

Forest St. Community Garden - 2026 Gardener Information

Welcome Gardeners!

Looks like weather is warming up! We can start planning our plots and **Note:** Tender plants like tomatoes and peppers should not be planted until ground temps stay above 55/60 degrees.

General information about all garden operations:

- **Tools in the corn crib shed:** lock combination **9876** (written on the lower right corner of the whiteboard on the tool wall.)
 - Use and return tools daily. Leave things better than you found them.
 - 4 wheelbarrows are leaning against the pavilion or in the compost bin area. There are pitch forks, shovels, rakes and specialty tools in the back left of the corn crib.
 - Please let a garden leader know of any broken tools before throwing them away.
 - Mower and Weed Whip - both are available – replacement line, fuel and starting fluid are in the shed.

- **Water:** Last to leave each day - turn off water main and lock handle
 - **Water main valve:** single valve handle on grey post near ground.
 - **Padlock and lock hasp:** same combination as the shed (**9876**)
 - Slide padlock shackle through hole on main valve in the off position and insert padlock shackle onto the locking hasp. Lock padlock and scramble the locking combination.
 - The lock is to deter water theft and misuse by non-gardeners.
 - **Daily:** return hoses and nozzles back to normal and shut off garden water and lock water valve main.

- **Compost bins:** behind white maintenance garage
 - **1st bin** - discard disease-free plants and vegetables - NO TOMATOES VINES, NO INVASIVE WEEDS (no quack grass, no creeping charlie,..). Please use and help turn/rotate the pile.
 - **2nd bin** – Compost is supplied for season start - please sow directly where you are planting starts and seeds.
 - **Stalky matter** - please set near the motorized chipper, to be ground into compost after it dries out. (Please keep pathway open between compost bins and trees.)

New Plot Garden Protocol Beginning for the 2026 Season

The new protocol is being implemented due to several years of abandoned and/or sub-standard maintenance on plots that required many hours of mitigation by garden coordinators at the end of the season.

Gardening requests:

1. Tools and wheelbarrows are available for all our uses in the “corn crib” shed, (lock combination is **9876**) and behind the white maintenance building. If you use them please put them back where they belong.
2. Plant as soon as the weather and climate conditions allow. Delaying planting will allow weeds to get a head start and make maintenance of your plot more difficult.
3. Get to know your neighbors. They can help you if you have a life event that will make it difficult to maintain your plot. Likewise offer to help others if they are having issues.
4. Leaf or seed free straw mulch placed around your plants will help keep weeds down and reduce the amount of required watering. There may be some piles of leaves from the fall leaf dumps – ask the garden coordinator for more information.
5. If you opt to till your plot the existing weeds in the plot will bloom unless you plant early and keep up on the weeds – again mulching will suppress weed growth in your plot.
6. Throw rocks and concrete chunks that you find in your plot over the levy. It is not allowed to put rocks or other debris in the mowed pathways – this makes mowing difficult and can result in \$1,000’s of repairs (this has happened in past years).
7. Weed bags are provided for noxious weeds, or crop vines/fruit that can spread disease or are diseased. A compost bin is available on-site for grass and benign crop waste. Please keep in mind that that the weed bags are for weeds/garden waste only – no dirt – pound off dirt into your plot or sink holes in the isles. If you cannot lift the bag without the bag ripping, we cannot either and will return it to your plot for you to remove the dirt.
8. Abandoned fencing and other random garden supplies are available on a first come first serve basis behind the city’s storage garage note: if the garden materials have a name attached, they will be reclaimed by past gardeners - if in doubt contact garden coordinators for more information.

Required maintenance and rules for the growing season.

1. Weeding. Weed your plot if the weeds are higher than your crops you will be warned.
2. Keep fencing clear of grass and weeds. A weed eater is available in the garden shed. Extra line and gas is available as well. If you use up the gas or line report to the garden

coordinator so that it can be replenished. Sand burs like to inhabit poorly maintained fences – you will be warned if this occurs.

3. Mow the aisle by your plot. Get to know the plot owner across the aisle so that you can rotate mowing. A mower is available in the shed, again let the garden coordinator know if you use the last of the gas so it can be replenished.
4. If you remove a nozzle from the hose, replace it before you go. Never leave a hose without a nozzle because water can be wasted if the valve by your hose is left open.
5. Shut off the valve where your hose connects to the water system when you are done using it.
6. Shut off the valve to the region that your plot is located (north or south) at the main water shutoff location if no one else is using water in your region.
7. If you are the last to leave the garden area (north, south, and shared), shut off and lock the main valve. (The lock combination for the water is **9876** as well.) Leaving a hose open without a nozzle or not locking the main valve has resulted in \$100's of water waste in past years.
8. Report leaks immediately. Please indicate location of leak (north, south, aisle). The water lines are buried a few inches below the surface and run between the hose connections by the "T" stakes. Do not till, pound stakes, or dig in this area.
9. A garbage container is located by the pavilion. Only weeds should be placed by the road. You are responsible for disposing your garbage, do not mix non-biodegradable items into the weed bags. Brush must be kept separate from the weeds.
10. Pets are OK, but not in other's plots – keep them in your plot or in the grassy area.

Required Maintenance at the end of the season.

1. Remove all weeds and potentially disease carrying garden waste. Put in weed bags – pounding off excess dirt – and place by road. If you have a large amount of, contact the garden coordinator and we can drop a trailer by your plot for your (and our) convenience.
2. Remove all metal and wood in the plot (cages, arbors, stakes, and fencing). It is acceptable to store your fence and stakes in your plot if you intend to re-rent the same plot in the next year but must be in a neat pile, and inform the coordinator of your intentions. It may be possible to leave fencing up that is parallel to the river, but it requires permission from the city. Contact the coordinator so that we can ask for you.
3. If you intend to have your plot tilled in the spring or if you do not want to re-rent, everything must be removed.
4. Weed whack the perimeter of the garden where your fence was and do a season end mow in the aisle so that it is ready for the spring.

5. If you want to mulch with leaves, we can have leaves delivered to your plot, but they must be spread within three days of the delivery. Contact the coordinator for more information. Please no plastic. If you put down cardboard it must be weighed down... it gets windy and it requires more weight than you think.

Warnings will be given for any in or out of season violations. If not corrected in a reasonable amount of time, the coordinator will remediate and abusers will not be welcome back in future gardening seasons.

- **Weed and Green Bag/Delivery Boxes:** Stored empty in pavilion shed or under pavilion sorting table – often left at the end of plot rows near gravel. Large green bags/delivery boxes are for invasive weeds - knock soil off to reduce weight and keep good soil in the gardens.
 - Weigh bags down with tools, weeds until you have added enough weight so that the bags will not blow away. (We have tracked them down as far as a block away from the gardens.)
 - Feel free to move the bag around as you work on your plot.
 - Full green bags - place close to the road - they are taken to the brush site (M/W/Sat.) as needed.
 - **NOTE:** If the bags are too heavy to move start a different bag (if you cannot lift them...we cannot either) Repeat as needed.
- **Rocks/concrete/bricks:** 30 years ago, this area belonged to households. If you work up any of these materials, please throw over the berm toward the river.
- **Mowing/trimming the perimeter of your plot:** Please keep your plot perimeter mowed or trimmed. Excess growth makes it impossible to take down fencing and encourages weed growth into your plot.
- **Garbage and porta pottie:**
 - The city will empty both as needed.
 - Please throw away or recycle old fencing or cages at home.
 - Please help keep the entire garden area free of garbage, as it reflects poorly on our community garden (passers-by and the city).
- **Homeless and vagrants:** frequently stay in the Forest St. Parks and gardens. If they are sleeping or peacefully hanging out leave them alone. If they are behaving in a violent manner, please report them to Eau Claire Police non-emergency at **715-839-4972** (please program this number into your phone for quick access.)