

Sterling Heights Community Garden

The Sterling Heights Community Garden aims to cultivate a vibrant and inclusive space where residents can connect with nature, grow fresh produce, and foster community relationships. Through education, collaboration, and sustainable practices, we empower individuals and families to engage in gardening while promoting healthy lifestyles and environmental stewardship.

Our vision is to strengthen Sterling Heights’ thriving community by bringing people together through a shared passion for gardening and sustainability. We aspire to create a welcoming environment that nurtures creativity, diversity, and collaboration, inspiring generations to embrace gardening as a means to enrich their lives and strengthen community bonds. Together, we envision a greener, healthier future for all residents.

The Sterling Heights Community Garden invites residents, non-residents and local businesses to engage in the creativity and cultivation of designated garden spaces (bed space) within the Community Garden.

Eligibility: Each household or business licensee is permitted to apply for one (1) Community Garden License. Licensees may apply for a second (2) license if there are enough remaining spaces available after the first planting date. Applicants 18+ are required to produce verification of residency or business status. For the Children's Garden, a parent or legal guardian must possess the license for children aged 6-12.

Application Process: Interested individuals or households can apply online at www.myshpr.net, in person at the Community Center (40250 Dodge Park Rd.) or the Nature Center (42700 Utica Rd.) or by mailing the documents to Sterling Heights Parks and Recreation, 40555 Utica Rd., P.O. Box 8009, Sterling Heights, MI 48311-8009. Falsifying information on the application will result in forfeiture of the license back to the city without refund. The Community Garden license is temporary, and is revocable by the City at any time, and shall not be construed or considered a lease or tenancy.

Selection Criteria: Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until all garden bed spaces are assigned. A waiting list will be kept in the event a bed space becomes available during the season.

Assignment of Garden Beds

Applicants may express preferences to tend specific bed spaces however final assignments will be made at the sole discretion of the Parks and Recreation Department. Bed spaces will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis, ensuring equal opportunities for all.

License Duration: Licenses are in effect for one growing season (May through October) and must be renewed annually on a first-come-first-served basis, subject to compliance with garden rules. Existing licensees will be given a first right of refusal to apply for a second consecutive year if desired. No licenses will be given to the same household or business for more than two consecutive years unless bed spaces remain available after April 1 at the department’s discretion. Licenses are non-transferrable.

Acceptable Garden Items: The Parks and Recreation Department maintains a list of items that are not approved for growing or cultivating in the community garden. This list is not exhaustive and may change as determined to be in the best interest of the City or to remain consistent with the goals and vision of this facility. This list is available on the City’s website and for review inside the garden at James C. Nelson Park. Any changes will be conveyed directly to all currently registered licensees. The Parks and Recreation Department will also maintain a list of recommended plant items for the benefit of the local ecosystem which may also be updated periodically.

License Fees: The following fees have been set for the 2026 growing season:

In-Ground Garden Bed 4'x12’ \$120.00

Non-Resident 4'x12’ \$156.00

Above Ground Garden Bed Large 4'x8' \$80.00

Non-Resident 4'x8' \$104.00

Above Ground Garden Bed Small 3'x6' \$60.00

Non-Resident 3'x6' \$78.00

ADA/ Accessible Garden Bed Adult 3'x6 \$60

Non-Resident 3'x6' \$78.00

ADA/ Accessible Garden Bed Child 2'x2' \$40.00

Non-resident 2'x2' \$52

Children's Above Ground Bed 3'x3' \$30.00

Non-Resident 3'x3' \$39.00

License Fee payments can be made by cash (in person only), check made payable to Treasurer, City of Sterling Heights (in person/ mail), or credit card (in person/ online/ mail using the attached application form.

Contact Information: Please contact the Parks and Recreation Department at 586-446-2700 or by email at recreation@sterlingheights.gov. For any questions, concerns or comments. Complaints can be submitted in writing by completing the online form at www.myshpr.net or filing a written complaint in person at the Parks and Recreation office. Complaints must be received within 24 hours of the incident; anonymous reports will not be considered.

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Code of Conduct and Regulations

_____ I understand that my use of this garden and assigned bed space is at the discretion of the City of Sterling Heights and is contingent upon compliance with all city policies and practices.

_____ Garden hours are from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. from May 2 through September 30, and from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. for the month of October ending on the 25th. The garden will be closed November – April.

_____ Upon receiving a bed space assignment, I will begin planting within two (2) weeks from the date of the last frost or Memorial Day.

_____ I will notify the City if I cannot for any reason maintain the licensed bed space. Failure to notify may result in forfeiture of the bed space and removal of all plantings.

_____ I understand that if I find myself unable to tend to the licensed bed space for any period of three (3) weeks, the bed space license will be deemed revoked.

_____ I will respect bed space boundaries, maintain manageable plants (under six feet), and address any weeds, pests, or diseases to support the upkeep of the Community Garden.

_____ I will take steps to maintain and improve the soil in the bed space by using organic gardening methods and agree to use only organic gardening methods in the bed space.

_____ I will agree to keep bed spaces, pathways, and surrounding areas clean, weed free, and orderly. Waste should be sorted into three categories: 1) dead plants, leaves, and green waste; 2) paper, plastic, cardboard, and metal; and 3) garbage or non-recyclable materials. I recognize the importance of not leaving household trash or other items in the Sterling Heights Community Garden.

_____ At the end of the growing season, all items planted in the Sterling Heights Community Garden must be removed and the bed space tilled back to a generally accepted starting condition.

_____ If I decide to use a trellis or vertical gardening system, its dimensions will not exceed 6 feet in height and 6 feet in width and must stay within the rented space limits.

_____ Access may be revoked if a licensee brings more than one guest, excluding their children or immediate family members.

_____ Adults must accompany children under the age of 18 in the Children’s Garden at all times. Adults over 18 are not permitted in the Children’s Garden unless they are with a child.

_____ Community Garden Licensees are responsible for their own safety and are encouraged to use their best judgment regarding participation in garden activities during inclement weather. The garden will be closed during severe weather events that pose a risk to safety, including but not limited to:

- Presence of thunder and/or lightning
- Severe thunderstorm or tornado warnings
- Flooding or other damage from storms

_____ The following actions are prohibited in the Sterling Heights Community Garden:

- Parking on grass or areas other than the designated parking lot.
- Bringing pets to the garden except service animals as provided for in the ADA
 - Service animals must remain on a leash no greater than 6' and be in control. Owner must clean up after service animals and dispose of waste appropriately
 - Emotional support animals are not permitted
- Planting and cultivating large or non-approved plants
- Misusing, tampering with, or removing any property, equipment, or materials provided by the City or not belonging to you.
- Displaying any harmful, derogatory, or political signage.
- Storing flammable/ harmful liquids or using non-approved pesticides.
- Use of tobacco, vape products, hookah, illegal narcotics (including marijuana) and alcohol.
- Engaging in disorderly conduct including theft or vandalism.

_____ Acts of aggression, including verbal and physical aggression and bullying towards other patrons, staff, or volunteers, will not be tolerated.

_____ I recognize that the Parks and Recreation Department will use various methods of communication to share relevant and important information regarding the community garden including emails, texts, phone calls, social media, newsletters, weather hotlines, and posting on the message center at the garden.

_____ I understand that it is my responsibility to protect the integrity of the Community Garden and will report violations by other patrons to the Parks and Recreation or Police Departments.

_____ I acknowledge and agree that participation in the Sterling Heights Community Garden is at the licensee's own risk.

_____ I understand that my participation is expressly conditioned by my agreeing to abide by the Code of Conduct and Regulations, as well as the execution of the Release, Waiver, Hold Harmless, Indemnity and Participation Agreement.

By signing below, I have read and understand the policies set forth by the City of Sterling Heights and acknowledge that violations of the above guidelines or city policies by myself, family members or my guests may result in my garden license being revoked in addition to legal action if appropriate.

Garden Bed Licensee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Garden Bed Licensee Print: _____ Date: _____