

SUN PRAIRIE COMMUNITY GARDEN ORGANIZATION, Inc. 2026 RULES, REGULATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

This document is for any person or group interested in renting a garden plot at the Sun Prairie Community Garden Organization, Inc.; herein referred to as SPCGO. Please read entirely to understand SPCGO rules and expectations before submitting a rental application.

Mission Statement: To provide gardening opportunities for those who desire to rent space where they may grow vegetables for home-use, in an open and welcoming community environment. The Sun Prairie community garden is not a certified organic garden site; however, organic practices are strongly encouraged.

I. RESERVATIONS: ONLY 2026 REGISTRATION FORMS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Eligibility: The SPCGO site is leased from the City of Sun Prairie, so plot renters must either reside within Sun Prairie City limits, reside within the Sun Prairie School District, or work within the City limits.

Annual Application Required: Plot renters must reapply annually. Registration forms can be mailed to or dropped off at 923 Jerico Lane, Sun Prairie, WI, 53590. Plot rental payment is due when the registration form is submitted. **Payment is accepted by CHECK (payable to SPCGO, Inc.) or CASH.**

Lynette Owens Memorial Grant: This grant is available in 2026 for new and returning gardeners interested in gardening who are residents of Sun Prairie and have a financial need. Grants are used to help with the cost of renting a plot and/or purchasing plants and seeds. The grant program is supported by individual donors. Grant awards will be announced on or about **April 20, 2026**. Anyone receiving a grant for the 2026 garden season, is responsible for planting, weeding, watering, and harvesting produce during the season (May 1 – October 15, 2026). Recipients of a plot will comply with SPCGO bylaws including volunteering 3 – 5 hours during the season by helping with community garden maintenance.

Rental Fees: The 2026 plot rental fee are: mini plot (4'x24') = \$10.00; Half Plot (9' x 24') = \$20.00; Full Plot (18' x 24') = \$35.00; One & half Plots (27'x24') = \$55.00; Two Full Plots (36'x24') = \$70.00. No person or group may rent more than two full plots. New gardeners who did not rent plots in 2025 are limited to a maximum of One Full Plot. Registration applications will be processed according to the date received, using the 3 criteria below to determine plot assignments.

1. Returning Gardeners from 2025, Requesting No New or Additional Plot - Registration and payment must be received by **March 23, 2026** in order to assure the same plot assignment.
2. Returning Gardeners from 2025, Requesting a New or Additional Plot - Registration and payment must be received by **March 23, 2026**. Returning gardeners' requests for new or additional plots will be processed in the order they are postmarked or received at 923 Jerico Lane.
3. New gardeners - After **March 28, 2026**, remaining plots not assigned to returning gardeners will be assigned to new gardeners, based on the order that applications with payment were received.

Flower Plots: SPCGO has 26 flower plots available at no cost to returning or new gardeners. Some flower plots are 4'x18', and some are 4'x24'. If you are assigned a flower plot, you must provide seeds, plants or bulbs and weed and care for the plot). Flower plots are for flowers, not for vegetables or herbs.

Refunds: Plot rentals may be cancelled for full refund prior to **April 15**. After that date, refunds may or may not be made by SPCGO, based on the reason for the request.

II. GARDEN SEASON: Target date for the 2026 garden opening is **May 1**, depending on soil conditions and weather. Gardeners will be notified by email, and a display board will be placed near the garden entrance when the garden is open for the season. The gardening season ends **October 15** at sunset. A reminder of the closing date will be sent by email, and will be posted at the garden entrance.

III. SPCGO AMENITIES:

Community Garden Sheds: The two sheds located on the east side of the garden are used for storage of SPCGO garden tools, hoses, wheelbarrows, wagons and other materials/equipment. The sheds are not available to store personal materials.

Display Board: The display board located south of the garden is used to post information regarding garden operations, articles of interest to gardeners, and SPCGO Board meeting minutes. Board of Directors meetings are closed session, so if renters have concerns, they should be addressed to Board President Tom Kinney at 608-837-4968. Tom can also be contacted to post other information on the display board. Gardeners are encouraged to routinely check postings.

Electricity: Electricity is available on the light pole within the garden.

Garden Tillers: Tillers are available for use by gardeners. Suggested donation for use of a tiller is \$10 for a full-size plot or greater; \$5 for a half plot or less. Use of a tiller is restricted to approved adult gardeners who can operate it in a safe and responsible manner. Tillers and gasoline are stored in the garden shed. If the shed is locked, see any SPCGO Board Member for access, and to submit the suggested donation.

Garden Waste: During the summer, weeds and pulled plants should be put in marked garden waste piles to be hauled away. Please help keep bark, and garden waste areas picked up, weeded, neat, and heaped to minimize space needed. No trash, twine, rocks, etc. are allowed in these piles. At the end of the gardening season, try to keep as much healthy plant material in your garden as possible.

Hand Tools: SPCGO provides large hand tools (hoes, shovels, rakes, wheelbarrows) for gardeners to use. Tools should be returned to the designated storage area so they are available for other gardeners.

Parking: Parking space is available on the east side of the garden, across the street in the Sheehan Park lots, along Linnerud Drive, and on the grass perimeter of the garden. However, on a rainy day and when conditions are wet, please do not park or drive on the grass perimeter to avoid creating ruts. Please be courteous, drive with caution, and do not block entries to pathways or to the garden shed.

Restrooms: Restrooms are available in Sheehan Park close to the community garden site.

Water: The water system consists of five faucets and a series of hoses that will reach all plots. If in doubt on how to operate water faucets, ask other gardeners. Be sure to shut off the faucet when you have finished watering (hoses will not last long under water pressure). Water must not be wasted. Do not leave water faucets “on” unattended. Water is available for garden use only. No car washing is allowed. Transporting water from our garden for use elsewhere is prohibited.

Winter Storage: The SPCGO committee fences an area on the east side of the garden for renters to store tomato cages, stakes, and fencing over the winter months. These materials need to be labeled indicating the owner of the items. SPCGO cannot be responsible for loss or damage. Items should be moved from the winter storage area to your assigned plots within 1-2 weeks after the announced opening of the garden season. Materials not removed from the storage area by sunset on **June 15** will be assumed abandoned, and will be scrapped or given to other gardeners.

Wood Chips: SPCGO provides wood chips for use in common pathways. All gardeners are expected to apply a layer of chips to pathways that touch their plots. If you are unable to spread bark due to physical limitations, please contact a SPCGO board member for assistance.

IV. GENERAL REGULATIONS:

Abandoned Plots: Any plot not planted before June 1, will be deemed abandoned unless the renter has contacted a Board Member to provide a reason why the plot has not been planted. Rental fees will not be refunded for abandoned plots, and such plots will be offered to those on the waiting list for the current gardening season. After initial planting, it is recommended that garden plots be cared for at least once each week. Weed control checks are ongoing during the gardening season, with emphasis during July, August and September. Weed notices will be given for plots that appear to be unattended, with weeds over 12 inches high, weeds reaching maturity, or weeds taking over the intended plants. Gardeners who are notified they need to do a better job of weed control will need to take care of the problem within seven days, or the neglected plot will be considered abandoned. If a weed problem reoccurs, that gardener’s plot availability will be reduced the following year. In extreme cases, gardeners may be prohibited from renting a garden plot the following year. Abandoned plots will be cleared of cages, fencing and stakes, and will be mowed. Restitution will not be provided for any plants that are mowed or materials that are removed. The renter of an abandoned plot may be prohibited from renting a garden plot in the future.

Fall Clean Up: It is your responsibility to clean up your plot before **October 16th**. Failure to comply will result in limiting or prohibiting your next-year’s rental of garden plots.

- All tomato and vined plants must be removed from the plot to control disease. Large plants such as corn, sunflower, and cole crops like brussels sprouts, broccoli, cabbages and kale must be removed. Non-diseased plants may be chopped into six-inch-long pieces and left in the garden as mulch.
- All raised beds, drainage furrows, holes, etc. must be leveled out and filled in. This facilitates mowing, spreading compost and fall plowing.
- Gardeners must remove all fencing, tomato cages, stakes, string, and plastic mulch. Personal gardening materials, tools, etc. remaining in the garden after **October 15th** will become the property of SPCGO, unless they have already been placed in the winter storage area.

Illness, Vacation or Moving: If you are unable to care for your plot for a short vacation period, ask someone to maintain your plot or contact a SPCGO Board Member. Board members can contact other gardeners who are willing to lend a helping hand. If for some reason during the gardening season you are no longer capable of properly tending your plot, or if you need to move away from the area, please notify a member of the SPCGO Board of Directors. The SPCGO board will review the circumstances and determine how the plot will be managed for the remainder of the gardening season.

No Sale of Produce or Seeds: The intended use of harvested garden produce is only for gardening household families, or donation to local food pantries. No Seed Saver Exchange or similar program propagation is allowed other than for personal consumption. Neither produce nor seeds are to be sold, traded, or exchanged for gain or profit at markets or commercially—No Exceptions.

Pets: Please leave all pets at home. No pets other than service dogs are allowed in the garden. It is NOT recommended to leave pets unattended in your vehicle.

Plot and Site Care: Be a good neighbor by keeping plants within your own plot. If you grow plants 2 ½ feet or taller, plant them at least 20 inches from adjoining plot borders so that your neighbor's plot will not be shaded for an extended period of time. If you are growing vine type plants, be sure they don't block pathways or interfere with neighboring gardens. All gardeners may prune plants which enter their plots, or which interfere with pathway traffic. Gardeners are expected to keep their plots, fence lines and adjoining aisles weeded and clear of trash and diseased plants throughout the gardening season. You are expected to weed your plot(s) at least once a week. Fences can be very serious weed areas, so if used, please keep them weed free. In addition to fencing and tomato cages, some gardeners use trellises, baskets and even comical scarecrows for functionality and decoration within their plots. Those materials are acceptable and are aesthetically pleasing to those visiting the garden. Conversely, fluorescent orange or yellow tapes like "caution, keep out, etc.," detract from the beauty of the garden. Please do not use those materials. Also, when purchasing plastic fencing, please choose more natural colors.

Rocks: Dispose of rocks from your plot in the woods east or north of the garden. Please do not throw rocks on the grassy perimeter of the garden. They go unnoticed, can damage mowing equipment and cause safety issues if thrown by mowing equipment.

Stakes: Plot "numbered" stakes must be left in place all season. At the conclusion of the season, they should be removed, cleaned and placed on the table near the garden shed. Twine used to mark your plot can be removed at your discretion if you fence your plot, or when the boundary of your garden plot becomes obvious.

Trash: The City of Sun Prairie does not pick up trash at the garden site. SPCGO provides a minimal number of trash cans, from which miscellaneous waste is removed periodically, but please take all cans, bottles, dirty diapers, plastic and paper materials home with you to help keep our garden site as neat and clean as possible.

V. COMMUNITY GARDEN SITE RULES:

City of Sun Prairie Park Rules apply. You are responsible for obeying the rules set by SPCGO and approved as part of leasing the land from the city. These rules apply to your plot and to the complete garden site. When in doubt, ask a SPCGO board member for a clarification.

Children: Parents or accompanying adults are responsible for children. Children may be in family plots or public areas adjacent to gardens. Teach your children the garden rules, especially to respect other plots. Also, please DO NOT leave children in your vehicle unattended.

Alcohol: Alcohol may not be consumed at the SPCGO site. Any exception for an event would have to be approved by the SPCGO, Inc. board and submitted to the Sun Prairie City Council for approval (about 6 weeks before the event).

Illegal Substances: Illegal substances may not be grown or used at the SPCGO garden site.

Personal Conduct: The SPCGO community garden will function in a family orientated environment for all to enjoy. All gardeners and visitors are expected to conduct themselves accordingly. Neither foul or abusive language nor negative or threatening behavior will be tolerated.

Hours: Hours of operation at the SPCGO site are from sunrise to sunset, but no later than 10:00 p.m. on those long summer days.

VI. RESPONSIBLE GARDENING:

Animal Pest Control: Deer have been a problem in previous years. Several organic animal pest control products are available at garden centers, but are most effective when used by all gardeners. It is each gardener's choice whether to use fencing, but please understand that deer can easily jump 4-foot fences. Covering vegetables such as lettuce, beets, and beans with plastic or wire mesh helps prevent deer from eating these plants. Rabbits will eat small fall garden plants like green beans and broccoli if they are not protected with a two-foot tall 1" mesh chicken wire. Groundhogs also visit the garden and eat produce. They like cucumbers, squash and beets. They also dig "darting holes". No trapping will be allowed in the Sun Prairie Community Garden unless written permission is given by the City Parks Director and seconded by the SPCGO, Inc. Board of Directors.

Extra Produce: Gardeners are encouraged to "Plant a Row for the Hungry". Plant a little extra if you have room and please take your extra produce to the Sun Prairie Emergency Food Pantry; 18 Rickel Rd, (608) 825-3875. Give extra produce to organizations and friends who need or will use it. A table is also available, by the garden shed, to put food on to share with other gardeners.

Mulch and Compost: Biodegradable mulches such as leaves, straw, and marsh hay are acceptable and encouraged. Mulching around plants can be done anytime during the season. Start with a layer of 3-4 inches deep for best results. Mulch helps suppress weeds and retain moisture. No leaves or mulch may be stored anywhere on the leased garden property. Compost is best applied in the spring, after stakes and strings are in place. Turn or till your compost into the top layer of soil; then plant for the gardening season.

Others' Plots: Walk only on pathways and in your own plot. Never enter another person's plot or take anything from another plot without expressed permission.

Perennial Plants: It is suggested that you not plant perennials. They typically do not produce until the second year (remember the complete garden is plowed each fall).

Plant Pest Controls: Use healthy garden practices and safe "alternative" controls when necessary. Use all controls as directed. All pesticides are dangerous, even "natural organic" ones like Rotenone. Keep pest control products and containers away from children and away from the water supply. Take all containers out of the garden and dispose of them properly. The UW Extension (Dane County) at 608-224-3700 can provide general garden advice and information on safe pest controls.

Vandalism and Theft: Harvest ripe vegetables!! Neither the City nor the SPCGO board of directors can be responsible for vandalism or theft that may occur. Alertness by all gardeners is probably the best way to minimize vandalism and theft. Police can help only if they arrive while a person is stealing or destroying property. Take down descriptions of people and vehicles (including license plate numbers) you suspect are improperly at your site, and let the police know. The Sun Prairie Police Department can be reached at (608) 837-7336.

VII. RULES VIOLATIONS, LOSS OF GARDEN PRIVILEGES, AND HOW TO DISPUTE: FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH RULES AND EXPECTATIONS MAY MODIFY OR PROHIBIT RESERVATION OF GARDEN PLOTS IN THE FUTURE. PLEASE OBSERVE ALL RULES.

Disputes regarding non-rental may be appealed, by the gardener, to the SPCGO board of directors. A written request for dispute resolution will need to be received from the gardener to be scheduled before the SPCGO. The decision by the SPCGO board of directors will be final.

VIII. SPCGO Board of Directors

Contact	Phone Number	Role
Tom Kinney	608-837-4968	SPCGO President; Reservations/rental
John Meicher	608-669-7337	SPCGO Treasurer

Art Teasdale	608-837-2349	Education, Garlic Patch Maintenance
Jennelle DeNoyer	608-279-0529	Education
Mark Hensel	608-214-5530	Garden Maintenance
Christi Miller	608-712-6422	Social Media
John Belken	608-225-7180	Garden Layout

IX. GARDEN COMMITTEES: SPCGO board members and others who work on setting up and managing the garden are not paid for the work they do. Many hours planning for the gardening season, helping and answering questions of other gardeners, and keeping the garden area in an inviting condition are required for the success of the garden. Garden success requires everyone’s support. Each renter is expected to volunteer 3-5 hours per season. Please read the following descriptions of volunteer opportunities and indicate on the registration form which committee(s) you will help with. Thank you for your help.

Fall Garden Clean Up & Winter Preparation: Renters are responsible to clean up their individual plots, as addressed previously in this document. This committee performs a final check and cleanup of all plots so they are ready for leaf mulch and fall plowing. That work will occur soon after Oct. 15, when notices have been posted. Committee leader: Tom Kinney.

Hose Set-Up and Take Down: Garden watering hydrants will be turned on and off by the City of Sun Prairie prior to and after the gardening season. Setting up the hoses from the hydrants starts soon after the twine garden grid is laid out. The hoses are attached to hydrants. The hoses are arranged to be able to reach all gardens. This committee is responsible for hose and faucet repair and returning hoses to the garden shed at the end of the gardening season. Committee leader: Tom Kinney

Good Neighbor: This committee is responsible for assisting gardeners due to unforeseen events, e.g., health issue, family emergency, etc. The committee, when contacted, will assist a fellow gardener with watering, spreading bark on pathways, weeding or harvesting produce. Committee leader: Tom Kinney

Maintenance of Garden Tools, Equipment and Grounds: This group is responsible to keep the hand tools, wagons, wheelbarrows and garden power tools in safe and operational condition. Volunteers share in mowing and trimming of areas around the perimeter of the garden. Weeds and tidies up the compost, wood chip and garden waste piles on the east and west sides of the garden. Committee leaders: Mark Hensel.

Maintain Community Garden’s Asparagus and Garlic Patch: This committee is responsible for maintaining the patches. Tasks include planting weeding, mulching, and watering to ensure a healthy crop. Committee leaders: Art Teasdale and John Belken.

Maintain Community Garden’s Raspberry and Rhubarb Patches: The community garden has raspberry and rhubarb patches for use by all SPCGO garden renters. This committee is responsible for maintaining the patches. Tasks include weeding, mulching, dividing and pruning to ensure a healthy crop. Committee leader: Tom Kinney.

Public Relations, Communications and Education: This committee prepares materials, updates and maintains our SPCGO web site, providing community gardeners with timely updates during the year. They may also prepare and submit articles and ads to “The Star” (our local newspaper) and other publicity as necessary. People on this committee should have some computer knowledge and skills. Committee leaders: Art Teasdale, Jennelle DeNoyer, and Christi Miller.

Spring Staking & Set-Up of the Garden: Much of the work for plot measurements is done in advance by the chairperson. A crew is needed for about a half day after the final spring tilling. This group is responsible for laying out a twine grid, staking out the individual plots, and numbering the plots. Volunteering for this group requires a lot of walking in loosely cultivated soil. Committee leader: John Belken

Weed Control: As mentioned previously, all renters are responsible for weeding their plots, plus half of the pathways adjacent to their plots. Those on the weed control committee do not do the weeding. The committee’s responsibility is to check which garden plots need weeding. The committee leader will in turn address weeding concerns with individual gardeners. For additional information see “Abandoned Plots” and “Plot and Site Care” in Section V above. Committee leader: Tom Kinney