

Knoxville Community Garden



Garden Manual & Rules

Growing Season
2026

701 E Montgomery Street
Knoxville IA

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Introduction

Meeting the Needs of the Community

A community garden makes nutritious food more available and can reduce grocery bills for families. It brings neighbors from different backgrounds and ages together in a way that encourages community pride. In addition to providing healthy food, exercise, and quality outdoor time, gardening inspires people to be more creative in all areas of life. It is a great way to introduce children to science and help them understand ecosystems.

Why We're Building a Community Garden

MNM Community Garden is a grassroots project by the Mint 'N More Foundation with the mission to help us further our goal of cultivating health and nourishing agriculture by making edible gardens accessible to those without space, who want some support or just want to grow in a community space. We believe that access to fresh, nourishing food is important and can improve the health of our community. Not only that, when people learn to grow their own food, they become more educated consumers, choose more fruits and vegetables in their diet and reduce costs and dependence on food pantries. This garden is more than a place to grow vegetables. It's a space where neighbors can: **Grow their own food**, even if they don't have yard space, **Learn gardening skills**, from planting to composting , **Connect with others**, build friendships, and share in harvests , **Support local food systems** and practice sustainability And most Importantly **Give back**, with extra produce shared with local food pantries.

Planning and Design

Garden Plan



Cedar Raised Beds

Large=40 Sq Foot

Small= 20 Sq Foot

Garden Operations

Plot Allocation

A garden plot can be leased for the growing season for a small fee on a first-come, first-served basis. Low-to-moderate income households may be eligible for a sponsored membership. Non-profit and educational organizations are invited to participate as well. Members can grow food for their household or donate it to a charitable organization or a local food bank. Membership fees help cover the cost of maintaining and improving the garden site as well as give members a stake in the garden. Registration for the following year opens first to current members, who have the option to keep their same plot. New members are assigned plots on a first-come, first-served basis, with plots assigned randomly

Plot fee Schedule

Plot rent is from April 1 to November 15 annually.

Plot rent: Large plot Approx 40 Sq Feet \$50.00 Approx 20 Sq Feet Small plot \$35.00

Plots will be offered on a first come first served basis of completed applications by January 31st.

Planting and Harvesting Schedule

The Knoxville Community Garden is open from Mid March to Mid November with two monthly activities throughout the year. Plan to spend 1-2 hours average per week managing your plot. Some weeks may be busier or slower depending on the growing season.

January 31st Applications are Due

February 21st Plots assigned

March 21st Mid March Growing Party Garden rules & plot allocation

April 15 Last Frost Day

April 18th Planting begins Garden Work Day

May 15th Planting Deadline Plots must be planted by this date.

December 1st Garden Closes for the Winter. Garden lock combinations changed

Annual Events: Mandatory for plot holders

Mid-March Get Growing Party Each member is required to attend this important orientation meeting. The meeting will also cover such topics as garden planning and recommended seed and plant varieties. The garden lock combinations will be provided at the meeting. This date is set annually, based on weather conditions.

Monthly Work Days Focused time to work on larger garden tasks and plot holders to get their volunteer time fulfilled.

Mid-November Winterizing Party You can begin clearing your plot anytime as the growing season winds down and cooler temperatures set in. All dead plant matter, and non-plant materials (such as string, wire, and cages) must be removed. The straw mulch should remain in the bed. Prepare the plots for the winter

December 1st Garden Closes for the Winter. All plant matter and personal items must be removed by this date. The garden lock combinations will be changed. Refer to the current season calendar for specific event dates.

Maintenance Expectations

- Keep your plot and the pathway around it tidy and weed-free. Most gardeners tend their plots and pathways 2-3 times a week.
- Clean any tools or garden equipment you borrow from the lending library and return them to their designated storage areas.
- Control your rambling vines by using trellises to train them and keep them out of the pathway.
- Mulch your plot to prevent weeds and conserve water. Organic straw is provided as part of the plot fee.
- Remove diseased plants by pulling them up completely and disposing of them.
- Dispose of weeds and plant matter properly. The garden does have a composting system. Remove all plant matter from the garden pathways or any mowed grassy areas outside of the garden. You may place plant matter and weeds in the compost area.
- Harvest your fruits regularly. Picking early and often encourages maximum yield.

- Remove dead plants and rotting vegetables to prevent rodents and other critters from invading the garden.
- Participate in weeding and mulching workdays throughout the season. As part of our community garden, each member is asked to contribute 4 hours of volunteer service per growing season to help maintain our shared garden spaces. Members may allow plants to go to seed for seed-saving purposes.

Enforcement and Accountability

- Actively garden throughout the growing season. If a plot is not properly maintained by the given deadline or if not kept in good condition, you will receive an email warning.
- **First Warning email** The garden manager may send an email notifying you of activities outside the operational rules and you will have 7 days to respond or correct the issue.
- **Second Warning email** If the issue is not addressed within 7 days, you will receive a second email warning, giving you an additional 7 days to resolve the problem, along with a reminder of the consequences.
- Possible Forfeiture If you do not resolve the issue by the end of the second warning period, you may be required to forfeit your plot. **Your continued use of the garden is at the sole discretion of Mint 'N More Foundation**

All plots are subject to regular inspections, and failure to follow the rules outlined in the Member Agreement may result in the loss of your garden plot.

Safety And Security

This safety policy is intended to demonstrate that the Knoxville Community Garden recognizes our responsibility to conduct our gardening activities in a reasonable manner and to maintain healthy and safe conditions in the Knoxville Community Garden. For the purposes of this policy, any reference to the Knoxville Community Garden, "the garden" or "the garden site" means the general boundaries of the garden.

1. Adult gardeners are responsible for their own safety. Children of gardeners are expected to be under the control of their parent(s) or guardians(s) when at the garden site. Do not allow children to disturb other plots of the community plantings and compost area.

2. If you see a hazard, unsafe condition, or situation that could result in injury or ill health, take the appropriate action. Eliminate the hazard or unsafe condition only if you can do it safely and are comfortable taking the action to correct the hazard or unsafe condition. Otherwise, notify the Garden Manager as soon as possible
3. Rototillers, lawn mowers, power weed trimmers, wood chippers, chain saws, or other power equipment will be operated in the garden only by individuals over the age of 16 who own the equipment. These individuals use this equipment at their own risk.
4. The use of chemical herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizer is Not allowable These products may not be stored, mixed or applied on garden sites.
5. Be aware of your surroundings. For minor, non-emergency incidents, contact the garden coordinator as soon as possible. Sosia Duffy (**641-856-9848**) or Gardeners can notify Knoxville Police dispatch at (**641-828-0555**). For life threatening or other significant incidents, call **911** immediately. Also, call the garden manager.
6. Do not leave garden tools out at the garden site. Community tools should be put away in the tool shed and personal tools should be taken away when a gardener leaves the Knoxville Community Garden.
7. No fires or fireworks will be used on the Knoxville Community Garden site
8. Drugs or alcohol shall not be consumed on the garden site.
9. Urination and defecation on the open ground is not allowed.
10. Monitor Water Consumption

Composting and Waste Management

Our Composting station is located on the north side of the property. Gardeners are allowed to add plant material to it as they work.

Composting is the natural process of recycling organic waste, like food scraps, leaves, and yard trimmings into a rich soil-like material. Tips for composting are to use carbon-rich “brown” materials, like fall leaves, straw, dead flowers from your garden and shredded newspaper and nitrogen-rich “green” materials, like grass clippings, plant-based kitchen waste (vegetable peelings and fruit rinds). What to not compost you should not compost meat, fish, and dairy products, this can attract pests and cause odors, other items to avoid are pet waste and oily or greasy food.

What To Do With Trash

There is no trash service at the Community Garden. It is expected that any trash brought or created on site is taken with the member for disposal. There are sacks available in the tool shed for removal of items that can't be composted.

Watering and Irrigation system

Water is provided by Mint N' More Foundation. It is municipal water, safe for plants and ready to use without pumps or filters.

To protect the water system:

- 1) Turn the water off at the faucet.
- 2) Release the water pressure in the hose by pressing the hand sprayer.
- 3) Roll the hose onto the caddy without kinks.
- 4) Push the water hydrant handle down to the off position.

Always check that the water hydrant is turned off when not in use and before locking the gate. Report any leaks to the Garden Manager immediately. **Under no circumstances can the water hydrant be left on when gardeners are not present.**

Volunteer Programs

The Garden Coordinator works closely with the facilitator and serves as the liaison overseeing items relating to the Knoxville Community Garden. A community garden can only operate because of the members that work together to make it happen. **We are seeking a few more volunteers that would be willing to donate a little more time assisting the staff.**

Please "X" below any help you'd be willing to provide:

☐ **Work Day Coordinator/Planting Day Leader**

promote pre-planting activities such as getting seeds started and acquiring materials. He or she must secure access to supplies and tools and work out a planting schedule.

Work with MNM staff to schedule tools and resources for workdays.

☐ **Garden Mentor**

Work with interested gardeners to welcome and orient new gardeners. Mentors will provide information and support where needed.

☐ **Social Committee**

Work with other gardeners to organize social events to build community such as seed swap or Potlucks, Harvest Dinner

☐ **Volunteer Harvester**

Work with staff to harvest abandoned produce and to collect donated produce, on a monthly basis.

☐ **Resource Leader**

Help distribute and store garden materials including plant materials, tools, informational materials or (knowledge, skills, abilities you could contribute to the garden)

Plot Agreement and Release

Rules & Guidelines: I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the community Garden Manual and Rules. Please initial below:

_____ I understand that failure to follow these guidelines may result in the loss of gardening privileges.

_____ Liability Waiver I am aware of the risks and hazards associated with participating in the community garden and agree to release and forever discharge the Community Garden organizers/city/property owner from all claims of damages or actions arising out of my participation.

_____ Photo Release I grant permission for photographs taken of me, my minor children or my garden plot to be used for promotional purposes.

By signing below, I agree to all terms and conditions listed above and in the accompanying documentation. Please keep a copy of this agreement for your reference.

First Name (please print): _____

Last Name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

(Self or Parent/Guardian if under 18 years)

Organization (if applicable): _____

RETURN to:

Mint 'N More Foundation

PO Box: 208 Knoxville, IA 50138

Email: director@mnmfarms.org