

Algoma Public Health

COVID-19: Quick Reference Guide for Community Gardens

April 29, 2020

Background

Community gardens play an important role in our food system, they provide spaces for residents to grow their own food, and it increases their access to healthy foods. Not only as a contributor to food security, gardens have also promoted a sense of community belonging and an opportunity for residents to be physically active.

COVID-19 has created a challenging time for many community garden organizers. Stopping the spread of the virus has directly impacted the way these gardens operate.

On April 25th the government of Ontario lifted restrictions, allowing community gardens to operate following the guidance of local public health units. This document provides guidance on how to safely operate your community garden during this time as well as personal preparedness tips for contributing gardeners.

Managing your Community Garden

Community gardens must follow these minimum standards to begin the gardening season while following public health guidelines for containing the spread of COVID-19. If a community garden is unable to follow the minimum guidance laid out below, they must remain closed until such time procedures are put in place.

- **Communicate.** Before opening, each garden must commit to following health and safety protocols and must communicate these protocols to all active garden members.
- **Limit access.** Registered members, staff and volunteers only during this time. Non-members and visitors should not be permitted to enter. Limit access to no more than 5 persons at one time.

- **Postpone all programming.** No events, children’s programming, training and group builds are to take place.
- **Gardens must be closed to the public.** For gardens without lockable fences, posted signs notifying that it is closed to the public must be up.
- **Physical distancing.** All gardeners must maintain a distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) from other people except for members of the same household.
- **Number of gardeners.** Limit the number of gardeners in a space to ensure physical distancing can be maintained. Think about creating a work schedule and using a sign-in and sign-out system for tracking.
- **Hand Hygiene.** Perform hand hygiene before entering and upon leaving the garden. Provide hand washing options to gardeners. Since hand sanitizers are ineffective on dirty hands, consider setting up a [portable hand wash station](#).
- **Equipment and proper disinfecting.** Launder gardening gloves after each use, while also providing instruction on cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces or tools (i.e. hoses, gates/handles). See attached Public Health Ontario document “Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings”
- **Signage.** Place all provided signage from Algoma Public Health at all garden entrances reminding members, staff, and volunteers about signs and symptoms of COVID-19 as well as your community garden’s revised COVID-19 protocols that are specific to your garden (i.e. hand hygiene, physical distancing measures, gatherings of 5 or less)

Personal Preparedness

Protecting your members, staff, and volunteers

- Ensure you are familiar with the new rules and guidelines for your community garden prior to accessing
- Do not attend the garden if you are sick
- Wash your hands before and after using the community garden
- Wearing face masks can help *reduce* (not eliminate) the spread, ensure physical distancing first and foremost
- Gardeners should plan ahead, use gardening techniques that reduce labour, and minimize the number of trips they make to the garden.
- Bring your own gardening tools and gloves to avoid having to share, or if this is not possible assign tools to each person
- Take garden gloves home to wash after every use and do not share.
- Avoid touching your nose, face, mouth and eyes unless you have just washed your hands.
- Latex gloves do not replace proper hand hygiene practices.

Sources

City of Toronto, COVID-19

<https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/>

Institute nationale de santé publique du Québec. « Avis : Jardins communautaires et collectifs » April 8, 2020. <https://sustainontario.com/2020/04/14/quebecs-proposed-safety-protocols-for-community-gardens/>

Public Health Agency of Canada. “Risk-Informed Decision-Making Guidelines for Workplaces and Businesses during the COVID-19 Pandemic.” Government of Canada, March 22, 2020. <http://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/risk-informed-decision-making-workplaces-businesses-covid-19-pandemic.html>.

Seymour Natalie, Mary Yavelak, Candice Christian, and Ben Chapman. “COVID-19 FAQ for Community Gardens: Steps for Garden Managers and Gardeners.” EDIS New Publications RSS. Food Science and Human Nutrition, March 20, 2020. <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fs342>. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “COVID-19: Resources for Households”, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 6, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/cleaning-disinfection.html>.

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

World Economic Forum, These products work best to kill the virus, March 20, 2020, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/03/clean-kill-coronavirus-covid19-safety-health/>

ATTENTION GARDENERS



If you have at least one of the following symptoms; fever and/
or new onset of cough or difficulty breathing

OR

At least two of the following symptoms:

- chills
- fatigue
- headache
- sore throat
- runny nose
- stuffy or congested nose
- lost sense of taste or smell
- hoarse voice
- difficulty swallowing
- digestive issues (nausea/
vomiting, diarrhea,
stomache pain), or
- for young children and
infants: sluggishness or lack
of appetite

Please go straight home. Stay Home.

Contact your local assessment centre or Algoma Public Health at: 705-759-5404 or 1-866-892-0172 ext. 5404, or Telehealth Ontario at: 1-866-797-0000

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings

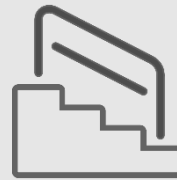
This document provides guidance on cleaning and disinfection of public settings, including schools, transit, colleges/universities and other workplaces in Ontario. For more information, please contact your local public health unit.

What you should know

- Commonly used cleaners and disinfectants are effective against COVID-19.
- Frequently touched surfaces are most likely to be contaminated.
- Use only disinfectants that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). A DIN is an 8-digit number given by Health Canada that confirms it is approved for use in Canada.
- Check the expiry date of products you use and always follow manufacturer's instructions.

Clean frequently touched surfaces twice per day

- In addition to routine cleaning, surfaces that have frequent contact with hands should be cleaned and disinfected twice per day and when visibly dirty.
- Examples include doorknobs, elevator buttons, light switches, toilet handles, counters, hand rails, touch screen surfaces and keypads.
- In addition to routine cleaning, check with your organization for any specific protocols for cleaning for COVID-19.



Select products

Cleaners

- Break down grease and remove organic material from the surface.
- Used separately before using disinfectants.
- Can be purchased with cleaner and disinfectant combined in a single product.

Disinfectants

- Have chemicals that kill most germs.
- Applied after the surfaces have been cleaned.
- Have a drug identification number (DIN).

Disinfectant Wipes

- Have combined cleaners and disinfectants in one solution.
- May become dry due to fast drying properties. Should be discarded if they become dry.
- Not recommended for heavily soiled surfaces.

Prepare products for use

- Where possible, use pre-mixed solution.
- Read and follow manufacturer's instructions to:
 - properly prepare solution
 - allow adequate contact time for disinfectant to kill germs (see product label)
 - wear gloves when handling cleaning products including wipes
 - wear any other personal protective equipment recommended by the manufacturer

Learn about the virus

COVID-19 is a new virus. It spreads by respiratory droplets of an infected person to others with whom they have close contact such as people who live in the same household or provide care. It can survive on different surfaces but can be killed by most cleaners and disinfectants.

You can also access up to date information on COVID-19 on the Ontario Ministry of Health's website: ontario.ca/coronavirus.

Sources:

Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario), Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee. Best practices for environmental cleaning for prevention and control of infections in all health care settings [Internet]. 3rd ed. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2018. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/bp-environmental-cleaning.pdf>

The Regional Municipality of York, Community and Health Services. Proper cleaning and disinfection practices [Internet]. Newmarket, ON: The Regional Municipality of York; 2019. Available from: <https://www.york.ca/wps/wcm/connect/yorkpublic/928899a2-d56b-47af-a9a0-b6e62d8e0bb7/Proper+Cleaning+and+Disinfection+Practices.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=mVMtoGe>

The information in this document is current as of March 11, 2020