

USING ALLOTMENT/COMMUNITY GARDENS

The Provincial government has amended the existing emergency order related to COVID-19 to allow the use of allotment/community gardens across Ontario. These gardens can be a great source of fresh food without visiting a grocery store.

Anyone using an allotment/community garden should follow the current advice to reduce the spread of COVID-19, including maintaining physical distance of 2 metres between people at all times, practicing good hand hygiene and staying home when you are sick. For more information, visit york.ca/covid19 and Ontario.ca/covid19.

To use or set up an allotment/community garden during the COVID-19 pandemic, follow these Public Health recommendations:

Entrance Restrictions or Requirements:

- Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 or close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 should not be allowed in the garden area. These individuals should be self-isolating at home for 14 days since the start of their symptoms or last contact with a case of COVID-19
- Allow access to registered members, staff and volunteers only; non-members and visitors should not be permitted to enter
- Access to the garden is for planting, maintaining and harvesting food only
- Events of any kind are not permitted, such as flower festivals, children's events and other programming, training or group builds

Physical Distancing Requirements:

- Maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from other people at all times, except for members of the same household
- Limit the number of gardeners in a space to ensure physical distancing can be maintained. Gardeners may need to take turns or garden at scheduled times to ensure physical distancing is maintained
- Use of masks or face coverings is not a substitute for proper physical distancing.

Hand Hygiene Requirements:

- Ensure adequate hand hygiene
- If hands are visibly soiled, handwashing must occur with soap and water. Where possible, provide handwashing stations in the gardens
- If not available, hands must be wiped clean with a moist towelette before applying alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Perform hand hygiene before entering and upon leaving the garden

Sharing Equipment/Tools and Cleaning Requirements:

- If sharing equipment or tools, handles should be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use. Use soap and water to clean first, then use an over-the-counter disinfectant. Anyone using gardening gloves should launder them after each use. Do not share gloves
- Clean and disinfect frequently-touched surfaces with over the counter disinfectant after each use. These may include hose attachments, door/gate handles and tools
- For more information on cleaning and disinfecting, see [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#) from [Public Health Ontario](#)

Signage Requirements:

- Place clear, easy-to-read signs at all garden entrances reminding registered members, staff and volunteers about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if they have symptoms:
 - Call your healthcare provider, York Region Public Health at 1-800-361-5653 or Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000
 - Seek assessment at a COVID-19 Assessment Centre In York Region, these are located at [Markham-Stouffville Hospital](#), [Mackenzie Health and Southlake Regional Health Centre](#))
- Place clear, easy-to-read signs throughout the garden — especially locations where shared equipment, tools, etc. are located — reminding registered members, staff and volunteers of the requirements that must be followed when using the garden to prevent the transmission of COVID-19

Communication and Other Requirements:

- Each garden should develop COVID-19 policies and procedures that are specific to that garden to follow the recommendations in this document; communicate these policies to registered members, staff and volunteers of the garden.
- Update or create a list of current registered members, staff and volunteers and track those who have agreed to participate under these COVID-19 policies and procedures
- Consider using a sign-in and sign-out system to track who is in the garden each day - this may help with communication and contact tracing should a positive case of COVID-19 occur.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON COVID-19, VISIT [YORK.CA/COVID19](https://york.ca/covid19)