

2020 Member Guide

To complement our by-laws (which were adopted February 1996) the Board of Directors of Gardens for Charlestown has assembled this Member Guide for gardeners to consult whenever they have questions about the qualifications for membership or guidelines for using the Gardens.

The Membership Guidelines were adopted at the start of the 2019 season. The Garden Use Guidelines were adopted by the Board at the start of the 2017 season; Nothing that appears here is entirely new; the guidelines are simply an effort to document some of the policies and practices that have evolved over the years so that we can be transparent and consistent about how we operate.

Membership Guidelines

[Adopted by the Board of Directors December 2018. These guidelines complement the By-laws for the Gardens for Charlestown, Inc. adopted February 1996. They have not been revised for the 2020 season.]

1. Membership

a) In order to be a “Member” of Gardens for Charlestown [GfC], one must meet the following criteria:

- i. Be 18 years of age or older;
- ii. Be a current resident of Charlestown and have the expectation of being a Charlestown resident for the duration of the season to which the annual membership fee applies;
- iii. Have paid the annual membership fee as set by the Board for the season;
- iv. Have completed and signed (in ink or digitally) the membership renewal form.

b) Terms and Conditions

- i. Only one individual per household may be a “Member.”
- ii. If another individual in a household plans on tending the garden plot on a regular basis, that person is to be listed on the renewal form as a “Plot Sharer.” This applies whether Plot Sharers are a spouse, life partner, sibling, adult child, roommate or friend; and such persons are also asked to complete and submit a separate renewal form as Plot Sharer.
- iii. Membership is for a period of twelve months beginning on March 1 and ending on the last day of February of the following year.
- iv. One remains a “Member in good standing” by adhering to the “Garden Use Guidelines” and—if the Member shares their plot—seeing to it that the sharers are also adhering to the guidelines.
- v. If a Member fails to adhere to one or more of the guidelines, or if the person(s) with whom the Member is sharing the plot fail to adhere to one or more of the guidelines, the Board may suspend or remove membership for that individual.
- vi. Any Member who is in “good standing” on January 1 will be offered an opportunity to renew their membership for the season that begins March of that calendar year. Membership is renewed by completing and signing a new membership form, reading and consenting to the Garden Use Guidelines, and paying the annual fee.

2. Plot Sharing

a) A Member may add up to two additional persons to their plot as “Plot Sharers,” so long as they meet the following conditions.

- i. Be 18 years of age or older;
- ii. Be a current resident of Charlestown and have the expectation of being a Charlestown resident for the season;
- iii. Have completed and signed (in ink or digitally) the Plot Sharer renewal form.

b) Terms and Conditions

- i. Plot Sharers are to receive the same communications sent to GfC Members and are welcome to attend all Member events, including the Annual Meeting. Note, however, that at the Annual Meeting, there is only one vote per plot, and the person listed on the renewal form as “Member” is the only one authorized to cast a vote.
- ii. One remains a “Plot Sharer in good standing” by adhering to the “Garden Use Guidelines.”
- iii. Any volunteer hours contributed by the Plot Sharer accrue to the account of the Member with whom they are sharing the plot, and the Plot Sharer should record them in the log book under the Member’s name
- iv. With respect to the use of patio, any Plot Sharer is welcome to use the patio under the same conditions as the Member with whom they are sharing a plot, but it is the responsibility of the Member to reserve the patio on the calendar, to ensure that the requisite volunteer hours have been performed on behalf of their shared plot, and that the patio has been left in good order.
- v. If a Plot Sharer fails to adhere to one or more of the guidelines, the Member with whom the person is sharing the plot will be contacted for remediation of the situation. If the situation with the Plot Sharer is not resolved, the Board may terminate the membership of the individual who is listed officially as “Member” on the renewal form, and the Plot Sharer will be ineligible to become a Member at a later date.
- vi. Any Plot Sharer who is in “good standing” on January 1 may be included on the renewal form of the Member for the coming season, and will be expected to sign the renewal form along with the Member with whom they are sharing the plot.
- vii. A Plot Sharer can become a Member in one of two ways.
 - First, if a Plot Sharer (who does not live in the same household as the Member with whom they are sharing the plot) has been on the waitlist and becomes eligible for a plot (as determined by date of waitlist application fee payment).
 - Second, if the Member with whom they are sharing the plot transfers membership to them. For example, if a Member is no longer able to or interested in maintaining their plot but the person who signed the Member’s renewal form as a “Plot Sharer” has been in good standing for two consecutive seasons, that Plot Sharer can be designated as the Member for that plot. If the Member transfers a plot to the Plot Sharer under these circumstances at the start of a new season, the Member and Plot Sharer should inform the Clerk of the change of status when submitting the renewal form. If the change is to be made in the middle of a season, the Clerk should be informed, and the current membership renewal form amended accordingly. The newly designated Member will be offered the renewal option at the conclusion of the season, as long as they are in good standing.

Garden Use Guidelines

[Adopted by the Board of Directors December 2016. These have been updated for the 2020 season, and revisions are indicated in green. Along with the Membership Guidelines, these complement the By-laws for the Gardens for Charlestown, Inc.]

These guidelines were created to ensure that everyone can enjoy the garden safely and share in the responsibility of maintaining this beautiful open space.

1. Volunteer Commitment

All maintenance, programming, and fundraising is performed by the volunteer Members of Gardens for Charlestown. Every Member is expected to contribute at least 12 hours per season maintaining common areas (e.g., paths, border gardens, patio, trees, lawn, sheds and tools) or planning and/or volunteering for events or programs. These hours can be fulfilled by the Member or by the Plot Sharer(s). All activities are to be conducted under the direction of a Board Member or Coordinator, and **hours should be recorded using the online app for volunteers set up for that purpose**. If gardeners cannot attend the various monthly cleanups, due to health or schedule conflicts, alternative tasks that may be performed at their convenience can be assigned by the Maintenance or Border Coordinator. If gardeners do not fulfill their 12 hours of volunteer service, renewal of the plot is not guaranteed for the next year. The Board will review the circumstances and discuss options with the Member.

2. Individual Use Garden Plots

Individual plots, as delineated by wood or stone boundaries, are intended for the sole use of the assigned Member or Plot Sharers. Other gardeners, Plot Sharers, and Members of the public are asked not to enter, traverse, place anything or disturb plants and structures in individual plots without the permission of the assigned Member. Members will observe the following guidelines for their individual plots:

- a) **Start and End Dates.** Each plot should be planted by June 1st and cleaned out by November 1st.
- b) **Weeding.** Each plot should be weeded regularly – we recommend bi-weekly, as weeds spread quickly throughout the garden.
- c) **Hoses.** Hoses may not be run through or over someone else's plot.
- d) **Fences and Borders.** Any new fencing erected around individual plots should be no taller than two feet and fabricated of metal. Bricks, pots, and similar objects should not be placed on top of the timbers that form the exterior borders of each plot.
- e) **Light-blocking Structures or Plantings.** As a courtesy to your neighbors, neither structures (trellises or plant supports) nor plantings should be placed in such a way as to cast shade on another plot. Please check with your neighbors to ensure you are not interfering with their gardens. Existing bushes and trees should be no more than three feet in height. No new bushes or trees are to be planted.
- f) **Open Flames.** Live fires, including candles, and Tiki torches, are not allowed in individual plots or anywhere in the Gardens.
- g) **Invasive Species.** Gardeners are asked not to plant invasive species, trees, shrubs, or cannabis – see website for a comprehensive list of prohibited plants.
- h) **Walkways.** Keep walkways adjacent to your plot free of structures, trash, pots, and weeds.

i) **Garden Debris.** Throughout the season, garden debris, trash, and weeds from individual plots must be taken off-site for disposal; do not leave trash behind anywhere in the garden. Organic materials following clean-ups of common areas are picked up by the City of Boston.

j) **End of Season.** At the end of the season, individual plots are to be cleared of dead plant material. If the gardener does this just prior to the final clean-up of the season, the plant debris may be left with the organic waste from the common areas for pick up by the City. Otherwise, the debris from individual plots is to be taken off-site by the Member. At the end of the season all fencing and structures must be removed or laid on their side.

3. Common Use Garden Areas

Common-use garden areas include stone/gravel and grass pathways, as well as border gardens along Main St, Bunker Hill St, and Charles St. Gardeners and the public are welcome to use the pathways during daylight hours for viewing gardens and plant material. Pathways are intended to provide easy access for gardeners to their plots and for hoses to reach individual plots. Border gardens are intended to provide viewing enjoyment for gardeners and the public.

a) **Pets.** Pets must be leashed at all times; owners will clean-up after their pets and prohibit them from entering plots.

b) **Hours.** With the exception of the patio area, all common areas are closed from dusk to dawn.

c) **Picking and Cutting.** No picking, cutting, planting, or removing plants or plant material from common border areas without the approval of the Border Coordinator.

d) **Border Crossings.** Border gardens should not be entered or crossed except where walkway breaks have been established.

e) **Structures and Signs.** No structures, signs, or other items may be installed in common areas without the approval of the Board. Nothing may be attached to the perimeter fence, gates or trees unless approved by the Board. The Garden does not allow political banners to be placed on fencing, in plots or in common areas.

f) **Debris and Structures.** Common areas must be kept free of debris and structures.

g) **Flames and Torches.** No live fires, including candles and Tiki torches, may be installed in common areas.

h) **Sidewalks.** As the property owners, it is the Garden's responsibility to maintain the perimeter sidewalks and keep them clean.

4. Common Use Garden Structures and Contents

Common-use structures include the Tool Shed, Big Shed, and Lattice Shed. Please observe the following guidelines with respect to their use.

a) **Tools.** Tools that are kept in the Tool Shed are intended for shared use by members while on the property of Gardens for Charlestown. Common use tools must be cleaned of dirt and debris and returned to the tool shed after every use. If a tool is broken, it should be left on the counter in the large shed with a note for maintenance to repair or discard.

b) **Contents of Big Shed.** The refrigerator, books, tables, chairs and other common use items in the Big Shed are for use by Members while on the property of Gardens for Charlestown. All other items intended for garden sponsored events, and stored in the Big Shed, are not for common-use.

c) **Offsite Use of Items.** Requests for use of items in the Big and Tool sheds to be used off-site should be made to the Board of Directors (please contact the Clerk at Clerk@gardensforcharlestown.org).

d) **Keys.** Keys are to be returned to their original lock boxes after every use. Both garden sheds are to be kept locked when not in active use.

e) **Other Uses of Shed Interiors.** The interior areas of the two garden sheds and greenhouse are not intended for general storage use by gardeners. Any special request to use these spaces must be approved by the Board.

f) **Shed Exteriors.** Nothing may be attached to garden structures without the approval of the Board.

g) **Refrigerator.** The refrigerator may be used to store food and drink items belonging to individual gardeners for the period of one day. This rule does not apply to garden sponsored events.

h) **Food Handling.** No food should be left outside or on the counters of the Big Shed overnight, as this may attract rodents. All debris and garbage should be removed the day of your event.

i) **Use of Supplies.** Sometimes there are things like cleaning supplies, paper towels, napkins, plastic cutlery, etc., in the Big Shed. Gardeners may use a small, reasonable amount of these items. However, if you are having an event on the patio, it is your responsibility to provide these items for your event.

j) **Discarded containers, structures or any other non-organic materials should be removed from the garden. Please do not leave items behind the large shed or with the organic garden material, as they will be picked up by the city.**

5. Greenhouse

A limited amount of greenhouse space is available for use by individual gardeners on a first come first served basis and is subject to an annual fee set each season by the Board. Each greenhouse gardener is entitled to one bench space. The greenhouse is intended for use during early months of the growing season (April and May) as a means to start seedlings and maintain other sensitive plants.

a) Permission to use the greenhouse from other than an individual gardener (plants intended for common area use) is subject to approval by the Greenhouse Coordinator.

b) Storage of garden material not belonging to individuals using the greenhouse is subject to the approval of the Greenhouse Coordinator.

c) All material belonging to greenhouse users must be labeled with their name.

d) All material must be removed from the greenhouse by June 1 with the exception of material to be used the next year by continuing greenhouse participants (for example, pots or bagged soils).

e) **Heating and ventilation equipment will not run past June 1.**

6. Garden Patio

The garden patio area and use of the gas grills is a benefit for gardeners to enjoy. Individual gardeners may reserve the patio for a private use up to 4 times a season. The length of time is limited to 4 hours per use, not including set-up and take down. Activity on the patio may extend beyond daylight hours but is subject to a curfew. We must be considerate of our neighbors.

a) **Reserving the Patio.** Gardeners may reserve the patio for a private event once they have participated in 2 cleanups or completed 4 hours of volunteer service for the Gardens. Gardeners may reserve the patio for up to 4 separate events per season totaling no more than 16 hours of use. The patio is reserved by adding the event to password-protected electronic calendar provided for this purpose on the GfC website.

b) **Hours of Use.** Use of the patio for private events may not start earlier than 8:00 am. Curfew for patio is 10:00 p.m. Noise and music on the patio must be kept to a level that does not disturb

neighbors. Music should be shut off at 10:00 p.m. All items used for a private event must be removed by 11:00 p.m. of the same day.

c) **Grills and Flames.** Gas grills are available for use on the patio. After each use, they should be cleaned and locked. Live fires, including candles, and Tiki torches, are not allowed. Battery or solar powered candles or lights are options when using the patio for personal events.

d) **Post-Use Clean-up.** The patio must be clean and returned to its original condition and personal decorations or table items should be removed immediately after your event. Any damage or broken items should be reported to the Board as soon as possible.