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Gardeners’ Welcome Packet Y Garden 2021

Welcome to the 2021 Y Garden! This Welcome Packet contains information about how the garden operates, important gardening dates, and who to contact with questions. It also contains information about garden volunteer opportunities and educational resources.

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This Gardeners’ Welcome Packet was adapted in part from the Welcome Packet Documents in the Community Garden Organizer’s Handbook (cacscw.org/gardens/handbook/index.htm) published by the Community Action Coalition of South Central Wisconsin. Other materials were adapted from Gardening Matters (gardeningmatters.org) and the Community Garden Coalition (cgc.missouri.org) and the University of Missouri Extension (extension.missouri.edu.)

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Welcome to the Y Garden

A community garden means many things to many people. For some, a community garden is a place to grow food, flowers and herbs in the company of friends, family members, and neighbors. For others, it's a place to reconnect with nature or get physical exercise. Yet others use community gardens simply because they lack adequate space or beneficial soil to have a garden at their house or apartment.

Regardless of why you are choosing to take part in a community garden, the activity comes with both responsibilities and rewards.

Responsibilities: Successful and vibrant community gardens rely on the dedication of each and every gardener to *maintain his or her own plot and contribute to the upkeep and management of the entire garden. There are tasks that must be done in order to help the garden run smoothly.* If everyone pitches in according to his or her ability and desire, the garden will prosper and grow.

Rewards: Community gardening has the potential to offer a range of benefits to individuals, families, communities and the environment.

- **Food Production** — Community gardens enable people to grow high quality fruits and vegetables for themselves, their families and their communities.
- **Nutrition** — Some research indicates that community gardeners eat more fruits and vegetables than non-gardeners.
- **Exercise** — Gardening requires physical activity and can help to improve the overall physical health of gardeners.
- **Mental Health** — Interacting with plants and nature helps reduce stress and increase gardeners' sense of wellness and belonging.
- **Community** — Community gardens foster a sense of community identity and stewardship among gardeners. They provide a place for people of diverse backgrounds to interact and share cultural traditions.
- **Environment** — Gardens help reduce the heat island effect in cities, increase biodiversity, reduce runoff from rain, recycle local organic materials and reduce fossil fuel use from long-distance food transport.
- **Learning** — People of all ages can acquire and share skills and knowledge related to gardening, harvesting, preserving, cooking, nutrition, health, etc.
- **Youth** — Community gardens provide a place for youth to explore gardening, nature, and community.

Above all, community gardening can provide a real sense of satisfaction and accomplishment for all involved.

Successful Gardening at the Y Garden

The following tips are intended to help ensure your success at the garden.

Successful Community Gardening

- **Plan to visit your garden two to three times a week during the growing season.** Make a schedule with yourself or other gardeners. Write it in your calendar. Post a colorful reminder on the fridge. Because your garden is not located outside your front or back door, it's easy to forget about the weeding, watering, staking and harvesting.
- **Attend gardener's meetings.** Educational meetings/presentations will be offered, depending on the level of interest and need. Some past educational topics include seed sowing, pruning and staking tomato plants, identifying edible weeds, diagnosing plant diseases, deterring garden pests, companion gardening, and seed saving. Please refer to the Y Garden Calendar on page 5.
- **Attend workdays.** Occasional work projects may be announced during the gardening season. These workdays will help you meet other gardeners while working together on a special project to benefit all gardeners.
- **Make friends with other gardeners.** Experienced gardeners are an invaluable resource at your garden. Ask questions. Visit their plots to see how they stake their tomatoes or trellis their beans or control insects.
- **Volunteer for a garden job or crew.** By pitching in on a certain job or project, you'll be supporting the garden as a whole and ensuring the work is spread among many people.
- **Educate yourself.** Review gardening websites. Attend gardening workshops and classes. Check out books from the library. Review the Y Garden bulletin board inside the YMCA building. There's always something to learn about gardening and the more you learn, the more success you'll have. Some good gardening websites are listed on page 10.
- **Stay Connected.** We encourage you to visit and join the Y Garden Facebook Group. Just search for Y Community Garden (Cadillac Area YMCA) and click on the green +Join Group. Look for and review important emails from garden leaders, along with questions and comments from other gardeners.

Y Garden Job Descriptions

Community gardens depend on gardeners' willingness and ability to take responsibility for a number of important tasks. Please review the following job descriptions and indicate your area of interest when completing the Y Garden Plot Application. You can also contact the Garden Co-Leaders to let them know how you'd like to volunteer.

Garden Co-Leaders: Primary contacts for the garden. Coordinate and facilitate all garden activities and meetings. Recruit gardeners for various jobs. Provide leadership and guidance for gardeners and volunteer positions below. Identify and recruit new Garden Co-Leaders. Help monitor the Y Garden Facebook page.

Communications Crew: Communicates with gardeners through email, phone calls or mailings about garden news, meetings, and events. May create and organize contests, promotional activities, and help monitor the Y Garden Facebook page.

Gardening Mentors: Possess gardening experience and a willingness to share it with gardeners. Provide guidance, assistance, knowledge, support, and encouragement to new gardeners. Novice gardeners requesting mentors will complete a Mentor Request Form. Mentors will be assigned to novice gardeners and will work together to determine the level of assistance needed. The Y Garden Mentor can expect to meet monthly with the gardener during the growing season. The mentor should reach out to the gardener every few weeks or stop by and check out how things are progressing in the garden. Gardening Mentors also help monitor the Y Garden Facebook page.

2021 Y Garden Calendar

Throughout the year the garden hosts a number of meetings and events. To date, the following meetings and events have been proposed or scheduled. Questions concerning events should be directed to the YMCA, Deb Dyer, Garden Co-Leaders.

Event	Date/Time	Location	Purpose
Spring Registration	Begins April 5th	On-line or phone	Call YMCA front desk (231-775-3369) to provide application information and pay for plots with a credit/debit card. Fees: \$20.00 per plot (members) \$25.00 per plot (non-members) Download a welcome packet from the website – Programs-Community Garden
Garden Clean and Prep work day Roto-tilling	May 15th 10:00-1:30 (Weather permitting) TBD	Y Garden	Spring clean-up of garden plot and common areas Roto-till designated plots Pick up garden map, confirm plot assignment,
Opening Day		Y Garden	Begin planting when appropriate
Gardener's Meetings	TBA	Y Garden	Garden updates, Q&A, educational or presentation topic to be announced
Closing Day	TBA - Approx. October 15 th	Y Garden	Remove all plants and non-plant materials from garden plots on or before the before the closing day

Frequently Asked Questions

Questions about how the garden operates will arise throughout the year. The following frequently asked questions and answers should be helpful. Additional questions can be directed to the Garden Co-Leaders or other Crew Leaders.

How much does it cost for a garden plot?

\$20.00 for YMCA members and \$25.00 for non-members.

How many garden plots are available and how big are they?

There are 32 plots at 20' x 10'. 8 are designated organic only.

What kinds of tools, equipment and supplies are available at the garden?

The tool shed is stocked with wheel barrows, shovels, hoes, rakes, buckets, and various other garden tools for your use. Hoses and spray nozzles are also provided. Tomato cages may be available on a first-come first-serve basis. You should plan on providing your own small hand tools, plants, seeds, and mulch.

What do I have to do to stay in good standing with the garden?

Plant your garden plot and abide by the Y Garden Guidelines on pages 8-9.

How many plots can I get?

You may register for one garden plot. If you are interested in additional plot(s), your name will be put on the waiting list. Gardeners will be notified if extra plots are available.

What should I do with extra garden fruits and vegetables that I don't need?

You are encouraged to bring extra produce into the YMCA building, where members are welcome to help themselves to the fresh fruits and vegetables. Cadillac area food pantries will also welcome your produce donations.

Who do I contact for gardening advice?

Contact the Y Garden Mentors or Co-Leaders, ask other gardeners, or post your question on the Y Garden Facebook page. We encourage you to visit the MSU gardening website for information on a variety of gardening topics. Additional gardening websites are listed on page 10. For basic vegetable gardening information, you can also contact the local MSU Extension office at 779-9480 or the local Wexford Conservation District office at 775-7681.

How much time should I expect to spend at the garden?

Plan to visit your garden at least a few times each week during the growing season to assess the need for watering, mulching, fertilizing, weeding, staking, or harvesting. Keep in mind that vegetable gardens need approximately one inch of water per week. You should plan to water when the top inch of the soil is dry, which may be once or twice a week *or more frequently during hot, dry, windy weather.*

What should I do if I experience or see theft or vandalism?

Notify the YMCA Welcome Desk or the Garden Co-Leaders.

What happens to my garden plot if I don't plant anything or don't maintain my garden?

Your plot may be reassigned to another gardener.

What is the deadline for submitting an application?

Registration applications should be submitted as soon as possible. Keep in mind there are a limited amount of plots and they are available on a first-come first-serve basis. You may request to be put on a waiting list if there are no available plots. Returning gardeners, in good standing, are given the opportunity to pre-register for the 2019 gardening season.

Who can I contact if I have questions now?

Deb Dyer, Y Garden Co-Leader: debd@cadillacareaymca.org, 775-3369 x32

Y Garden

Gardener Guidelines

Guidelines and rules serve a purpose—to maintain a safe, clean, beautiful and friendly environment for community gardeners. Each gardener must understand and agree to the following rules and responsibilities before gardening at the Y Garden. Please read the guidelines and direct any questions or comments to the Y Garden Co-Leaders.

1. All gardeners are required to complete a registration form. The non-refundable plot fee of \$20.00 for YMCA members or \$25.00 for non-members is due when the completed application is submitted. Plots are available on a first-come, first-serve basis
2. Gardeners register for one 20'x10' plot. Gardeners may request additional plot(s) and will be put on a waiting list for the extra plot(s). Gardeners will be notified if extra plots are available.
3. All gardeners are invited to volunteer for one of the garden jobs/crews list on page 4. Please contact the Garden Co-Leaders for more information.
4. Chemical weed killers, fertilizers and pesticides are not allowed in the organic section of the Y Garden. The only herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers allowed are those listed by the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI). Complete lists are available at www.omri.org/omri-lists. Local garden centers should also be able to assist you in locating appropriate organic products.
5. Chemical fertilizers are allowed in the non-organic portion of the garden.
6. Garden meetings may be scheduled during the gardening season. You will be notified by email of meeting dates, times, and presentation topics. Meeting dates will also be posted on the Y Garden Facebook page: Y Community Garden (Cadillac Area YMCA).
7. Gardeners are responsible for planting, cultivating and maintaining their own garden plot and tending the adjoining pathways. *If your plot appears to be untended for a period of time and you haven't contacted the YMCA or a garden Co-Leader, we will attempt to contact you before assigning your plot to another gardener.* Call the YMCA if you need help or if you will be out of town for an extended period of time. If you plan to discontinue use of your space, contact the YMCA Welcome Desk as soon as possible.
8. Plant tall plants and vines in places where they will not interfere with your neighbor's adjoining plot. Planting marijuana or illegal plants is prohibited.

9. At the end of the gardening season, all dead plants and non-plant materials (string, wire, wood, metal, plastic, etc.) must be removed and disposed of properly and all gardens left neat and tidy. *If your garden is not cleaned-up by the closing day, you could lose your gardening privileges for the next season.*
10. Pick up litter and properly dispose in the trash can.
11. Follow the Compost Management instructions posted in the composting area near the garden shed. Put weeds and dead plants into the appropriate compost container or bin. Do not put them in the trash can, leave them in your plot, or on the pathways.
12. Do not apply anything to or pick anything from another person's plot without their express approval.
13. Please do not leave the water on unattended. When finished gardening for the day, hang up the hose at the faucet area, return tools to the shed, and *lock the shed and garden gates before leaving the garden.*
14. The YMCA is a smoke-free campus. Smoking and chewing tobacco are not allowed. Additionally, tobacco can transmit a lethal virus to tomatoes and cigarette butts are loaded with toxins. Smokers should plan to wash their hands with soap and water prior to touching tomato plants.
15. Pets, drugs, alcohol, weapons, and fires are prohibited.
16. Please supervise children in the garden.
17. Report theft, vandalism, and unusual activities to the YMCA Welcome Desk.
18. Social responsibility with the harvest is important. If your ripe produce remains unharvested or if your plot appears to be abandoned, the YMCA reserves the right to pick your produce during the harvesting season.

Your cooperation in abiding by these guidelines is appreciated. *If the rules are not followed, we will call or email you and you will have one week to respond. If the situation has not been remedied after one week, you may lose your gardening privileges.*

Use common courtesy, be considerate of your gardening neighbors, and enjoy the community gardening experience!

Resources on the Web for Planting, Harvesting, Composting, Pest Control, and Plant Disease

Planting and Harvesting

Starting Your Vegetable Garden

<http://migarden.msu.edu/vegetables>

Helpful Gardening Guide – How to Plant Vegetables

<http://migarden.msu.edu/uploads/files/plantingVeg.pdf>

Organic Gardening Techniques

<http://extension.missouri.edu/p/g6220>

Plant and Grow Tips – Smart Gardening

http://migarden.msu.edu/tip_sheets

Vegetable Harvesting and Knowing When Your Produce is Ready to Pick

<http://migarden.msu.edu/uploads/files/veggieharvest1.pdf>

Composting

Making and Using Compost

<http://extension.missouri.edu/p/g6956>

Pests and Disease

Diagnosing Plant Problems

www.extension.umn.edu/garden/diagnose/plant/vegetable

Disease Prevention in Home Vegetable Gardens

<http://extension.missouri.edu/p/g6202>

Managing Insect Pests in the Home Vegetable Garden

<http://extension.missouri.edu/p/m163>



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2021 Y Garden Plot Application

1. Gardener Name: _____
2. Gardener Address: _____
3. Gardener Phone: _____ Gardener email: _____
4. Submit plot fee along with this application (circle one) \$20.00 YMCA Member / \$25.00 Non-Members
5. Please put my name on the waiting list for one additional plot (circle one) yes / no
6. Type of garden plot requested (circle one) Organic / Non-Organic
7. You are encouraged to volunteer for at least one of the garden jobs/crews listed below. Refer to page 4 of the Y Garden Welcome Packet for a description of each job. (circle one or more)
 - * Garden Co-Leader
 - * Gardening Mentor
 - * Composting Crew
 - * Communications Crew
8. If you are a novice gardener, would you like an experienced gardener to help you? yes / no
9. If you are an experienced gardener, would you like to mentor a new gardener? yes / no
10. Phone and email: All gardeners are required to share their phone number, address, and email address with the garden leaders.

This statement must be signed by a parent or guardian if under 18 or by the adult themselves if they are the participant: I certify that my children have permission or that I consent to participate in YMCA Programs. I further stipulate and agree to protect, indemnify, save, and hold harmless said Cadillac Area YMCA employees and YMCA volunteers against any and all claims arising out of my children's (or my) participation in YMCA Programs. I also certify that the program participant (myself or my children) has been screened medically and that there are no medical conditions or injuries that preclude his/her participation in YMCA Programs. I give my permission for photos and/or video to be taken and used for YMCA public relations purposes.

Signature _____

Date _____