

UF/IFAS Extension **Sarasota County**
Community Garden Program Membership Agreement

The Sarasota County Community Garden Program is administered by UF/IFAS Extension in cooperation with Sarasota County (jointly known as UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County).

The Community Garden Program Membership Agreement is to be submitted annually, upon plot assignment or renewal, along with a \$40 non-refundable annual program fee. New members joining at the end of a garden year (between April 1 and July 31) pay a reduced fee of \$15, with a subsequent new form and full fee required for renewal into the new garden year.

This membership agreement is valid from Aug. 1, 2025, through July 31, 2026, and represents a 12-month commitment of the Garden Member. Annual renewals for eligible members occur in July of each year and are considered past due on July 31.

| MEMBER INFORMATION | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------|--|-----|
| Community Garden Name | | | | |
| Primary Member Name | | | | |
| Main Phone No. | | Alternate Phone No. | | |
| Email | | | | |
| Street Address | | | | |
| City | | State | | ZIP |
| Mailing Address (if different in July) | | | | |

Please describe any special skills you might have that would contribute to this garden community (e.g., carpentry, plumbing, mechanical, teaching, fundraising, gardening, managing, or computer experience):

| |
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| |
|--|

In the future, would you consider assisting in garden coordination? Yes | No

Would you like to be Garden Manager, Co-Manager, or Alternate Manager for this garden year? Yes | No

| EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|
| Contact Name | Phone No. | Relationship to Primary Member |
| | | |

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SECONDARY MEMBER INFORMATION

You MUST list the names of all family members or others that will work this plot, which might include your emergency contact. Children must be listed by a parent. There is no additional cost or participation-hour increase for adding secondary members.

| Secondary Member Name | Secondary Member Email | Secondary Member Phone | Minor? (< 18 yrs old) |
|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| | | | Yes No |
| | | | Yes No |
| | | | Yes No |
| | | | Yes No |
| | | | Yes No |
| | | | Yes No |

Rules and Responsibilities

1. All park rules and local and state regulations must be followed. Garden hours are the same as park hours (sunrise to sunset). Pets are NOT allowed in community gardens.
2. Observe reasonable safety precautions. Gates and sheds should be kept locked to prevent access by unauthorized persons. **Garden Members are prohibited from giving gate codes/lock combinations to non-members.** Any individuals that may visit/tend the plot/paths with the primary member, or on their behalf, must be added as secondary member to the membership agreement. Due to the potential for injuries inherent to gardening, and the remote nature of some sites, it is advised to keep a cell phone on hand at all times. Report any suspicious persons or criminal activity to law enforcement immediately. Sarasota County and its partners assume no liability for losses resulting from theft or vandalism.
3. **Be an active gardener. Active gardeners regularly garden a minimum of two hours a week** to maintain the garden to park standards, reap successful harvest, and enjoy moderate exercise benefits of gardening. An active gardener regularly maintains their plot by keeping it fully planted each season, harvesting in a timely fashion, practicing responsible Integrated Pest Management (IPM), and keeping their plot and paths free of weeds, litter, and debris. (View: [IPM for Sarasota Community Gardens](#) and [IPM wallet guide](#))
4. **Contribute a minimum of 16 participation hours to help maintain common areas and vacant plots.** This may be accomplished by attending a **minimum** of four regularly scheduled workdays per year to help maintain common areas and vacant plots. The Garden Manager or designee may assign tasks or regular garden roles in lieu of workdays. All Members are expected to actively participate in maintenance and care of the garden. Participation hours may be assessed twice a year, in early January and in early June. **Members deemed deficient in participation hours may have membership terminated or non-renewed, accordingly.**
5. Equipment, supplies, and other materials must be properly stored. Pathways must be kept free from obstructions, including overgrown plants. Proactively communicate with Garden Managers regarding

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maintenance questions/compliance.

6. Plots should be actively gardened within 14 days of plot assignment. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Garden Manager. **If the Member is to be away for an extended period, they are responsible for appropriately covering the plot or ensuring that another garden member will actively tend the plot and adjacent communal areas. The Garden Member will proactively notify the Garden Manager.** Plot coverings must last the duration of their use, and this upkeep is the responsibility of the member. See our “Putting Your Garden to Bed” video (youtu.be/t47r1_xgYB4) for suggested methods or contact your Garden Manager for guidance.
7. Remain responsible for all personal items brought into the garden. Lost or abandoned items will be held for 30 days and, if not claimed during that time, will be considered a donation to Sarasota County.
8. Keep sheds clean and orderly. Sheds are to be used specifically for storing garden supplies for the group as a whole and are not intended for personal use.
9. Vegetative waste, except heavy stalks and vines, should be disposed of in compost bins and not trash receptacles. Do not compost tomato, eggplant, or peppers that were not grown in the garden. Diseased plants and other waste should be removed for home pickup or proper disposal in dumpsters. **Do not compost whole plants; cut into pieces before placing in compost bins.**
10. **Harvest timely to prevent pests and waste, and harvest only from assigned garden plot.** Pull spent or dwindling plants in a prompt manner; this reduces plant diseases/pests in the garden and increases likelihood of plant compostability. If you are holding a plant/harvest to save seeds, please review this with your Garden Manager as some plants harbor pests that cause more damage than the benefit of saving the seeds. Communal beds may be harvested in moderation or as determined by the Garden Manager.
11. Produce grown in community gardens is for self-consumption only. Sale or donation to any third party is prohibited without prior written approval by the Program Coordinator.
12. **Plot plantings are primarily intended to be edible.** Decorative plantings must follow Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ principles. Plant species listed as Category I or II by the Florida Invasive Species Council are prohibited in all garden areas. See floridainvasives.org/plant-list/ and assessment.ifas.ufl.edu/assessments/ for more information or contact the Garden Coordinator. Tree/shrub installation within plots is prohibited, due to shading and complications with root systems. The property owner reserves the right to remove or prune any plant that is prohibited, dead, diseased, or creating a hazard or public safety issue. Individuals are responsible for any costs associated with removal of non-conforming plants that they install.
13. Permission must be obtained from the Program Coordinator prior to construction of any new structures or any activity that may affect existing structures or require contracted services or permitting.
14. **All Garden Members are responsible for proper water use. Do not leave water turned on or in hoses.** Garden hoses must be stored on racks when not in use to maintain a tidy appearance and help prevent injuries. Every effort should be made to conserve water resources and water systems. Gardens may require Members to attend a tutorial to learn how the watering system works and how to keep the system operational. Use of water-saving methods, such as hand-watering and mulching is encouraged. [Report any leaks or other observed problems to the Garden Manager immediately.](#)
15. Prevent and manage pest problems per the Community Garden Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plan. IPM uses proper plant selection and maintenance and the least toxic method of pest control to encourage healthy plants that resist insect and disease infestations. Prior to applying chemicals

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within your plot, refer to the IPM plan for a list of approved chemicals that are consistent with **organic gardening practices** and rated safe for edibles. Acceptable pest control methods include, but are not limited to, pruning or removing diseased or infected plants, hand picking, soil solarization, biological controls (e.g., *Bacillus thuringiensis*), and natural botanicals. (View: [IPM for Sarasota Community Gardens](#) and [IPM wallet guide](#))

16. Complete UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County's power tools safety training prior to using any power tools. Wear appropriate safety protection when operating power tools. [Register on Eventbrite](#) to receive the video link via email. Notify the Garden Coordinator and Garden Manager after watching the video so your completion can be recorded.
17. The use of tobacco products in the gardens is prohibited.
18. In no case shall materials that might be construed as offensive be allowed in gardens.
19. **Any provocative, uncooperative, inflammatory, or belligerent behavior is prohibited** while at the garden site, during garden activities, or in garden communications. Members must conduct themselves in a positive manner that contributes to an enjoyable community atmosphere for the garden.
20. **Communicate proactively with Garden Managers.** Address violations or concerns promptly. **Be respectful of volunteer time** by following membership rules and responding to Manager communications and following sound guidance. Email is the primary form of communication, and if you elect not to use email you will need to proactively communicate with Garden Managers to receive updates, check bulletin boards, etc.
21. **Regularly assess if you have adequate time to actively garden and fully participate. If not, clear and cover the plot and resign your garden membership so another may enjoy the space and grow food for their table.**
22. UF/IFAS Extension, Sarasota County, and all affiliated organizations that are partners with, or otherwise support, the Community Gardens Program assume no liability for injuries or accidents.
23. Report hazards or problems to the Garden Manager. If the manager is not available, report urgent issues to the Program Coordinator. For emergencies, call 911.

Termination and Resignation

1. This agreement is valid from Aug. 1, 2025, through July 31, 2026. Annual renewals occur in July of each year and are considered past due on July 31 for the upcoming year. **Members reported for repeated or multiple violations, or unresolved violations, may become ineligible for renewal and/or may have their membership terminated.**
2. Any Member who voluntarily chooses to stop gardening or not renew their annual Agreement should notify the Garden Manager and UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County immediately. **The Member is responsible for removing all vegetation in the plot upon termination of the Agreement.** When a plot becomes available, UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County will reassign it to the next person on the waiting list. This Agreement is not transferable, and Members are not authorized to turn over their plot to another person.
3. In the event of a membership agreement violation, the Garden Manager will attempt to resolve the matter by contacting the Member directly. If no resolution occurs, UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County will send a warning notice to the Member. Thereafter, the Member will have 14 calendar days to resolve the identified violation(s). If violations are not corrected, UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County will

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send a final warning notice to the Member. The Member will then have seven calendar days to comply. **Failure to abide by the rules stated within the membership agreement shall result in forfeiture of the participant's plot and associated fees. Sarasota County reserves the right to immediately terminate memberships for any violation(s).** Grievances may be filed formally through UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County's Conflict Resolution and Grievance Procedure. Members that are terminated or abandon a plot may not be eligible to garden at another community garden in this program.

Liability Release Statement

The undersigned, in consideration of being granted a plot in the Community Garden Program, hereby agrees and understands the risks involved in the Community Garden Program and fully assumes the risks for themselves, their assistants, family members and guests and further agrees to indemnify and hold harmless UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County, Sarasota County, Friends of Sarasota County Parks, the City of North Port, the City of Sarasota, and all affiliated organizations that are partners with or otherwise support the Community Garden Program from any and all claims resulting from any injury, sickness, loss or affiliation which may occur while engaged in any Community Garden activity.

Primary Member Name _____

Date _____

Signature (required) _____

Initials (required) _____

SAMPLE

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Agreement

I have read the Annual Membership Agreement and Liability Release Statement. By this application, **I agree to comply with the Community Garden Rules and Responsibilities. I understand that failure to comply with the rules and responsibilities will result in the termination of my Agreement and my plot assignment**, as determined by the UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County Community Garden Program Coordinator. I have read and agree to the terms contained within this agreement.

Name **Signature** **Date**

Primary Member

Secondary Member

Secondary Member

Secondary Member

Secondary Member

Secondary Member

Secondary Member

Culverhouse Community Garden Members
Please be aware of projects to improve the garden and park,
which might impact egress and include temporary water outages.

UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County reserves the right to amend this agreement.

An Equal Opportunity Institution.

The University of Florida is committed to providing universal access to all of our events. For disability accommodations, such as alternate formats of written material, please contact 941-861-5000 or sarasota@ifas.ufl.edu at least two weeks in advance. Learn more at ada.ufl.edu and scgov.net/ada.