



Region of Waterloo

PUBLIC HEALTH & EMERGENCY SERVICES

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MEDIA RELEASE

Region of Waterloo community gardens to re-open

May 4, 2020

WATERLOO – On April 25, 2020, the Ontario Government announced new amendments to the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act that permit the use of community gardens across the province.

Over the next week, area municipalities will begin to reopen the over 80 community gardens that exist in the region. Municipalities will follow a coordinated approach to reopening by working together with The Community Garden Council and in consultation with Region of Waterloo Public Health to ensure a safe transition back to operating these valued spaces.

As a further safety precaution, access to the gardens will only be permitted to community garden volunteers with assigned plots. To ensure their safety while onsite, volunteers must adhere to series of guidelines developed by Public Health officials. The following are some of the key requirements in the guidelines:

- Prior to gardeners visiting their plot, they should use the COVID-19 [self assessment](#) tool – if they have symptoms, live with someone who has symptoms, or has been identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19, the gardener should stay home and self-isolate for 14 days before returning to the garden;
- Gardeners should be on site only for the planting and maintenance of the garden and should not engage in other social activities or gatherings;
- Community gardens must provide hand washing stations and/or hand sanitizer that is easily accessible to gardeners and gardeners should clean their hands when entering and exiting the garden

- Gardeners must maintain physical distancing, keeping a 2 metre distance between themselves and other gardeners; and
- All shared tools and hard surfaces such as latches to garden gates, door handles to garden sheds, compost bins, planting tables, and hand tools must be disinfected before and after each use.

Gardeners who do not follow the recommendations may be asked to leave the garden, or may face fines for non-compliance under the Ontario Emergency Measures Orders and Regulations.

Signage will be put in place at each garden site to identify that it is closed to the general public. Local municipal by-law can be contacted regarding non-compliance and enforcement of the legislation. For more information, please call 519-575-4400.

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