

SUNRIVER COMMUNITY GARDENS (SRG) USER AGREEMENT Rules and Guidelines

Welcome – to this very special food growing community garden. To keep the “community” values safeguarded it is important to have a few guidelines and best practices in place.

Being a member of a community garden means there are expectations a plot holder helps out, however and whenever they can – by keeping shared spaces and paths cared for and being mindful of making shared aspects of the garden work for all – composting, taking garbage home, and being respectful of community garden property. Please help us keep SRG a place for all of us to showcase and be proud of.

1) INTRODUCTION

The Sunriver Community Gardens (SRG) has five primary users:

1. **Allotment gardens** – plots and raised beds
2. **Community Orchard** – volunteers and apple shack
3. **Food CHI: Grow a Row** – growing food to assist helping agencies i.e. Sooke Food Bank
4. **Native gardens** - woodlands and wetlands. Edible and medicinal plants/berries
5. **Healing Garden – all SRG members are welcome to use the healing and herb garden**

The overall 2.5 acres SRG site is managed by the Sooke Region Food CHI Society (Food CHI) with input from the SRG Council – plot users, orchard and Food CHI volunteers.

Food CHI is the licensed occupant of SRG. They have an agreement with the District of Sooke to occupy and manage the site, and to ensure compliance to the District's environmental standards and by laws.

Each user group will manage its own area and program. The SRG Council manages site issues and changes that affect **ALL** users. For example, access to the site, water, drainage, shared resources/assets – tool and storage sheds, outhouse, gazebo, cob oven, composting, safety and garden security (fences and gates).

The SRG council includes representatives from the 6 pods, and other interested gardeners who support the allotment gardens with special resources – composting, maintenance, water systems, newsletter, events, etc. For more information regarding council meeting times and minutes, check out www.sookefoodchi.ca under Sunriver Community Gardens.

1.1 Allotment Garden Plot Users - PODS

The numbers involved with the 100+ plots and raised beds is close to 200 people. The allotment garden has 6 pods – see plot plan posted up near tool shed. Each pod has several representatives to help oversee your pod and handle any queries or concerns.

Contact your pod representative if you need info or have suggestions. Your pod is like your neighbourhood – take a few minutes and say hello to those around you.

FOOD CHI and orchard representatives – are posted up on toolshed blackboards.

Safety and Liability - By becoming a member of Sooke Food CHI you will be covered for liability. Food CHI requires all plot gardeners and volunteers to have an orientation to SRG on the operation of equipment and tools, and the use of public spaces. A first aid kit is in the tool shed for minor injuries. For serious medical incidents a call to 911 or trip up Sooke to the medical clinic is advised. Users should exercise caution on windy days as branches may fall onto the site..

Garden security – when leaving please check to see tool shed is secured and tools put away. All gates must be closed to keep deer, rabbits and other animals out. If in doubt, play it safe and close the gates. Do not assume “somebody else” will do it.

2) ALLOTMENT PLOT AND RAISED BED RENTALS

- Plot and raised bed rentals are open to any resident of the Sooke Region. Raised beds are normally provided for those with mobility issues.
- Only one plot rental per household address is permissible. When a plot is being shared with someone, one person will be designated the “primary gardener” who will be responsible for that plot in accordance with these rules and guidelines.
- A wait list will determine allocation of garden plots to plot holders on a first come, first serve basis. A potential plot holder cannot begin to work their plot until a SRG orientation and membership with Food CHI is completed, and this user agreement (SRG Rules and Guidelines) has been read and signed.
- No plot holder shall sublet or reassign their plot to another.

Wait Lists – to be kept by Allotment garden council or committee throughout the year. Wait list contact name will be posted on toolshed blackboard.

2a Rentals and Fees – payable to Sooke Region Food CHI Society

1. Plot rentals are for one calendar year, to be renewed each year and are **non-refundable**.
2. Fees:

Micro	\$60
Small – up to 250 square feet	\$70
Medium - 250 to 500 sq ft	\$80
Large – 500 to 750 sq ft**	\$90
Raised beds 4 x 8 ft	\$35

**** No plot shall exceed 750 square feet.**

3. To reserve one’s plot for the next calendar year the fee must be paid by November 30th of the previous year.
4. Notice for renewals shall go out each year to all plot holders during October of that year

5. Wait list names will be contacted in January (or sooner), if plots are available.
6. Plots not cultivated by May 1st will be reassigned to the wait list participants, unless there are extenuating/exceptional circumstances.
7. Should the plot look underutilized and non-productive by the end of June, pod reps will see if any assistance is required.
8. Plot fees will be reviewed each year by the SRG council. Notification of any changes will be sent out prior to plot renewal time.

ALLOCATION OF PLOT FEES

The funds raised from plot fees are administered by the Sooke Food CHI Society and managed by the SRG council. Plot fee funds are to be used for:

- 1) Garden maintenance and equipment
- 2) Garden operations and administration
- 3) Future site development and emergency repairs.

Note: As a general principle, funds for projects in the gardens outside of the allotment garden area are raised through grants and donations e.g. the orchard, native gardens, apple shack.

2b Use of Plots – growing, maintenance and harvesting

The most important guideline for maintenance of plots is common sense. Whatever you do should have NO impact on plots next door or near to you – sprinklers, shade from growing structures or fruit trees, noxious weeds, pesticides, garbage, over ripe/rotten food not harvested, slug eggs, etc.

1. Each plot should be numbered, and have clear boundaries marked that do not spill over into a pathway, or service lane. Your Pod rep will contact you if there are concerns about your plot.
2. Small cold frames and growing structures not to exceed 6'3" are encouraged. Due to safety and best practices, no glass or tires are permitted. Growing structures must be within your plot boundary and not cast shade on your neighbour's plot.
3. Gardeners are encouraged to use "best practices" – no chemicals, only organic fertilizers and organic slug baits, no pesticides, hand tools where possible - use hand tools to till and weed. Seed ground covers, practice soil amendments. Tools in the sheds are for all to use. Save seeds. Have fun.
4. Best practices include the management and containment of invasive weeds and plants.

Weed Control – One of the most significant pests in the gardens are weeds. Care must be taken to not let your weeds go to seed (e.g. thistle, dandelion, etc.) or creep (buttercup, sorrel, etc.) thereby invading neighbouring plots, pathways or

gravel lanes. An effective way to manage weed growth is to turn over all the soil containing weeds, or alternately, do your hoeing during the hottest part of the day, when the sun can kill the roots of many noxious weeds.

In order to help with the overall care of the garden, we ask that you control the weeds around your plots as well (i.e. the chip paths and to the midpoint of the gravel lane that surrounds your particular plot.) Keeping your plots clear of unwanted weeds will help to reduce the other major pest in the gardens...the ever present SLUGS!

Some food plants too can be invasive (e.g. raspberries, strawberries, etc.). You are requested to contain these plants. Raspberry roots travel quickly, and using a root barrier of some sort is required to control them. An example would be to use some re-cycled vinyl siding and sink it into the ground 12" around your raspberry patch.

4. It is common at times to have one's garden get a little out of hand. Remember, if you need help, call your pod rep. Don't give up if feeling overwhelmed.
5. By November 1 plots should be cleaned up, unless one has winter crops. If one lets their plot go for someone else to rent, plots must be cleared of stakes, growing structures, decorative rocks, etc. Make it easy for the next person.

All plot holders are welcome to use community composts, and Food CHI soil amendments - manures, leaves, grass clippings. Compost "ready to use" can also be used in moderation by the gardeners...be mindful of sharing all the easy-to-use soil amendment materials, donated by our Sooke Community.

Harvesting –any surplus food you have grown that is not consumed by your friends and family, please consider donations, check board for dates and times or email info@sookefoodchi.ca. Weekly distribution of food is delivered to over 5 agencies in Sooke who support those in need. Real food is welcomed and enjoyed by many. If you are not able to harvest your plot, volunteers can offer assistance

2c Water

SRG is on the CRD water system. Food CHI is billed once every 2 months. We are on a rate comparable to an agricultural rate, but water conservation is good to practice. We have 11 water stand pipes, and communal hoses. Pressure is not the best, but it works.

Water lines are installed 2' under in the allotment garden; however water is turned off for winter months (after November 11). Use the rain barrel at tool shed if you need some water, off season.

Should there be a concern that something is not working properly, contact your pod rep for action. If you know what is wrong, there are spare parts for hoses, taps, and connectors in the tool shed.

1. no unattended or overnight watering/sprinkler use
2. please comply to CRD watering restrictions, posted on tool shed
3. do not water your neighbours plots without permission

2d General Rules – kids, pets, fires, cob oven and orchard

1. **Young children** (under 12) are welcome to visit SRG; however they must be supervised to ensure their safety. Children must not wander into other plots and pick berries or vegetables. Play areas with sand boxes are on site, with toys. **Children are not allowed to enter the gated north end of the property, where the pond is located, unless under the constant supervision of a responsible adult.**
2. Where plot holders bring in non-plot registered friends or others to assist in their plots (at any time) it is mandatory they become members of Sooke Region Food CHI Society. All volunteer/helpers are required to have Food CHI membership in order for them to have liability insurance coverage. Under normal conditions plot gardeners cultivate their own plots without enlisting the services of contracted professionals. Membership forms can be found on line www.sookefoodchi.ca or in the tool shed (when available).
3. **Pets** are not permitted beyond garden gates. If your dog is not in your vehicle, they need to be leashed or on a tie up rope in the event they frighten visitors.
4. **Burning** is permitted in bonfire areas behind gazebo, and in fire pits, but only when permitted by the District of Sooke's burning by laws and **ONLY** by SRG members.
5. **Small cooking fires** are permitted anytime in the gazebo. Firewood is available in the woodshed, and normally there is kindling in gazebo, and hatchet, paper and matches in tool shed.
5. **Cob oven** – SRG users are welcome to use the cob oven. Follow posted instructions – use caution about not having too hot of a fire. Bread and pizza paddles are hanging on the post at the cob oven.
6. **Orchard** - Anyone wishing to volunteer to help with the care and maintenance of the orchard can contact Glen Thelin at glensgardeningco@shaw.ca. Seasonal fruit picking will be organized by the SRG Orchard Committee.
7. There will be NO posting of signs (political or business promotion) at the Sunriver Community Gardens – roadside or within the gardens.

2e Communication

Please email info@sookefoodchi.ca for general queries or if you are unsure of whom to contact about a specific issue. You can generally expect a response within 48 hours.

Plot holders will receive communication from their SRG council, pod representatives and occasionally Food CHI by email, to undisclosed recipients. Email addresses will be kept private.

No member of the allotment garden shall solicit business or promote other non-SRG business by using Sunriver Garden email addresses.

All communication will be posted as well on Notice Board outside Tool Shed, recognizing not everyone reads or gets email. Normally all information regarding SRG is posted on the Sooke Food CHI's website <http://sookefoodchi.ca/sunriver-community-gardens/>.

Request for posting communication notices (i.e. non-profit) can be sent to info@sookefoodchi.ca.

2f Non compliance to above Rules and Regulations

In the event that a plot holder is not able to comply with any of the above guidelines, 2 representatives from the relevant pod shall meet with the person(s) to see how best to resolve the issue.

Should the issue not be resolved to the satisfaction of either one of the 2 parties, a representative from Food CHI, the licensee, will meet with those involved parties and attempt to mediate a solution.

Should mediation fail, the plot holder's membership will be revoked for non-compliance with the user agreement and they will forfeit their plot. The plot will be available for reassignment through the wait list pool. **No refunds will be issued.**

3) PLOT HOLDER'S AGREEMENT

**I / We, have read the Sunriver Gardens User Agreement.
I / We understand and agree to comply with the above SRG
Rules and Guidelines**

Date: _____ Plot # _____

Primary Gardener (print name) _____

Signature: _____

Secondary Gardener (print name) _____

Signature: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

Mailing address: _____

Phone: Home _____ Work _____ Cell _____

Email address: _____

PAYMENT: DUE BEFORE NOVEMBER 30, 2017

RENEWAL

NEW MEMBER *

PLOT FEE PAID

AMOUNT \$ _____

* Lifetime Food CHI Membership included in new member fees

Please see attachment "**Plot Sizes and Fees**" for your plot payment amount.

METHOD OF PAYMENT:

Cheques/money orders – payable to Sooke Region Food CHI Society

MAIL TO: c/o Patricia Whiteley, PO Box 1001, Sooke, BC V9Z 1J1

**PLOTS UNPAID BY NOVEMBER 30, 2017 WILL BE GIVEN TO A FAMILY ON
THE WAITLIST AND YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED BY EMAIL.**

PRIVACY:

Sunriver Community Gardens will use personal information to communicate with you, process applications and to provide you with the services you have requested.

Sooke Region Food CHI Society's collection of personal information is used only for the purpose that it was originally collected such as for Society mailings.

We will not sell or trade any personally identifiable information that may be collected from and will not disclose such information to third parties except as authorized by law.