

## **Community Garden Social and Behavioral Guidelines**

THPRD's community gardens thrive on respect, cooperation, and a shared love of gardening. By registering for a plot, you agree to uphold a code of conduct that keeps our gardens safe, inclusive, and enjoyable for everyone. These guidelines aren't just rules, they're a community pledge backed by a growing body of research showing that prosocial behavior, treating others with kindness, honesty, and respect, leads to stronger communities and better well-being for all (Seppala et al., 2013; Li, Khan, & Rameli, 2023; Chen, 2024). When we treat each other with courtesy and care, everyone benefits.

### **Community Expectations**

#### **Be Respectful and Inclusive**

Treat all fellow gardeners, staff, and volunteers with respect, kindness, and patience. Maintain a welcoming tone toward people of all backgrounds and experience levels. Disrespectful or hurtful language, harassment, or discrimination of any kind have no place in our gardens. Research shows that being kind to others strengthens personal well-being by fulfilling core human needs: autonomy, competence, and connection (Chen, 2024; Li et al., 2023).

#### **Respect Others' Spaces and Property**

Only access your own garden plot (and assigned communal areas) unless given explicit permission. Do not take, borrow, or move anyone else's tools, plants, or produce without consent. Respecting personal space and boundaries builds trust and prevents misunderstandings (Murray, Ross, & Cannon, 2020).

#### **No Abusive Behavior – Keep Communication Positive**

Abusive, aggressive, or bullying behavior is not tolerated. This includes yelling, personal attacks, threats, or derogatory remarks. Maintaining a civil tone ensures that all gardeners feel safe and welcomed. Boundaries protect community harmony and promote individual wellness (Chen, 2024).

#### **Resolve Conflicts Constructively**

Disagreements may happen. What matters is how we handle them. Addressing conflict directly, respectfully, and early reduces negative outcomes and encourages long-term cooperation (Bao et al., 2016). THPRD Community Gardens staff are here to help mediate if needed.

#### **One-Warning Policy (Zero Tolerance for Abuse)**

The program will issue only one warning for disruptive, harassing, or abusive behavior. Any further incidents may result in removal from the garden program. This ensures that the garden remains a safe, supportive space for all (Bao et al., 2016).

## THPRD District Policies & Regulations

### Respectful Communication & Conduct

As a reminder, THPRD District Policies, Chapter 7—District Regulations states, **7.02(A)** “No person shall use abusive, threatening, or obscene language and gestures.” This includes:

- Gardeners must maintain civil, non-disruptive interactions.
- Conflict, harassment, or verbal aggression is strictly prohibited.
- Applies to all interactions between gardeners, staff, and visitors.

### Consideration for Shared Space

THPRD District Policies, Chapter 7—District Regulations states, **7.02(A), 7.02(C), 7.02(E)** “Persons must conduct themselves in a manner that will not distract or disturb others.” This includes:

- Loud arguments, disruptive behavior, or dominating shared space (like pathways or tool sheds) is not acceptable.
- Keeping shared resources tidy and usable for all is part of expected conduct.

### Authority and Compliance

THPRD District Policies, Chapter 7—District Regulations states, **7.02(N), 7.14(B)** “No person shall disobey any reasonable direction of a district employee.” This includes:

- Gardeners are expected to follow staff instructions, including reminders about noise, maintenance, or scheduling.
- Repeated or severe non-compliance can lead to expulsion from the THPRD Community Gardens program and exclusion from district property (Section 7.15).

### Consequences for Violations

THPRD District Policies, Chapter 7—District Regulations states, **7.14 & 7.15** “Violations may lead to exclusion from district property for 30–180 days.” This means:

- Behavioral violations—especially those involving aggression, harassment, or willful disregard of district rules—can lead to expulsion from the THPRD Community Gardens program and formal **written exclusions**.

### 3-Step Conflict Resolution Protocol

1. Talk Privately and Calmly
  - Use “I” statements and focus on facts: “I noticed this tool was moved, and I wasn’t sure why.”
2. Listen and Seek Understanding
  - Avoid interrupting. Ask clarifying questions. Aim to solve the problem, not win the argument.

### 3. Ask for Support if Needed

- Contact THPRD Community Gardens staff if you need a neutral party to help resolve the issue.
- Contact THPRD Safety Services for immediate support in the event of a crisis, escalated conflict, or safety concern: (971) 246-0169

\*Studies show that environments that support constructive communication and emotional safety lead to better individual outcomes and stronger communities (Murray et al., 2020; Chen, 2024). [A Shared Commitment](#)

By signing up for a garden plot, you commit to building a space that is safe, respectful, and inclusive for all. These expectations are rooted in evidence showing that cooperation, empathy, and clear boundaries don't just grow better gardens—they build stronger people and communities (Seppala et al., 2013; Chen, 2024).

### References

- Bao, Y., Zhu, F., Hu, Y., & Cui, N. (2016). The research of interpersonal conflict and solution strategies. *Psychology*, 7(4), 541–545. <https://doi.org/10.4236/psych.2016.74055>
- Chen, Y. (2024). Prosocial behavior and well-being: A meta-analytic review of basic psychological needs as mechanisms. *The Journal of Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.2024.2307377>
- Li, L., Khan, A., & Rameli, M. R. M. (2023). Assessing the relationship between prosocial behavior and well-being: Basic psychological need as the mediator. *European Journal of Investigation in Health, Psychology and Education*, 13(10), 2179–2191. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ejihpe13100153>
- Murray, C. E., Ross, R., & Cannon, J. (2020). The Happy, Healthy, Safe Relationships Continuum: Conceptualizing a spectrum of relationship quality to guide community-based healthy relationship promotion programming. *The Family Journal*, 29(1), 50–59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1066480720960416>
- Seppala, E., Rossomando, T., & Doty, J. R. (2013). Social connection and compassion: Important predictors of health and well-being. *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, 80(2), 411–430. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sor.2013.0027>