

Gardening Matters



Promoting and Preserving Community Gardening across the Twin Cities
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Managing your Garden's Waiting List

No two ways about it, we continue to see overwhelming demand for community gardens. Gardens are having waiting lists for the first time.

Now it is everyone's job to have good waiting list policies. Here are some guidelines and strategies used by gardens around the Twin Cities.

1) Take name, phone number, address and email. Record the date their call or email or letter was received.

You'll want to invite these folks to garden events, potlucks or clean-ups. They took an interest in the garden -- honor it by inviting them to be part of the garden even if there isn't a plot available. This is a "good neighbor" practice and there may come a time when the garden needs all its friends!

Then share your waiting list with GardenWorks, for two reasons:

First, help us gauge demand for community garden space in the Twin Cities. We keep tally of the number of calls and where they live as people call to join a community garden. This information tells a powerful story both within the neighborhood and regionally.

Second, we help groups start a community garden...which is no small endeavor. There

may be people on your waiting list that would like to start a community garden, and could give a new project the critical mass it needs for a successful outcome.

2) Have waiting list policies available for those who are interested in joining the garden. Make these available online or on a bulletin board at the garden.

For policies available online, visit www.dowlingcommunitygarden.org. You can also find a number of waiting list policies in "Garden Rules" available on our website.

3) Give those on the waiting list other options if it is unlikely they will be placed in the garden in the upcoming season.

Is there a role that they can have in the garden without renting a plot? Are there other community gardens

nearby? And as always, GardenWorks can let them know what options are available as well, but be careful if they learned about the garden from GardenWorks.

4) For your own community garden "health", limit the number of plots per gardener. When a plot is relinquished or abandoned, offer it first to those on the waiting list.

Give them an opportunity join and get a jump on the next season. Even if a plot is available relatively late in the season, let a person decide whether or not they want the plot. There's still time to harvest and they might appreciate the opportunity to prep the plot for next season (if applicable). At the Museum Services Community Garden, people are able to bump themselves up the waiting list by attending the spring meeting and workdays.