

## PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the garden is to provide fresh produce to people struggling with food insecurity. Garden produce will be delivered to food pantries and directly to people in need.

The garden also exists to:

- grow relationships within the church and with the community
- foster generosity
- educate all ages about gardening
- encourage healthy eating and physical activity
- encourage environmental stewardship of God's creation
- provide natural space for worship, meditation and relaxation

## OPERATING POLICIES

### 1. GARDENER ELIGIBILITY

Gardeners:

Must be at least 14 years of age or under the supervision of an adult gardener.

Must sign and return an application annually along with applicable fees.

Must agree to comply with all garden rules and policies.

Are encouraged to donate a portion of what they grow to the food pantry.

May grow food only for donation or personal consumption. Food may not be grown for commercial purposes.

### 2. APPLICATION FOR GARDEN PLOT

New gardeners will be assigned a 4' X 16' individual/family plot on a first come first serve basis upon receipt of application and annual fee. Plots may be retained from year to year as long as the gardener has complied with all operating policies and pays the annual fee by the renewal deadline of Jan. 15. Applications for new gardeners may be received starting Jan. 16 for the following calendar year. When all plots are reserved, a waiting list will begin. If there are unrented plots after Feb. 28, gardeners may rent a 2<sup>nd</sup> plot.

### 3. APPLICATION TO BE A FOOD PANTRY GARDENER

Anyone wishing to garden solely in the food pantry plot should complete an application but will not be charged any fees.

### 4. APPLICATION TO DISTRIBUTE PRODUCE TO THE FOOD PANTRY OR OTHERS IN NEED

Any adult wishing to help with the delivery of food to Ecumenical Ministries, Prodissee Pantry or families in need should complete an application but will not be charged any fees.

### 5. FEES

The Garden will operate on the calendar year from Jan. 1-Dec. 31. **Individual beds will rent for \$25 per year or \$15 for 6 months (Jan-June or July-Dec).**

In case of hardship, a gardener can apply to donate 5 hours of labor to garden maintenance in lieu of the \$25 rental fee.

### 6. SERVICE HOURS

All adult gardeners are expected to contribute towards general garden upkeep and help at at least one garden work day per year. Service hours can be served in the following activities:

Ground Maintenance (mowing, weed eating, irrigation maintenance etc.)

Watering , weeding or harvesting in the Pantry Plot

Construction

Compost maintenance

Clean up

Produce Delivery

Educational Presentation at a Meeting

Food Pantry gardeners are expected to take total responsibility for their own crop but should ask for help when it is needed.

### 7. PLOT CONSTRUCTION

Raised beds must be constructed following the plan approved by the Garden Board.

Simple non-permanent structures such as decorations, trellises and teepees are allowed. All structures must be approved by the Garden Board. No structure or plant may prevent another plot from receiving full sun for less than 6 hours.

## 8. PLOT MAINTENANCE

All plots must be prepared and at least partially planted by March 15.

All plots must be kept weeded and mature crops harvested. Weeds should never be allowed to go to seed. If you are not able to harvest your produce, let the Garden Coordinators know so someone can be assigned to harvest your produce for the food pantry.

All gardening activities must be contained within the plot boundaries as marked by the corner stakes. Mowers need to be able to get through the rows unimpeded. The Garden Coordinator reserves the right to trim back vegetation hanging beyond the boundaries of your bed.

If you are unable to tend your plot for an extended time due to travel or illness, arrange for another GOE gardener to tend your plot until you return. Gardeners who are no longer able to attend to their plots should notify the Garden Coordinator as soon as possible. We may be able to salvage or harvest your crops to donate them to the pantry.

Gardeners who break rules or fail to maintain their plot will be given a warning by the Garden Coordinator. If the garden is not cleaned up and tended within 2 weeks of notification, the gardener will lose all gardening privileges. No fees will be refunded. The gardener will not be allowed to garden during the next calendar year.

## 9. PATHWAYS

Pathways between plots must be kept clear of all obstructions and weeds. Vegetation must be trimmed to allow easy passage and mowing.

## 10. COMMUNITY GARDEN EQUIPMENT

The GOE owns some gardening tools and equipment that are available for all gardeners to use. Each gardener is responsible for returning equipment in clean condition to the proper secure location. Gardeners are responsible for their own tools which should not be left at the garden.

## 11. SEEDS/PLANTS

Gardeners are responsible for providing their own seeds and starts.

Illegal or invasive plants may not be grown. (See Alabama Invasive Plant List

[www.se-eppc.org/Alabama/ALIPCplantlist.pdf](http://www.se-eppc.org/Alabama/ALIPCplantlist.pdf))

It is best to grow weedy plants such as mints and fennel in pots. Remove seed heads before they mature, so they don't reseed in other plots or pathways.

Perennials such as asparagus, rhubarb and flowers are permitted, but should be removed when you leave the gardening program.

If you are not going to grow vegetables during a season, it is suggested that you grow a cover crop or mulch fallow sections with newspaper and straw or black plastic. Please do not let it become overrun with weeds.

## 12. MULCH

Organic mulch such as wheat straw, pine straw, compost, and leaves are highly recommended to conserve water and add nutrients to the soil.

Non-biodegradable mulches, such as stone, carpet, and artificial turf are prohibited.

Plastic and porous weed blockers are permitted, but need to be secured to the ground to prevent them from blowing away and must be removed from the bed when it is no longer yours.

## 13. FERTILIZERS

The use of organic fertilizers is preferred but not required. See Appendix A for a list of approved organic fertilizers. Avoid fresh manure which may contain weed seeds, smells bad and may have sanitary issues. Composted manure is permitted.

## 14. HERBICIDES AND PESTICIDES

Herbicides may only be used in the GOE under the approval and direction of the Garden Coordinator.

Only organic pesticides and insecticides may be used in the GOE. See Appendix B for an approved list of organic pesticides. Integrated Pest Management practices should be followed. (See [www.aces.edu/anr/ipm/](http://www.aces.edu/anr/ipm/))

## 15. IRRIGATION

Do not drag hoses over neighboring plots. All hoses must be stored such that they do not present a safety problem to other gardeners. Keep hoses above the grass. Mowing crews are not responsible for damage to hoses.

Use water conservation methods such as mulching.

Report irrigation leaks to the Garden Coordinator or church staff immediately.

## 16. COMPOST

Compost bins are located on the west side of the garden. Please put your vegetative refuse in the bins.

Do not put diseased plants or weed seeds in the compost. Dispose of them at home or in the garbage container on the north side of the church parking lot.

Do not put pet poop in the compost.

Do not compost left-over table scraps (especially dairy, meat, or fats) as this attracts nuisance animals. Raw vegetables and fruits, leaves, coffee grounds and egg shells make good compost.

#### 17. CHILDREN

You are encouraged to involve children in gardening. Children under the age of 14 must be under the supervision of an adult. Adults are totally responsible for children under their supervision. Please make every effort to see that children respect the plots and pathways.

#### 18. PETS

Pets are the responsibility and liability of their caretaker. Leashes and poop scooping are required.

#### 19. LIBRARY

The GOE has a shelf of books in the church library. We also have a drawer of resources in the library file cabinet. Books may be borrowed. Items in the file may be copied but they may not leave the library.

#### 20. SEED EXCHANGE

There is a box in the refrigerator of Building C with packets of seeds which anyone can use or add to.

APPENDIX A  
APPROVED ORGANIC FERTILIZERS

ALFALFA MEAL	MANGANESE SULPHATE
ARAGONITE	MANURE (except from dogs and cats)
BAT GUANO	ROCK PHOSPHATE
BLOOD MEAL	WORM CASTINGS
BONE MEAL	ZINC SULFATE AND CHELATES
BORON	
CALCIUM LIMESTONE FLOUR	
CORN GLUTEN	
COMPOST	
COMMERCIAL ORGANIC FERTILIZERS	
COPPER SULFATE	
COTTONSEED MEAL	
COVER CROPS	
CRAB MEAL	
DOLOMITIC LIMESTONE	
EPSOM SALT	
FEATHER MEAL	
FISH EMULSION	
GRANITE MEAL	
GREENSAND	
GYP SUM	
IRON (chelated)	
KELP PRODUCTS	

## APPENDIX B

### APPROVED ORGANIC PESTICIDES

B-t (*Bacillus thuringiensis*)

COPPER, FIXED OR SULFATE (provided it is used in a manner that minimizes accumulation of Cu in the soil)

DAWN DISH DETERGENT

GARLIC

HOT PEPPER SPRAY

HYDRATED LIME (but not as a soil amendment)

HYDROGEN PEROXIDE

INSECTICIDAL SOAP

LIME SULFUR

MEDINA ORANGE OIL

OILS (horticultural, narrow range oils as dormant, suffocating and summer oils)

NEEM

PERACETIC ACID

POTASSIUM BICARBONATE

PYRETHRINS

RUBBING ALCOHOL

SABADILLA

TALCUM POWDER