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Prairie State College Community Garden Frequently Asked Questions

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What is organic gardening?

In its most basic sense, organic, as it relates to gardening, is defined as “grown with only animal or vegetable fertilizers, as manure, bone meal, compost, etc.”

We encourage all gardeners to grow their fruits and veggies, organically. To do so, we provide guidance on what alternatives can be used to chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

We encourage the use of natural fertilizers, such as fish pellets and compost, as well as companion planting, crop rotation, disease/pest resistant plants, etc. through education.

To discourage the use of chemical pesticides, when garden staff is notified of a potential pest problem, we work with the gardener to identify the pest and a natural solution. A garden advisory is then sent to all gardeners to

What is the cost of a garden plot?

Plots are \$25.00 per season.

What size are the plots?

There are 24 plots 4 foot wide by 8 foot long and two double plots which measure at 4 foot by 12 foot long.

Who do I contact to purchase a plot?

To purchase a plot, contact the sustainability coordinator, Alessandra Cairo, at acairo@prairiestate.edu or 708-709-3764.

Can I get a refund if I am unable to garden or if the season is bad?

All sales are final. Unfortunately, we cannot control the weather or gardening season. Should you no longer be able to tend to your plot, the plot and all contents, will be turned over to Prairie State College. The garden manager will maintain the plot for the remainder of the season with all produce being donated to Respond Now, or another food pantry.

When is the garden open?

The garden typically open from mid-to-late May to October 1. However, actual season opening and closing is weather dependent.

What are the garden hours?

The garden is open from sunrise to sunset daily. The garden manager hours vary by season. Check the garden shed for the current growing season's hours.

Can I bring friends and family or pets to the PSC community garden?

Friends and family should not be at your plot unsupervised if they were not listed on your contract. Please be advised, campus police has the authority to ask for identification and does receive a list of allowed gardeners. If you are at the garden and not on that list, you will be asked to leave.

Children under the age of 16 should not be left unsupervised at the garden.

Pets must be leashed at all times. Please remember, there is little shade at the garden. You may consider leaving them at home if you plan to be at the garden for a long time.

Can I bring my own seeds?

Yes. As a community gardener, you are responsible for bringing your own seeds and/or plants.

Can I bring my own soil, mulch, fertilizer?

Yes. Please be sure all products are organic and free of chemicals.

Dose the PSC community garden provide free seeds?

Occasionally, the PSC garden receives donations from local nurseries. Should this occur, a notification will be sent to all gardeners that a donation was received. Plants will be available on a first come first serve basis.

What's not allowed to be planted at the PSC community garden?

Garden rules currently do not restrict any plants. However, we do discourage viney plants as they may be seen as an intrusion. If you plant viney plants, please ensure they do not become overgrown and enter your neighbor's plot. Please note, we cannot be responsible for damage that occurs to your plants if they are outside your garden boundaries.

How do I dispose of garbage and unwanted items?

All organic materials can be placed into the garden compost bin. This includes weeds, rotten produce, and other plant-based materials.

Please do not discard of plastic, Styrofoam, and other landfill items in the compost bin. There is a garbage bin located just outside the shed for landfill waste.

Can I leave my personal items (i.e. folding chairs or garden supplies) in the shed?

You may check with the garden manger to see if storage space is available in the shed for the season. Please do so at your own risk. We are not responsible for lost or stolen items.

What should I do if I lose something at the PSC Community garden?

Lost items will be turned into the information desk at Prairie State College. If you have questions, or are looking for something specific, you can call 708-709-3500 or send an email to the sustainability coordinator at acairo@prairiestate.edu.

Can I donate to the PSC Community Garden?

Yes. Please contact the sustainability coordinator, Alessandra Cairo at acairo@prairiestate.edu.

Is the PSC Community Garden safe?

Yes. The garden is located on campus across the street from the main building. Campus police and safety patrols the site 24 hours/day. There is an emergency callbox located near the garden, as well, if you are if you are in need of assistance.

For medical emergencies, please dial 911 from your cell phone. Should you need to reach campus police from your cell phone, please dial 708-709-7777.