

Franciscan Earth Literacy Center's
Seeds of Hope Farm

2017 Community Garden Guidelines

The Franciscan Earth Literacy Center (FELC) will be hosting community garden plots on the Seeds of Hope Farm for the 2017 season. Plots will be available for a participation fee for anyone interested in growing their own produce to use for themselves. FELC promotes active learning and healthy relationships with our natural environment. This extends to the community garden plots, in which we hope to give individuals the opportunity to have a hands-on learning experience. Participants will also have the opportunity to learn basic gardening skills from experienced Master Gardeners.

The following guidelines are in place to ensure that the community garden project keeps in line with FELC's mission and to give participants all the information they need to make sure their gardens succeed.

Preparing your plot:

FELC staff will till your garden area to prepare it for planting by approximately May 1, 2017 unless delayed by weather. You will be notified by email or phone when your garden area is ready for you to plant and care for.

Garden areas will be identified with stakes and string and labeled with the gardener's name. Community Garden plots will be accessible during daylight hours only. All children in the community garden plots must be accompanied by an adult.

Choosing your plants:

Annual vegetables and fruits are permitted. If you want to grow perennial herbs, pots are permitted and will need to be removed at the end of the season. Plant tall crops (corn, sunflowers, etc.) so that they will not shade neighboring plots. Keep trellises in locations that will not shade other plots. If a crop height is questionable, please ask FELC staff.

Tools and equipment:

Bring any hand tools or gloves that you will need to work in your garden space. Each community garden participant is responsible for his/her own tools. FELC is not financially responsible for any lost or damaged tools. Please- no motorized tillers.

Parking:

Parking is permitted in the large parking lot on the south side of the Franciscan Earth Literacy Center. The Community Garden area is situated to the north east of the barn and is easily accessible from the parking lot by walking behind the barn.

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Upkeep:

Please keep paths between beds and around the garden clear.

Please keep weeds controlled with frequent weeding. Weeds should not get taller than 4 inches or cover more than a third of your plot. Weeds that have been pulled can be spread between garden rows or in the path between garden spaces where they will decompose and add nutrients to the soil.

Please make arrangements to have someone tend your plot if you will be unable to tend it for over 7 days.

Please notify an FELC staff person if you are unable to continue to garden your plot.

Plots that are left unmaintained, with weeds exceeding 4 inches, are subject to being tilled or reassigned. If such a situation arises, FELC staff will contact the gardener and notify them that the plot will be tilled and reassigned if not cleaned up within 7 days.

Soil Amendments:

Gardeners can add organic material to their plots if they desire, but it may not be necessary. Products of plant or animal origin (i.e. compost, leaf mold, livestock manure, fish emulsion, cover crops, kelp meal, liquid seaweed and commercial organic fertilizers) are acceptable. Natural mineral fertilizers, such as greensand, granite dust or ground limestone are acceptable.

Commercial inorganic fertilizers are prohibited:

Gardeners may use only natural fertilizers and pest control measures that are acceptable by major organic certification agencies, such as those listed with Organic Materials Review Institute.

Herbicides & Insecticides:

Herbicides are those artificial chemicals that are used to control weeds. Herbicides, either organic or synthetic, are **not** permitted. Mulching, hand weeding and hoeing are recommended to reduce weed growth. Insecticides/pesticides are those products used to control harmful insects. Synthetic insecticides are prohibited.

There are many home remedies that people often use to control insects in their garden. While we do applaud these efforts we want to be sure that all home remedies used are safe for the environment and safe for you. If you are unsure whether or not your method will be permitted, ask an FELC staff member.

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Other Pests:

Generally our worst four-legged pests are deer and ground hogs in this part of the farm. Please do not attempt your own pest control practices on these animals. The staff tries to keep the deer and ground hog populations under control. However if you notice a persistent problem, please contact an FELC staff member.

Water Use:

At times it is necessary to water your plants. FELC will have a garden hose available on a reel near the community gardens. In keeping with the values and mission of the center, we ask that gardeners use water as sparingly as possible so that we can make sure the gardens are environmentally sustainable.

It may be necessary for the gardeners to work together if watering needs occur on a regular basis. It is important to share hoses and length of time of use of these general materials. Watering cans may be useful to obtain water from the rain barrels at FELC. If you experience problems with getting your garden space watered please notify an FELC staff member and we can come up with an alternative plan.

Harvest:

Harvest in a timely manner to avoid rotting produce. Please do not harvest from the plots of others without permission.

Training:

With the help of volunteers from the Seneca County Master Gardeners program, FELC plans to provide training in basic gardening.

Ending Date:

FELC staff will till the garden plots at the end of the gardening season, which is often in October. Please clear your plot after your gardening has ended for the season.

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Clearing your plot:

Remove all tomato cages, fencing, stakes, string, plastics, and all other non-organic material from your garden and take them home with you. Please do not place any material in the barn or anywhere around the garden without permission.

Pull out all plants that have tough stalks or vines, such as sunflowers, corn, pumpkin, squash etc. These can be spread around your site, to be tilled later.

Registration and Fees

There are 2 plot sizes available:

- Full size (approx. 20' x 30') \$100.00*
- Half size (approx 20' x 15') \$75.00*

(*Grants are available for those unable to afford the full cost of the plot rental)

Participation fees may be paid in full, or in two equal installments with the second due by July 1.

Registration and Agreement forms are due by May 1, 2017 in order to reserve a plot for the season.

To request a registration pack, contact FELC Administrator by e-mailing ssherick@felctiffin.org or calling 419-448-7485. Registration packs can also be picked up from the Franciscan Earth Literacy Center.

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**2017 Community Garden
Registration and Agreement Form**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Number of adults sharing this plot: _____ Names of Adults:

Number of children: _____

Names of Children:

Emergency Contact: _____ Phone Number: _____

Do any of the gardeners who will be working on the plots have allergies to bees, pollen, cut grass, spiders, etc.? Please explain:

Please indicate your choice of garden size:

- Full (20' x 30') \$100.00*
- Half (20' x 15') \$75.00*

(*grants are available for those unable to afford the full cost of the plot rental.)

Note: all sizes are approximate.

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Membership agreement, signature and fee

I, _____, have read the Community Garden Guidelines and agree to them. I further agree by my signature that I understand that I am participating at my own risk and will not hold the Franciscan Earth Literacy Center or the Sisters of St. Francis and their representatives, employees or board members liable or responsible for any injury or incident resulting from my participation, or that of any member of my family or any guest of mine. In addition I do not hold the Franciscan Earth Literacy Center or the Sisters of St. Francis responsible for any injuries that may incur on the Franciscan Earth Literacy Center or the Sisters of St. Francis property or any loss or damage that occurs to me or any of my guests.

I understand that memberships are non-refundable, but are transferable.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Agreement Form

1. I agree that I am responsible for planting and maintaining a parcel of land that will be assigned to me for farming/growing.
2. I will provide my own tools/materials or make a request to FELC staff if special equipment is needed.
3. If I must abandon my plot for any reason, I will notify an FELC staff member by calling 419-448-7485 or e-mailing ssherick@felctiffin.org.
4. I will keep weeds at a minimum, not allowing them to exceed 4 inches and I will maintain the paths surrounding my plot.
5. If my plot becomes unkempt, I understand I will be given one week's notice to clean it up. If it is not weeded after one week, I understand that my plot will be reassigned or tilled.
6. I will remove litter from the plot, as well as from adjacent pathways and fences, and properly dispose of same.
7. I will participate in the fall cleanup of the garden.
8. I will pick only my own crops unless given permission by renters of another plot.
9. I will follow the guidelines concerning commercial inorganic fertilizers, insecticides and weed repellents.
10. I understand that community garden plots will be available for access during daylight hours only.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return the Registration and Agreement Form to the Franciscan Earth Literacy Center. Include your check made payable to **Franciscan Earth Literacy Center**.

Franciscan Earth Literacy Center – 419-448-7485
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