Welcome to the 2027 Adams Farm Community Garden Season

In this welcome packet you will find helpful information about important dates, task groups, rules and guidelines, and frequently asked question. Please read this information carefully and direct any questions you might have to the Community Garden Management Team.

Opening Day

Welcome to the Adams Farm Community Garden. Opening Day is Saturday, May 1, 2027, a time to renew friendships for returning gardeners and a time to welcome new gardeners. During Opening Day, a member of the Community Garden Management Team and garden mentors will be available to show new gardeners to their plots, introduce them to their neighbors, and answer their questions. Returning gardeners may begin working on their plots at any time. Please read this welcome packet carefully as it contains the information you will need as a member of the Community Garden.

Garden History

The Adams Farm Community Garden was established by the Friends of Adams Farm and the Town of Walpole Select Board with the assistance of the Town of Walpole Recreation Department as an organic garden for members of the community. The garden helps the local environment by keeping farm land in use, by educating the community on the need to attend to our natural resources, and by establishing a group of committed gardeners who support the goal of preserving this valuable town resource. We urge all garden members to consider joining the Friends of Adams Farm to help support the work of the Friends in preserving the almost 700 acres of trails, fields, and woodlands that make up Adams Farm. For more information, go to https://adams-farm.com.

Being a Gardener at the Community Garden

Whether you are someone who has never planted a garden before or someone who was brought up on a farm, there is a place for you at the Adams Farm Community Garden. The Community Garden contains 64 individual plots. Each gardener is responsible for maintaining their plot (keeping the plot weeded and keeping the aisles around the plot mowed/weed free) and participating in one of the community Task Groups.

Participation in a Task Group

As the garden has grown so have the tasks of maintaining the garden, hoses, wheelbarrows, fence, compost, weed-free plots and walkways and of organizing potluck dinners and meetings. **To keep the farm working for everyone, each gardener must commit to volunteer work during the planting season.**

All gardeners must serve on a Task Group that helps keep the garden maintained and in good working order during the growing season (May 1, 2027 to November 6, 2027). Task Groups have been created that cover most of the work that needs to be completed during the season. The Community Garden Management Team will do frequent check-ins with each Task Group leader to verify gardener participation. There is something for everyone to do!

Sign up for a task group on your Community Garden Registration Form for 2027.

Task Groups for the 2027 Season

- **Vegetation Management:** The Vegetation Management Team trims vegetation along the path on the wooded side of the garden so that the Farm's landscaping company can run its mowers and keep the path trimmed and free of poison ivy and other plants that can invade the garden. The Vegetation Management Team also trims growth along the compost area and removes plants that are growing on the garden fence. Mow garden paths (Weekly or more frequently if necessary).
- **Equipment Maintenance:** The Equipment Maintenance Team maintains hoses, nozzles, garden carts, wheelbarrows, and fencing around the garden.
- **Mentoring:** The Mentoring Team answers gardeners' questions about best practices for organic gardening (weed/pest control, planting strategies, winter cover crops, healthy soil, seed saving, etc.).
- **Hospitality:** The Hospitality Team organizes opening and closing day activities, potluck suppers, meetings, and other garden-related activities.
- **Vacation Watering:** The Vacation Watering Team waters the plots of fellow gardeners (at their request) while they're on vacation.

Gardeners can also give back to the community by contributing excess produce to the local food pantry through the Norwood Garden Club, which maintains a plot (D9) at the Garden and donates what they grow to the Norwood Food Pantry. The Garden Club accepts any extra produce gardeners care to donate from their own plots.

Thank you for your part in helping keep this valuable Walpole resource alive and thriving. We look forward to seeing you in the garden.

The Community Garden Management Team

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a community garden all about?
We are individuals and families of diverse backgrounds and gardening experience who choose to garden together. Our Community Garden supports organic gardening practices. Each household gets a garden plot to tend and contributes volunteer hours to help run and maintain the garden. Gardeners maintain paths, manage the weeds and equipment, and divide all tasks among us.

How big are plots?
Plot size is approximately 20 ft. x 20 ft.

How much does it cost?
$30 per plot per year.

What do I get when I sign up?
- One garden plot that is approximately 20 ft. x 20 ft. for your use during the season.
- Access to water available from watering stations placed along the garden's main aisle.
- A supportive environment for learning about gardening and meeting neighbors.

How many plots can I get?
Each gardener is assigned one plot. However, plots can be shared with friends or family members. If you feel a whole plot is too much work, an effort will be made to help match you up with someone who is interested in working only half a plot. One individual or family is the lead contact for each plot. Unless a different plot is requested, returning gardeners keep the same plot they gardened the previous year.

Once the gardening season starts, gardeners from Walpole on the wait-list will receive priority if plots become available after the May 22 planting deadline. If plots are abandoned later in the season, they will be assigned via a lottery system to existing gardeners who would like a second plot. If an existing gardener receives a second plot, the second plot may be used by the gardener for the current gardening season only. At the end of the gardening season, the second plot will become available again and be assigned to a gardener on the wait-list for next year's gardening season.

How do I get on the wait-list for a plot?
Fill out the Adams Farm Community Garden Registration form that is available from one of the following web pages:
- The Community Garden page of the Friends of Adams Farm website (https://adams-farm.com/community-garden/)
- The Town of Walpole Adams Farm Committee web page (https://www.walpole-ma.gov/adams-farm-committee)

Mail the completed registration form to the Friends of Adams Farm Community Garden, P.O. Box 725, Walpole, MA 02081. The wait-list is first come, first served; however, Walpole residents take precedence.

What is Winter Gardening?

If you are a returning gardener and there are any plants (perennials, chives, oregano, herbs, garlic, etc.) growing in your plot after Closing Day, or you want to begin working your plot before opening day of the next season, then you should register as a Winter Gardener. This means filling out the 2028 registration form and mailing it in along with the $30.00 plot fee by Closing Day, November 6, 2027 (see the registration form for making out and mailing the check).

Is the garden organic?

We use organic practices. No herbicides (like Round-Up) are ever allowed in the gardens, nor are petroleum-based plastic, bark mulch, or landscape cloth. Compost is provided when available, and organic fertilizers are encouraged. If you are unsure about a particular product, contact a Community Garden Management Team member to find out if you can use it.

What about composting?

Our composting site is located outside the fence at the north end (North Street side) of the garden. There are usually three piles: one where you deposit your garden waste (please take diseased plants home for disposal), one pile that is in the process of breaking down, and one pile that is completely broken down and ready to spread on your garden. If you have any questions about what can and cannot go into the compost pile, contact a Community Garden Management Team member.

How much time does it take?

Gardening is fun, but it's also hard work. You have to weed, harvest, and maintain your plot. It gets hot in July, and weeds begin to sprout along with your favorite tomatoes. If you are going to be out of town for an extended period, you'll have to arrange for someone to tend your plot. Gardening also demands more time at some points in the season than at others. If you don't think you can tend to your plot twice a week, consider sharing with someone else.

Once I have a plot, what do I have to do?

- Be a good neighbor by following the rules of the garden and maintaining your plot.
- Perform the required hours of voluntary service for a garden Task Group.
- Enjoy the garden, the fruits of your labor, and the community of gardeners.

2027 Adams Farm Community Garden Regulations and Guidelines

The Adams Farm Community Garden supports organic practices. This ensures that healthy and nutritious produce is being grown for everyone to enjoy.

Rules and Regulations

- **Opening day of the garden is May 1, 2027. Closing day is November 6, 2027**. All gardeners must participate on these dates. If you are unable to attend, please notify a Community Garden Management Team member or Task Group leader. We will ask for your help on another day.
  - **Opening Day** – All equipment that has been in winter storage in the barn is removed and set up. Equipment is evaluated and repaired. New gardeners are welcomed at this time by the Community Garden Management Team Members and Hospitality Task Group. They are assigned plot numbers sent through email before opening day and are shown to their plots and introduced to other gardeners on hand. This is also a time for questions and answers.
  - **Closing Day** – All equipment needs to be brought into the barn attic for winter storage. Garden plots are reviewed by the Community Garden Management Team members and Task Group leaders to see if they are sufficiently cleared. All garden plots must be cleared down to the dirt unless the gardener is Winter Gardening. All tools, tomato cages, poles, stakes, hoses, water barrels, and equipment like wheelbarrows and wagons must also be removed from plots by November 6, 2027. If the plot is not cleared and the plot owner did not sign up as a Winter Gardener, the plot owner will forfeit the plot. For more information, see "What is Winter Gardening" in the Frequently Asked Questions section below.
- **Gardeners must start planting their plots by May 22, 2027**. If you are not planted by the May 22 deadline, you will lose your plot and it will be reassigned to someone on the wait-list.
- Plots must be planted, weeded, and frequently attended to throughout the growing season and must adhere to organic gardening practices. If you are unable to maintain your plot, contact a Community Garden Management Team member or Task Group leader. Otherwise, you may receive notices that you are not keeping up your plot. **Anyone who receives <u>three (3) notices via email</u> that their plot is not being maintained will lose their plot, and the plot will be reassigned to someone on the wait-list.**
- Produce and flowers grown in the garden are for personal use only and cannot be sold commercially.
- **Only organic pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides can be used in the garden.** Petroleum-based landscape cloth, bark mulch, and black plastic are not allowed in the garden as a weed suppressant but organic, biodegradable ground covers (such as clean, seedless hay, straw and coir core) are permitted. If you are unsure about a particular product, contact a Community Garden Management Team member to find out if you can use it.
- Particle board which contains carcinogenic formaldehyde is not allowed in the garden. It is often found in relatively inexpensive bookcases and chests of drawers. These items should

not be brought into the garden.

- **Trapping, poisoning, sticky tape or otherwise harming animals is not allowed at Adams Farm.** Use fencing or other non-lethal repellents to keep animals out of your plot.
- If you grow winter grasses such as winter wheat or rye on your plot, you must cut them in the spring before seed heads form and seeds spread around the garden.
- After using a hose, you must reel it up and turn off the water. You may not use water timers and sprinklers or leave hoses fully open in the mound/troughs of your garden. Only hand watering is permitted.
- All gardeners are responsible for keeping the pathways around their plots cleared or mowed and free of ruts and hazards/obstacles to people using the pathways.
- Do not throw rocks you remove from your plot into other plots, into the paths around your plot, or over the fencing around the garden into pathways and areas outside the garden. Take your rocks to the rock pile that is in the wooded area to the left of the compost piles. Do not throw rocks into the compost piles.
- There is no smoking in the garden, and pets are not allowed in the garden.
- **You must take home diseased plants for disposal; do not put them in the compost pile**.
- Keep your plot neat by removing all trash, such as plastic bags and pots, and leave tools that you keep at the farm neatly stacked in your plot. Trash should be taken home. Do not leave it anywhere at the Farm.
- Do not put up brightly colored fencing around your plot. Any fencing should be unobtrusive and not detract from the appearance of the garden. You may install fencing around your plot between opening day and closing day only. Fences and fence posts must be removed by closing day and may not be re-installed until the next opening day. **The maximum height of a fence around a plot is 3 feet.**
- **Metal raised garden beds are not allowed. Beds must be made from natural materials and not be higher than 12 inches.**
- Keep the garden gates closed when in the garden and closed firmly as you leave the garden.
- Each gardener must be a member of a Task Group. If you do not participate in a Task Group, you will not be allowed to renew your plot the following spring.
- No gardener is allowed to venture into another gardener's plot to pick produce, pull weeds, prune vines/sunflowers without said gardener's permission. If you want to report a problem, or you have a question, please contact a Community Garden Management Team member or Task Group leader.
- **If your plot abuts the perimeter fence; you must not allow vegetation to grow onto or through the perimeter fence.**
- **Do not affix or place anything on to the perimeter fence at any time.**

Guidelines

Invasive plants

Be aware of what you are planting in the garden. Invasive plants can quickly overtake your garden and spread to your neighbor's plot. Mint, peppermint, catnip, comfrey, weeds, raspberries, purslane, amaranth, and Jerusalem artichokes are among the worst offenders.

Plant height
Plant tall flowers and vegetables that may shade your neighbor's plot in the middle of your plot.

Children in the garden
The garden is a wonderful opportunity for children to learn about where their food comes from and to taste new vegetables. If you bring your children into the garden, *please supervise* them and see that they do not walk on growing plants or pick vegetables or flowers from another gardener's plot.