

Community Garden Handbook 2022

The Tom Settlemire Community Garden (TSCG) is an organic community garden owned and managed by the Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust (BTLT). The Garden is on Crystal Spring Farm, a 320-acre working farm owned by the Land Trust. The mission of the Tom Settlemire Community Garden is to provide intergenerational organic gardening opportunities, increase the availability of locally grown food for the alleviation of hunger in our community, and offer experiential gardening education at a nominal cost to the people of the greater Brunswick & Topsham area. Access to the Garden is at the end of Maurice Drive (off Baribeau Drive) and is adjacent to a trailhead and the Labyrinth in the Woods.

**Please review this handbook carefully and contact the Garden Coordinator with any questions or concerns.*

| Table of Contents | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Page Number | Section Title |
| 1-2 | 1. History and Community Responsibilities |
| 2 | 2. Benefits |
| 2 | 3. Plot Assignment |
| 2-3 | 4. Plot Maintenance and Crops |
| 3 | 5. Pests at the TSCG |
| 3-4 | 6. Volunteer Requirements |
| 5 | 7. Garden Mentorship Program |
| 5 | 8. Garden Committee |
| 5 | 9. Organic Only and Other Crop Limitations |
| 5 | 10. Miscellaneous |
| 5 | 11. Forfeiture |
| 6 | Acceptable/ Unacceptable Product List |
| 7 | Guidelines for Compost Bins and Weed Pit |

1. History of the Garden

In the spring of 2012, after much research and planning, hundreds of volunteers came together to till and prepare the TSCG's individual plots, install a perimeter fence, install a shed, build compost bins. The Land Trust worked closely with Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Program (MCHPP) to develop the Common Good Garden (CGG) – a 6,000 sq. ft. area of the garden where plot holders and other community volunteers could grow food for MCHPP's pantry and soup kitchen. The community, local funders, volunteers, and Revision Energy joined forces to install a solar-powered water system. The water system was expanded in 2013 to include an automated irrigation system for the CGG that significantly increased yields and reduced the need for volunteers to water. The TSCG is a beautiful, vibrant space ready to evolve and meet the needs of its growing community. We are excited to share this space with you.

Responsibilities of TSCG Members

The Tom Settlemire Community Garden is first and foremost a community of people. If you tend your plot well, keep it weeded and harvested, and contribute time to maintenance of common areas, you will make an invaluable contribution to the community that is the heart of our Garden. Garden rules are based on a simple foundation – *be a good neighbor*. Member gardeners tend their plots responsibly and with organic methods and materials, and volunteer to maintain the fence, pathways, demonstration gardens, common areas and the CGG.

2. Benefits - The annual plot fee entitles gardeners to the following:

- Your garden plot: 10' x 16' (full) or 10' x 8' (half) of some of the best agricultural soils in the region!
- Two wheelbarrows of compost (purchased by the Land Trust in bulk each spring).
- Fencing around entire garden and three-foot, wood chipped paths between plots.
- Access to timely electronic information and support from agencies such as the Cooperative Extension Service and Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association. *Please note that all Garden communications are sent via email.*
- Access to the communal garden shed, wheelbarrows, and tools.
- Composting area for disposal of garden waste.
- Potential for participation bulk orders of row cover and other needed supplies.
- Connection to a great community of gardeners!

3. Assignment of Available Plots

- Plots are assigned on a first come, first served rolling basis.
- One plot per person/family (unless extra plots are available – see below).
- Returning plot holders will be re-assigned the same plot, provided they submit their renewal application by **Friday, February 25, 2022**. *Those who do not submit their renewal application by Friday, February 25, 2022 are not assured their same plot, or any plot at all. They are entered into the first come, first served queue.*
- After all plots are assigned, names will be placed on a waiting list.
- Second plots will be allotted only after all gardeners on the waiting list have been given a plot, and not before May 16, 2021. Second plots are allotted only for the current year.
- Gardeners who are no longer able to tend their plot for any reason are asked to notify the Garden Coordinator immediately at garden@btlt.org or (207) 729-7694. We do understand commitments change. It is usually easy for us to fill a plot if we know we need to. It is much harder to hold your plot for you, let it get overgrown and neglected, and then try to clean it out and have someone else plant mid-season, than it is to reassign early on!

4. Plots, Plot Maintenance & Crops

- **Gardeners are responsible for working their plots by June 1.** Plots untended by this date will be offered to those on the waitlist unless other arrangements have been made with the Garden Coordinator.
- Vegetables must be harvested in a timely manner. Rotten tomatoes, squash, and cucumbers are a source of disease and will cause 'sprouting' problems the following year and attract unwanted pests. Failure to harvest is also a waste of good food that you worked hard to grow! *If you are having difficulty harvesting or using the food in your plot at any time (such as a vacation, or otherwise), please contact the Garden Coordinator and they can help you get the food harvested and donated to Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Program.*

- 3-foot wood chipped paths are laid out between plots and around the TSCG perimeter. Gardeners are responsible for keeping their plot and paths next to their plot weeded throughout the season. Woodchips are provided for gardeners to use on paths as needed.
- Plots should be planned so trailing plants do not spread into paths or other gardens.
- Tall crops (pole beans, corn, etc.) should be situated on the south side of the plot so they won't shade other plots. Very tall plants should not be grown in the plots. **SUNFLOWERS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN GARDEN PLOTS.** Note: We have been lax on the sunflower rule in recent years, and there are many sunflower volunteers now. *Please weed them out, failure to do so may result in removal by Land Trust.*
- Garden structures (trellises, fences, posts, etc.) are allowed as long as they do not shade neighboring gardens. Raised beds may be constructed if desired at gardener's expense. Do not use pressure treated wood as the chemicals can leach into the soil.
- Water is available from two tanks filled by solar-powered pumps. Plot holders should use watering cans to carry water to their plots from the faucets at the tanks. **HOSES ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE PLOT SYSTEM** to avoid damaging plants in neighboring plots and accidentally draining the tanks. If you are physically unable to carry water to your plot, let us know when you join, and we will do our best to assign you a plot close to the water tanks.
- Gardens must be put to bed by the end of October or two weeks after the first killing frost. Weeds, dead plants, vegetables, and non-biodegradable mulch must be removed. Exceptions are cover crops, frost-resistant vegetables such as kale, brussels sprouts and parsnips, and fall plantings such as garlic. If you intend to work in your plot past the end of October, you must let the Garden Coordinator know.
- Returning gardeners may leave perennial plants, trellises, fences, raised beds and other structures in place. The Land Trust is not responsible for items that are lost, stolen, or damaged at TSCG.
- Members who are not renewing their plot are expected to leave their garden free of weeds and structures. Raised beds may be left in place upon request.

5. Pests at the TSCG

- At TSCG there are many gardeners, many different crops, and many different insects. *Gardeners accustomed to insect pressure in their home gardens will likely find the TSCG to be a more challenging growing environment in terms of pest damage.*
- With so many different gardeners, it is impractical to attempt to implement a universal pest management program. During the season, we will email specific organic pest control ideas to all TSCG members as different insects appear. We have developed a list of acceptable and unacceptable organic pest control products, which appears at the end of this document.
- Prior growing seasons show us that the following insects are particularly intense TSCG: striped cucumber beetles, Mexican bean beetles, squash beetles, Colorado potato beetles, and cutworms. We highly recommend if you plan to grow cucumbers, beans, potatoes, or other crops beloved by these pests, that you pay close attention to planting time (for example, planting as late as you can to try to avoid the most productive time of the insect's life cycle) and use row cover.

6. Volunteer Requirements for Plot Holders

Plot holders are required to donate six (6) hours of time during each growing season in support of TSCG. Without your volunteer time, TSCG would, quite literally, not exist. We need and deeply appreciate each of you! We will discuss specific volunteer duties at the orientation sessions. The following are opportunities to volunteer:

- **Workdays:** Workdays will be held throughout the season on a weekly or monthly basis. There will also be spring and fall workdays when the community gets together to open and close the Garden and take on large tasks.
 - **Teams:** Volunteers can also join a team to share and coordinate responsibilities with other volunteers. The Mowing Team is responsible for regular mowing and weed whacking throughout the garden. The Compost Team is responsible for turning and maintaining the compost piles at TSCG. The Orchard Team is responsible for the preservation and care of the fruit trees in the shared section of the garden. If you are interested in joining one of these teams, please indicate your interest on the plot application form or get in touch with the Garden Coordinator.
 - **Maintenance:** The success of the Garden depends upon maintenance of shared spaces. Some plot holders take on maintaining a perennial or demonstration garden. Additionally, keeping the shed organized, the garden space clear of trash, and the pathways cleared and weeded are all tasks that require volunteer time.
 - **CGG Weeding:** There are almost always opportunities to weed in the Common Good Garden. This is something that you can do for 10 minutes while visiting your garden plot. Every little bit helps, and you should never hesitate to wander into a CGG row (or 5!) and weed it.
 - **CGG Work Sessions:** There are 2-3 weekly work sessions to plant, tend, and harvest the Common Good Garden. Each season, thousands of pounds of fresh food are grown for Mid Coast Hunger Prevention in the CGG. This could not happen without the vital contribution of volunteers. The work session schedule is set at the beginning of the season.
 - **Ad Hoc Tasks:** As all gardeners know, many tasks arise during the growing season that are unpredictable. Throughout the season, the Garden Coordinator will email plot holders about unexpected needs.
 - **Events:** The TSCG organizes events throughout the year. There are Gardening Workshops in winter, the Plant Sale (our biggest fundraiser) in spring, and the Plotluck Party in the fall. These events require volunteer time to plan, set-up and clean-up.
- If you have any special skills/interests you would like to share with the garden (e.g. carpentry, particular crop expertise, etc.), please let the Garden Coordinator know before the season begins.
 - If you do not feel that any of these options are a fit for you, please contact the Garden Coordinator before sending in your application. If you are ever uncertain how to get your hours, feel free to check in with the Garden Coordinator for ideas or direction.
 - Plot holders are responsible for recording their volunteer hours through the website portal located at www.btlit.org/garden-volunteers/. The Garden Coordinator will send reminders throughout the season if you are low on hours. Please make sure to record all your volunteer hours, even if you have reached the required number. Reporting total volunteer hours helps with planning and aids fundraising efforts as it demonstrates both what it takes to run the TSCG and the depth of community investment in the project.

Volunteer hours are essential to the TSCG's operation. **If the season goes by you haven't made a good faith effort to meet your hours, we will be unable to offer you a plot the following season.** However, we absolutely understand that life happens, and sometimes you may not be able to complete your volunteer commitment as fully as you intended. If this becomes the case for you, please be in touch with the Garden Coordinator.

THANK YOU for this important support!

7. Garden Mentorship Program

- Gardeners with two or more years of experience gardening at TSCG can opt to support a new TSCG gardener through our mentorship match program. We know that the first season at TSCG can be difficult because of the garden's unique microclimate and the prevalence of pests. The goal is to help new gardeners adapt to gardening at TSCG and build relationships within our garden community.
- Please indicate in your plot application or reach out to the Garden Coordinator if you are interested in being a mentor or getting matched with a mentor as a mentee.
- Being a mentor can count towards your required garden volunteer hours!

8. Garden Committee

- The Garden Committee oversees the community garden and actively supports the TSCG mission. The Garden Committee works with the Garden Coordinator and other BTLT staff to support the maintenance and planning of the garden.
- A meeting schedule for the Committee will be determined in the spring.

9. Organic Only and Other Crop Safety Limitations

- Non-organic fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides are not permitted. (Please see Acceptable/Unacceptable product list at the end of this document.)
- Product labels must state that the product is 100% organic (except for seeds).
- Smoking is not allowed in or around the Garden. Tobacco mosaic virus, which can be carried on smokers' hands, is a serious threat to tomatoes and other related plants.
- While returning gardeners are welcome to plant perennial crops (such as chives and other herbs), you should not plant any crop considered noxious or invasive. If you're not sure whether a plant is invasive, contact the Garden Coordinator, the Land Trust, or the Extension Service for advice.

10. Miscellaneous

- *No dogs or other pets are allowed in the Garden at any time.* A reminder that dogs must be leashed on and around the trails on Crystal Spring Farm.
- Children are always welcome, but please ensure they are respectful of neighbors' plots and Garden infrastructure to avoid damage.
- Carry out anything that cannot be composted (compost guidelines on last page).

11. Forfeiture

- If these guidelines are not followed or a plot is unused, untended, or neglected, the Garden Coordinator will attempt to contact the gardener first by email and then by phone.
- Plot holders who do not respond to these contacts may have their plot given to someone else or otherwise put to use.
- In cases of forfeiture, fees will not be refunded. \$30 will be charged to gardeners who leave neglected plots to cover the clearing of the plot.
- Consideration made for vacations/life events that lead to temporary neglect of typically well-tended plots, please communicate with the Garden Coordinator.

ACCEPTABLE GARDEN PRODUCTS

There are hundreds of organic products for garden use--this list is by no means comprehensive. In general, look for OMRI (Organic Materials Review Institute), NOP (National Organic Products) or MOFGA (Maine Organic Farmers and Growers) certification on packaging. Our local garden centers (Skillins', Brook's, Urban Garden Center, Estabrook's, and more) carry many organic products. Fedco Seeds and Johnny's Seeds are great online sources, and are Maine based companies.

FERTILIZERS/SOIL AMENDMENTS

- **Organic, packaged fertilizers**-- Such as those made by North Country Organics and Espoma Organic
- **Fish Emulsion/Kelp/Seaweed**-- Improves plant vigor and stress resistance. (ex: Neptune's Harvest)
- **Finished Compost**
- **Manures** -- must be well-composted before use
- **Wood ashes** -- use sparingly as ashes raise the pH level

INSECTICIDES

Organic insecticides are still insecticides. Their job is to kill insects. They cannot differentiate between potato beetles and honeybees. Since harm to beneficial insects can occur with sprays, prevention should always be your first line of defense. The next step is consistent hand picking/drowning in soapy water. Use pesticides only when there is a significant problem. Identify the pest first and use only the appropriate treatment. Review use instructions carefully--application timing is critical to maximize effectiveness and minimize unintended damage to beneficials. Contact the Garden Coordinator if you need help finding a solution.

- **Garlic, hot pepper, and other kitchen mixes** to mix and use as a spray
- **Kaolin Clay (Surround)**--protective barrier
- **Spinosad**-- caterpillars, leaf miners, Colorado Potato Beetle larvae
- **Insecticidal soaps** -- check labels for organic seal
- **Diatomaceous earth** -- controls slugs and snails, but dust can be harmful to beneficials
- **NEEM oil** -- promotes health and vigor of plants, some formulations registered as insecticides
- **Sluggo** -- slugs and snails. Contains iron phosphate, a naturally occurring soil mineral and bait.
- **Pyganic** -- (pyrethrin) Colorado potato beetle, cucumber beetle, flea beetle
- **Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*--Dipel)** -- leaf eating caterpillars

FUNGICIDES

- **Serenade (*Bacillus subtilis*)**
- **Sulfur**
- **Copper** (Use with extreme caution, as this has known impact on honeybee populations)
- **Botanical Oils**

UNACCEPTABLE PRODUCTS

****These products may not be used at any time in the Garden****

- Chemical fertilizers in bags
- Liquid fertilizers such as Miracle-Gro, Miracid, or Peters
- Chemical treatments for pests or diseases
- Sevin
- Rotenone
- Malathion
- Sabadilla
- Methoxychlor
- Diazonin
- Chemical slug baits other than Sluggo
- Any products that are not listed as certified organic products (OMRI, MOFGA, or NOP)

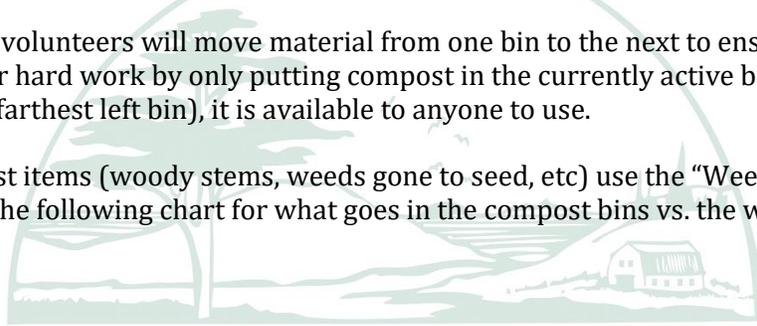
Guidelines for Compost Bins and Weed Pit

Tending to the compost already requires plenty of heavy lifting, and there's nothing more discouraging to our compost volunteers than having to clear inappropriate materials from nearly finished compost!

WHEN IN DOUBT, GO WITH THE WEED PIT!

Directions for proper composting:

1. Please first fill the bin on the right as you are facing the bins.
2. You are welcome to bring leaves, shredded paper, food scraps, and lawn clippings from home to add to the bins if you like. (Please no lawn clippings from lawns treated with herbicides or 'weed and feed' products)
3. When adding 'green' materials (food scraps, weeds, grass, etc.) please mix some 'brown' material in (leaves, shredded paper, etc.) at about a 1:1 ratio. Note: Weeds that have gone to seed should not be put in the bins.
4. A team of compost volunteers will move material from one bin to the next to ensure efficient composting. Please respect their hard work by only putting compost in the currently active bin. Once compost is fully composted (in the farthest left bin), it is available to anyone to use.
5. For hard to compost items (woody stems, weeds gone to seed, etc) use the "Weed Pit" in the large concrete blocks. Please see the following chart for what goes in the compost bins vs. the weed pit.



| COMPOST BINS | WEED PIT |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Food scraps• Leaves• Shredded paper• Weeds (not gone to seed)• Lawn clippings (not from treated lawns)• Plant materials that have gone by (dead flowers, pea plants, squash vines, etc) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tomato vines• Cabbage, broccoli, corn, and sunflower stalks• Any other veggie waste that is "very woody" or can be a disease vector• Diseased plants• Weeds that have gone to seed |

Please contact the Garden Coordinator at garden@btl.org if you have any questions