

Renfrew County and District Health Unit COVID-19: Action Plan Template for Opening of Community Gardens

Community gardens are now considered essential services and permitted to open, provided instructions from local public health agencies are followed. Gardens operating in Renfrew County and the District must follow the [Safe Operating Requirements for Gardeners & Coordinators](#) from Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU).

This *Action Plan for Opening of Community Gardens* is a tool to help community gardens meet the requirements set by RCDHU. Coordinators and members of community gardens are encouraged to use this tool as they plan to safely re-open gardens.

NOTE: Renfrew County and District Health Unit has signage for: Handwashing, Hand Sanitizing, Physical Distancing, and [Should I Enter the Community Garden?](#) See the resources below.

Before your garden opens, take the time to think about how you will meet the following public health requirements in order to be permitted to open.

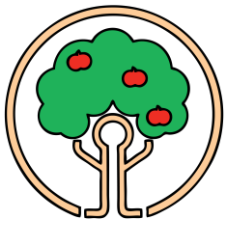
Physical Distancing

Community gardeners must **maintain a physical distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet)** from each other while at the garden, except for members of the same household. **A maximum of 10 people are allowed in the garden at any given time provided physical distancing is maintained.** Children should only be brought to the garden on an as-needed basis and physical distancing should be considered when bringing children to the garden. Pets should not be brought to the garden. Service animals are permitted with proper identification/vest.

Other tips that may help your garden maintain physical distancing:

- Remove or tape-off communal seating and picnic areas.
- Make a schedule to ensure a maximum of 5 people in the garden at any given time. Consider scheduling gardeners based on the location of their plot to maintain physical distancing.
- Have members sign in before entering and after leaving the garden so members know who is already in the garden.

For your community garden, how will physical distancing be managed? (e.g., schedules, closing communal areas, etc.)



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Member List and Attendance Log

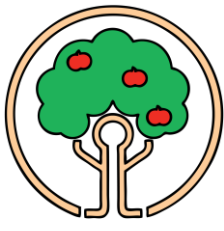
The community garden coordinator must keep a list of all gardeners, volunteers, and staff who may use the garden, including the name and contact information for each. Garden members are expected to provide current contact information to their community garden coordinator and must agree to follow the [Safe Operating Requirements for Gardeners & Coordinators](#). Here is a link to a sample [Tracking Tool for Community Garden Coordinators](#).

In addition, gardens should use a sign-in and sign-out system to track who is in the garden each day. This can be a paper or electronic sign-in sheet. This helps public health reach out to gardeners who may be affected if another gardener becomes ill. If your garden uses a paper sign-in sheet, encourage gardeners to bring their own pens. See below for an example of a sign-in sheet. **A printable template is at the end of this document.**

Name	Date	Time In	Time Out

For your community garden, what needs to be done to create an updated contact list? (e.g., notify gardeners to share current contact information with the coordinator, by a specific date).

For your community garden, what would the best option be for a sign-in sheet? (e.g., Electronic? Paper? Other?) **Where should it go? How will the sign-in sheet be communicated to gardeners?**



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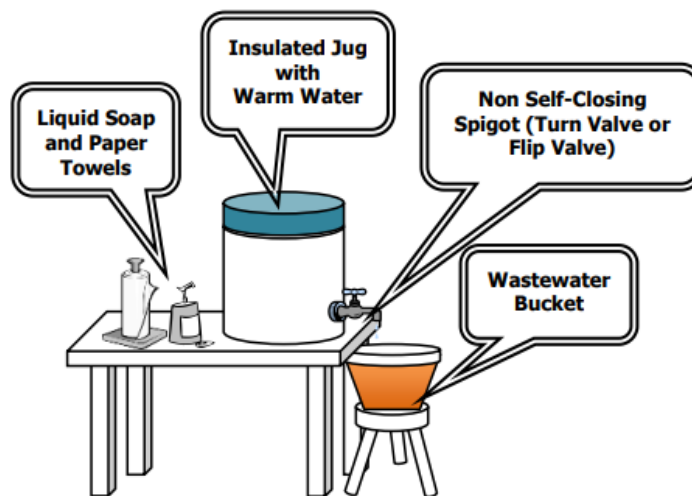
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Hand Hygiene

Good hand hygiene helps to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Have a place for gardeners to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer. Ask gardeners to bring their own hand sanitizer with them when gardening. Each person must ensure proper hand hygiene: before entering and after leaving the community garden; before or after touching their face; and, before or after touching common touch areas, shared tools or other objects. Signage must be posted instructing community gardeners to maintain proper hand hygiene.

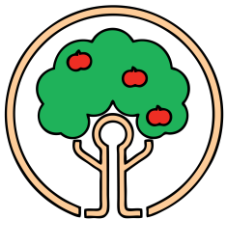
The following methods for hand hygiene in a community garden setting are acceptable. Think about which method will work best for your garden.

- Handwashing sink equipped with hot and cold running water under pressure, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Hand wipes to remove dirt and debris, followed by alcohol-based hand sanitizer (containing at least 70% alcohol).
- Temporary handwashing station prepared as per the picture below. This method may only be used if wastewater can be discarded appropriately, such as into a sink or toilet. Wastewater containing soap may not be discharged onto the ground.



Source: https://www.fraserhealth.ca/-/media/Project/FraserHealth/FraserHealth/Health-Topics/Food-Safety/Temporary_Food_Premises_Application.pdf

For your community garden, what actions can be taken to help facilitate handwashing and hand hygiene? (e.g., set up a temporary handwashing station, ask gardeners to bring their own handwipes and hand sanitizer, etc.) **Who will clean and maintain the handwashing set-up?**



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Cleaning and Disinfection

Frequently touched surfaces/items should be cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily or more often as required: garden hoses, spigots, faucet and door handles, shed locks/handles, gate locks, as well as shared garden tools. Items must be cleaned and free of debris before they are disinfected and the manufacturer's recommended contact time for disinfection must be followed. Refer to [Public Health Ontario's Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings handout](#).

Health Canada has prepared a [list of approved disinfectants](#) that are effective against the COVID-19 virus. Follow the manufacturer's instructions when using the approved disinfectant. Store all disinfectants safely out of children's reach and monitor their use.

A bleach-water solution may be used as an effective disinfectant. To prepare, add 4 teaspoons of bleach for every litre of water. Allow a contact time of at least 60 seconds before wiping away the disinfectant or allow the disinfectant to evaporate. If using a bleach-water solution as a disinfectant, it must be prepared daily. Vinegar is not approved as a disinfectant by Health Canada as it is not effective against pathogens such as the COVID-19 virus.

For your community garden, what actions can be taken to make sure that proper cleaning and disinfection takes place? (e.g., make bleach available, provide a container for mixing and sign with instructions; choose another disinfectant from the Health Canada list, etc.)

Where will products be stored?

Garden Tools

Gardeners must wear their own gloves, and preferably bring their own set of tools. Sharing tools is discouraged, but if necessary, shared tools must be cleaned and disinfected between each use, as described above. **For your community garden, what actions can be taken to make sure that gardeners have their own set of gloves and use their own tools, or that tools are disinfected between uses?** (e.g., post signs, provide disinfectant, etc.)



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Entrance Restrictions

Gardeners must not enter the garden if they are feeling unwell or showing any signs of illness. As of March 30, 2020, those over the age of 65 or those with compromised immune systems or underlying medical conditions, are advised to stay home.

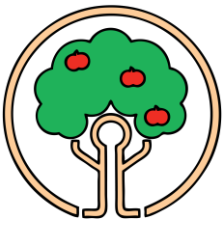
Prior to opening the garden, garden coordinators are to post a sign instructing gardeners with illness to not enter the garden. Each gardener must self-screen prior to entering the garden. A decision tree "[Should I Enter the Community Garden?](#)" has been created to help gardeners decide on whether they may enter the garden. The decision tree includes signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and where to get help if gardeners have symptoms.

If gardeners have symptoms of respiratory illness, they must return home immediately and either complete the online [Ontario Self-Assessment](#) tool or contact the COVID-19 Intake Line Renfrew County and District Health Unit at 613-735-8654. All recommendations from the self-assessment tool or RCDHU must be followed.

How will you communicate the entrance restrictions to gardeners? (e.g., post the decision tree, send an email update on entrance restrictions to members, etc.) **What are some strategies your garden could use, if some gardeners cannot use their plots this season?** (e.g., gardeners temporarily giving plots to others; using open plots to grow food to donate to community programs, or those who are unable to garden this year, etc.)

Resources:

- RCDHU link: [Community Gardens – Safe Operating Requirements for Gardeners & Coordinators.](#)
- RCDHU Signage link: [Should I Enter the Community Garden?](#)
- RCDHU. [Tracking Tool for Community Garden Coordinators: COVID-19 Requirements Available.](#)
- RCDHU. **Community Garden Sign-In Sheet** (See below).
- Public Health Ontario (2020). **Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings.** Available from: www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-environmentalcleaning.pdf?la=en
- Health Canada (2020). **Hard Surface Disinfectants and Hand Sanitizers** (COVID-19). Available from: www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19.html



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- Public Health Ontario (2020): How to Handwash, How to Hand Rub: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/health-topics/infection-prevention-control/hand-hygiene>
- Physical Distancing Signage.** Available from: <https://www.rcdhu.com/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-2/>

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Carolyn Froats-Emond, RD Public Health Dietitian at 1-800-267-1097 or 613-735-8654, ext. 517 for support. Thank you for helping to keep community gardens healthy and safe.

Community Garden Sign-In Sheet

Community Garden:			
Name	Date	Time In	Time Out