



## **ATTENTION ALL NEW AND RETURNING COMMUNITY GARDENERS:**

### **Important information Regarding the Thornclyff Community Garden (TCG)**

It is important that all community garden members understand how the TCG is operated and as an active participant, accept and adhere to the expectations and responsibilities of the TCG Executive Committee and community garden members.

To create a thriving garden community, individual gardeners must be willing to work as a community and have the garden's best interests at heart.

Please review the information below and bring any questions you may have to the April meeting of gardeners.

### **Establishment and Authority**

- TCG is a community program of the Thornclyff Community League (TCL).
- The Thornclyff Community Garden (TCG) was established in the spring of 2017. The \$4,020 cost to build the garden was funded entirely by the Thornclyff Community League (TCL).
- The 17-bed garden was built on a volunteer basis by TCG gardeners who rented garden plots during 2017 and 2018.
- The TCL Board is accountable to the City of Edmonton for adhering to the terms of the community garden agreement between the two parties.
- Under the management of the TCL Board, the Thornclyff Community League holds all operational rights and ownership to the Thornclyff Community Garden.
- The TCL Board approves members of the TCG Executive Committee who are entrusted with the annual operation of the community garden. Executive Committee Members are bound by the TCG Executive Committee Terms of Reference.

### **TCL Relationship with Thornclyffe School**

- The Thornclyffe School has been a community garden partner since 2017 with a record 120 students and staff participating in one season.
- Water for the two 1,000-litre water tanks is generously donated each year by Thornclyffe School. To lose this privilege would directly impact the ability to sustain and operate the community garden in the future.

### **Operations and Gardener Responsibilities**

- The TCG Executive Committee oversees the garden's operations each season and reports directly to the TCL Board on garden activities, fees collected, expenses paid, problems or concerns, and the condition of the garden on a regular basis.

- The TCG Executive Committee is responsible for conducting an annual inspection of the garden to consider where repair, replacement, or upgrade is required. A written report will be submitted to the TCL Board prior to the end of the garden season for proposed work to be done the following year.
- Garden tools and equipment located in the garden are available for use by all gardeners. Access to the water hose to fill the water tanks will be determined by the TCG executive committee. Gardeners do not have direct access.
- Gardeners change from year to year depending upon the number of returning gardeners and interested new gardeners, well as the number of plots required by Thorncliffe School.
- Every gardener is required to sign the gardener's contract and pay their fees before they are given access to the community garden and their garden bed.
- The Community Garden Coordinator follows an established hierarchy for first rights to rent a garden plot when assigning garden beds each year. More details are available if required.
- Garden beds are rented each year at the designated cost of \$25/bed for low beds and \$40/bed for high beds. Once fees are paid and a gardener's contract is signed, gardeners have access to the garden, its tools, watering tanks, and other amenities between May and October. Gardens must be planted by June 15 and all garden materials must be removed by October 15.
- Neither TCG or TCL have any further obligation to gardeners, and neither are obligated to allow a gardener to return the following year.
- Past gardeners may request to return from year to year in March or April and are welcome to return if they adhered to the gardener's contract in the previous season; failure to adhere to the gardener's contract may disqualify gardeners from returning in the future.
- Reasons that gardeners may be ineligible for a garden bed in subsequent years include, but are not limited to:
  1. Causing damage or loss, whether intentional or due to neglect, to the physical property of TCG or TCL including garden beds, tools, watering tanks, storage unit, compost and garbage bins, gate locks, water hoses, and TCL inventory
  2. Non-payment of garden bed fees by April 30<sup>th</sup>
  3. Not signing the gardener's contract
  4. Absence in mandatory community meetings of the gardeners
  5. Failure in a previous year to demonstrate being a "community" gardener, including the ongoing maintenance of the TCG, such as:
    - a. Not assisting to fill the water tanks or following the established protocol as scheduled
    - b. Not replacing the water hose properly in the school
    - c. Lack of partaking in the upkeep of the garden's common areas
    - d. Not helping to tend or water the common beds, particularly the central flower garden
    - e. The misuse, including the wasting, of the water supply
  6. Not fulfilling responsibilities associated with the garden's watering schedule

7. Failure to adhere to the community garden's goals, including allowing a rented plot to become improperly attended or overgrown.
  8. Lack of care or attention to a rented garden bed by not weeding regularly or not harvesting produce when it is ready to pick
  9. Sharing the TCG garden gate access with family members under the age of 14 or non-members of the community garden.
  10. Failure to remove garden materials from a rented bed at the end of the season
- The TCL Board sets the combinations to the storage unit and community garden area. Neither the TCG Executive Committee nor its gardeners have authority to change the combination of the locks to the garden gate or TCL sea-can without receiving permission first from the TCL Board. Any changes to the lock combination must be immediately reported to the TCL Board.
  - Each year a confidential gardener contact list is created and shared with current gardeners only. The purpose is to enable gardeners to contact each other for a variety of reasons during the growing season. It is expected that gardeners permit their contact information to be shared in this manner.
  - A watering schedule is created each season. At the April meeting gardeners sign up for one-week periods to water the common gardens and Thorncliff School gardens (late June to early September only), in addition to watering beds for gardeners who identify themselves as being out of town for short periods, i.e. on vacation. Duties of the gardeners on rotation include:
    1. Ensuring both water tank levels are maintained at a minimum of 1/3 full. If the water level in one tank drops below 1/3 full, both tanks are required to be filled and/or topped up. Tanks at 1/3 levels at the end of the rotation week are not left for filling by the next person in the rotation.
    2. Assigned gardener(s) contacts the Master Gardener (or their designate) to arrange access to the water hose in order to fill the water tanks. Allow 1-2 days' notice where possible to coordinate schedules and ensure the tanks do not run dry.
    3. For safety purposes and to ensure there is no water waste during the fill-up process, it is mandated that at least two people (preferably TCG gardeners) participate filling the water tanks. The Garden Coordinator, or designate, is not considered one person; gardeners are expected to keep water overflow to a minimum when filling tanks. This is one reason why two people are required.
    4. Hoses must be drained out completely before the hose wound on the wheel in the storage room. Another reason why two people are required.
    5. It is the responsibility of **all community garden members** to maintain adequate water levels in both water tanks throughout the season.
    6. It is the responsibility of the Community Garden executive committee to ensure that the water tanks are drained at the end of each garden season.
  - The watering schedule runs weekly on a Monday to Sunday rotation schedule from planting day to mid-September. A copy of the schedule will be posted in an accessible location for all community gardeners to view.
  - Gardeners may switch weeks in the watering schedule, however any changes must be

report to the Garden Coordinator or their designate.

- The watering schedule will be adjusted if new gardeners join to ensure all gardeners participate equally in this community responsibility and will notify gardeners of the changes if their weeks are affected. Generally, each gardener is responsible for at least two weeks over the growing season.

### **Gardener Meetings – April, June, August, and October**

- As per the gardener's contract, it is mandatory all gardeners attend the four scheduled meetings. Meeting attendance is an essential component of working together as a community. These meetings allow for garden matters to be discussed, operational decisions to be made, and the election of Executive Committee Members.
- If a gardener misses two or more of the four meetings without good reason, they may be disqualified from returning the following year. All gardeners are required to advise the Chair in advance if they are unable to attend.
- Meeting materials are distributed by the Secretary via email a minimum of two days in advance of each group meeting. Gardeners are expected to read the meeting materials in advance of the meeting.
- The Chair sets the April meeting. Dates for the June, August, and October meetings are decided by all gardeners at the April meeting. The August meeting may be cancelled if there is no business to discuss or problems to resolve.
- If gardeners do not sign up for the necessary number of weeks to fill the watering schedule at the April meeting, the Community Garden Chair will assign specific weeks and it is the gardeners' responsibility to switch with another gardener if they have scheduling conflicts.
- The Gardener Contract and Watering Schedule are reviewed with gardeners with questions discussed and answered at the April and June meetings.

### **Signing Officers and Spending Authority**

- There are three signing authorities for the community garden: the Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.
- The Treasurer is responsible for creating the financial reports for the garden.
- Garden fees are collected each season by the Community Garden Chair.
- The TCG Executive Committee is authorized to manage the rental fees collected each season but otherwise has no spending authority beyond this. To spend more, they must provide a written spending proposal to the TCL Board for their review and approval.
- Expenses relating to the operations of the community garden may be incurred by a gardener for reimbursement by the Treasurer. However, approval from the Chair or approval by motion at a gardener's meeting must first be acquired prior to incurring the expense. Original invoices must be approved and dated by the Chair and submitted to the Treasurer for payment. If the invoice is lost or otherwise not available, an expense reimbursement form can be obtained from the Treasurer. Once approved by the Chair, the

Treasurer promptly issues the cheque to the gardener or vendor as appropriate.

- **The TCG Reserve Fund** is a designated fund (a requirement of the community garden contract with the City of Edmonton) created to maintain the community garden's sustainability and can only be used to repair, replace, or upgrade assets in the community garden. It cannot be used for operating expenses of the garden. The value of the TCG Reserve Fund must be maintained at \$1,000 until funds are spent and then it is the responsibility of the TCG Executive Committee and TCL Board to decide how the funds will be replenished.