** Support daily operations and act as points of contact between tenants and staff for gardening committees.

## **Compliance and review**

Non-compliance may result in escalating consequences. This includes the loss of gardening privileges.

This procedure is reviewed every five years in alignment with the Tenant Community Gardens Policy.