

# COMMUNITY GARDENS PROGRAM GOVERNANCE PROCEDURES

## GARDEN MANAGERS GROUP

The Community Gardens Managers Group consists of all current and alternate volunteer garden managers. The managers group provides input on program objectives, amendments to program rules and forms, budget priority setting, and other matters.

All issues require a simple majority vote by those group members present at a meeting, provided at least five current garden managers are present.

The managers group meets semi-annually, in October and March. Special meetings will be held as needed, with at least one-week advance notice. Manager group meetings will abide by Florida's Open Meetings law (Section 286.011, Florida Statutes), including public noticing through Sarasota County's weekly calendar, taking and retaining minutes, and holding meetings in a facility accommodating the public.

## GARDEN MANAGER NOMINATION AND SELECTION

1. In July of each year, any member who wants to serve as a garden manager should indicate so on their membership agreement. Prerequisites include being an active member for a minimum of one year and having no membership agreement violation notices on record. Garden managers serve two-year terms — one year as an alternate, followed by one year as a primary manager — and may serve any number of consecutive terms. The number of garden managers is based upon the number of plots in a garden, with one primary manager and one alternate for every 20 plots.
2. When there are more nominees than vacancies at a given garden, active members in good standing will vote to select the manager(s) at their garden. Voting will be open for a minimum of 15 calendar days. Late ballots will not be counted.
3. Any newly selected positions will become effective on October 1 of each year, with previous managers relinquishing their responsibilities at that time.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

In the true sense of a "community" garden, disagreements should be handled informally through discussion between the parties involved whenever practical. A member should first attempt to work out any issue directly and respectfully with the other party. If needed, collect the facts, including the date, time, place, and nature of the incident(s) and document any attempted resolution(s).

If members are unable to resolve concerns on their own, the next step is to ask a garden manager for help. If the grievance is with a manager, the issue should be addressed with an alternate manager, when feasible.

On occasion, conflicts and complaints cannot be resolved informally. For these situations, the parties involved should complete a grievance form to notify the Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator then will consult the parties involved to collect facts and follow the normal process for rule violations, if any have occurred. Grievances must be filed within two weeks following an incident to be reviewed.

Members may appeal a grievance-related decision/termination within 14 calendar days of the outcome by requesting reconsideration by the County Extension Director. The Director will review the information and determine whether it warrants further consideration.