5 Step Guide to Starting a Community Garden in Chatham-Kent

Supported by the Chatham-Kent Food Policy
Council and Chatham-Kent Public Health









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5 Step Guide to Starting a Community Garden in Chatham-Kent

Introduction

The Municipality of Chatham-Kent is helping to promote food literacy by assisting in finding locations to encourage communities to garden together. We are glad that you're interested in starting a community garden in your community. This is a serious responsibility which will require community support and dedicated, ongoing commitment by all members of your community gardening group.

Designing, planting and caring for a garden can be very rewarding! Community Gardens have demonstrated positive health benefits to participants and their families. Community gardens:

- Provide access to fresh produce
- Save costs by substituting garden-grown produce for store-bought foods
- Increase physical activity in participants, especially older adults
- Improve mental health and well-being through interacting with nature; and
- Are an important place for building broader community involvement

A Chatham-Kent Community Garden is a plot of land used to produce food, native and ornamental plants, edible berries, and food perennials. It is an area of publicly or privately owned land, rooftop or other space managed and maintained by individuals and/or organizations, to grow and harvest food crops and/or non-food ornamental crops, such as flowers for personal or group use, consumption or donation. Community gardens may be divided into separate plots or may be farmed collectively and may include common areas maintained and used by community garden members.





5 Steps to Starting a Community Garden

Step 1	Form a Group of Community Gardeners
	Define the garden type: ornamental, edibles or both
Step 2	Choose a possible location and if required ensure you have written permission from the landowner for a garden
	- Complete the site surveys, this requires three separate visits ("Site Usage Survey" - Form 1)
Step 3	Submit a written proposal: • Application for a new garden (Form 2) • Group membership roster • Funding plan • Garden design • Installation, labour and supply plan • Maintenance plan • Required documentation Submit all required paperwork (site surveys, insurance, landowner permission letter)
Step 4	Notification of approval: - Negotiate a final garden design & Receive final written permission
	Read, sign, submit "Commitment Letter" - Form 3A
	Have each gardener read & sign "Liability Waiver" -Form 3B and "Code Of Conduct" -Form 3C
Step 5	Install the garden!

See pages 3-6 for details on the 5 Steps to Starting a Community Garden in Chatham-Kent





Step One: Form the Garden Group

Creating a Community Garden in Chatham-Kent is a grassroots operation. A Community Garden may consist of one or many participants. If you are working with others who would like to start a Community Garden, please note that it is important for Community Gardens to be inclusive; **anyone interested in joining the Garden is to be considered.**

Select a garden leader who will serve as the Garden's representative to the Chatham-Kent Community Garden Committee and to the public. The garden leader will be responsible for organizing and monitoring all garden activities, as well as scheduling and attending the Chatham-Kent Community Garden meetings to present and discuss the proposed Community Garden.

Once established, your Community Garden members should be in contact with the Chatham-Kent Community Garden coordinator and Chatham-Kent Public Health (CKPH) to receive ongoing support for the garden.

Step Two: Define Garden Type, Choose Location, Complete Form 1

Define the Garden Type

- 1. <u>Ornamental Gardens</u>: Include annuals, perennials, and small shrubs, with no plants intended for food. Ornamental gardens may be planted directly into existing soil. Native and drought-tolerant plants are encouraged.
- 2. <u>Edible Gardens</u>: Includes plants for use as food and may be planted directly into the soil or in raised beds.
- 3. Combination Gardens: Includes both ornamental plants and plants intended for use as food.

Choosing the Garden Location

To identify and define a site for a proposed Community Garden:

Permission from the owner of the land has been provided in writing that the land may be used as a site for a community garden.

- 1. Whenever possible, property should be accessible to pedestrians and persons requiring the use of mobility devices (wheelchairs, scooters, etc.).
- 2. Community Garden sites must not present a conflict to existing uses of the property.
- 3. Consider the source of water that is available for the garden.





- 4. Consider sun exposure and shade from buildings, trees, etc. Full sun is best. Community Garden sites must not require the removal of any trees, significant vegetation, landmarks or amenities.
- 5. Community Garden sites should be in a location that is visible for surveillance purposes.
- 6. Property must have sufficient parking available in the vicinity of the garden.
- 7. Community gardens must be available to the community-at-large or to the community served by a sponsoring organization and must not be used to grow commercial produce or plants.
- 8. Consider the number of households currently interested in the garden location.
- 9. Confirm that there is enough space to accommodate the garden and consider the type of garden that is planned to be used in ground, raised beds, etc.
- 10. Proof of liability insurance (minimum of \$2 million) must be presented or it may be requested that the garden be covered under the policy of Chatham-Kent Public Health.
- 11. A budget must be submitted for initial start-up funding requests and consideration for future funding. Please include any additional sources of funding that are being considered.
- 12. A Site Plan must be submitted demonstrating both the current site and the envisioned site.

Complete Form 1 - Site Usage Survey (see Appendix)

- Survey visits determine what's going on in the area surrounding your proposed Community Garden site by identifying who's there, times of heaviest usage, various types of activities, etc.
- Using the Community Gardens Site and Usage Survey, three separate site visits are to be conducted over a period of one to two weeks.
- The Chatham-Kent Community Gardens Coordinator or Staff Support from the CKPH must accompany you on your first survey visit.

Step Three: Form 2 – Written Proposal & Required Paperwork

Written Proposal

Submit a written proposal, which should contain the following documentation:

- 1. Complete Form 2 "Application for a New Garden" (see Appendix)
- 2. Group membership roster: name of your Community Garden, contact information for the primary garden leader, secondary leader (if applicable) and a complete listing of current members. IMPORTANT: A Community Garden must benefit at least 7 separate households.





5 Step Guide to Start a Community Garden

- 3. Funding Plan: provide a detailed funding plan, outlining how much the garden will cost, and sources of funding, including the amount of start-up funding requested from the Chatham-Kent Community Gardens Committee.
- 4. Garden design: provide a detailed design, and include the garden layout with dimensions of the beds or plots, dimensions of the garden as a whole, the location of the water source, any potential buildings/structures (sheds, etc.), nearby streets, buildings and trees. Please include information on all the factors considered in Step Two (garden type, location etc.). If structures (i.e. sheds) are being considered, please indicate if you have contacted the Building Department of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent.
- 5. Installation, labour and supply plan: should answer each of the following questions:
 - a. How and by whom will your garden be installed? For example, will a day be coordinated that all gardeners will be involved in this instillation or has an outside group been approached to assist in this?
 - b. What is the source of materials such as lumber or soil? For example, "for raised beds the wood used will be cedar and the soil will be purchased from (name of) landscaping company".
- 6. Maintenance Plan: provide a detailed maintenance plan, indicating how the garden will be cared for on a daily and seasonal basis, including watering, weeding, mulching, spring prepping and winterizing.
- 7. Submit the required documentation: include the permission letter from the landowner and insurance documentation or request for CKPH coverage.

Be sure that all required documents are completely and accurately filled out to avoid a delay in processing. Mail or email required documentation. Once your written proposal is approved, you will be

notified and the Chatham-Kent Community Garden Coordinator will monitor the installation process.

Please submit all documents via email, mail, or in person to:

Sharmini Balakrishnan, MPH, RD

Chatham-Kent Public Health 435 Grand Ave W, PO Box 1136 Chatham, ON N7M 5L8 sharminib@chatham-kent.ca





Step Four: Notification and Form 3A, 3B, and 3C

- All application forms and proposals will be reviewed by Chatham-Kent Public Health and the Chatham-Kent Community Garden Committee at the next meeting date (note meetings are scheduled monthly).
- After the application is received by Chatham-Kent Public Health, the Chatham-Kent Community Garden committee may request additional information before final approval is made.
- The group's leader will receive either an Application Approval Letter from CKPH directing you to proceed to Step 5 OR a request for more information. In some circumstances, the requested location may be denied.

Before the garden is installed you must submit:

- Form 3A Commitment Letter: signed by the garden leader
- Form 3B Liability Waiver: signed by every person who will be working in the garden
- Form 3C Code of Conduct: signed by every person who will be working in the garden

Step Five: Install the Garden

After the Chatham-Kent Community Gardens Committee has approved your application it's time to install the garden.

The most important aspects of successful community gardening are ongoing community support and communication between the community and the Chatham-Kent Community Garden Committee.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHATHAM-KENT PUBLIC HEALTH (CKPH):

CKPH will assist in the promotion of and help to raise awareness of a Community Gardens through the CK Food Policy Council website and other opportunities that are available. CKPH, with the support of the Chatham-Kent Community Gardens Committee will support the development of community gardens, in accordance with available resources by:

- a) Providing access to information on the development and operation of community gardens
- b) Helping develop user agreements with the owners of sites chosen for new gardens
- c) Helping develop a community-led environmental education program





- d) Assisting in the evaluation and approval of potential community garden sites;
- e) If approved by the Community Gardens Committee, may provide some funding for initial start-up costs.
- f) All requests for start-up funding will be submitted in writing and are subject to the approval of the Chatham-Kent Community Gardens Committee;
- g) Monitoring the Garden Sites periodically during the gardening season.

Please see all Forms in the Appendices below:

- A. Form 1 Site Usage Survey
- B. Form 2 Application for a New Garden
- C. Form 3A Commitment Letter
- D. Form 3B Liability Waiver
- E. Form 3C Code of Conduct







Appendix A: Form 1 – Site & Usage Survey

INSTRUCTIONS

Survey visits determine what's going on in the area surrounding your proposed garden site by identifying who is there, times of heaviest usage, etc.

- Three separate site visits are to be conducted over a period of one to two weeks.
- The Chatham-Kent Community Garden Coordinator and Staff Support from Chatham-Kent Public Health must accompany you on your first survey visit.
- Of the three required visits, one is to be during peak usage time on a weekday & one during peak usage time on a weekend.

SURVEYOR'S INFORMATION

Garden Location:	_Community	y:		Date:
Interested in (check one): Ornamental	E	dibles Gar	den	_ Both
Garden Landowner:				
Surveyor's Name:	I	Phone:		
Surveyor's Address:				
Are you a gardener? Y/N				
TODAY'S CONDITIONS				
Day of the week (circle one): M T	W	TH F	SAT	SUN
Time in: Time out:				





Weather	(check all that	apply):					
Sunny	Windy	Hot	Cold	Cloudy	Snowy	Rainy	Warm
THE PRO	POSED GAF	RDEN ARE	A				
LOCATIO	ON DESCRIP	ΓΙΟΝ					
Describe courts)	the location o	f the propo	osed garde	en area (i.e. N	N corner of F	Richmond aı	nd Keil next to the tennis
CURREN	T USAGE						
Does you	r group want	to work in	an existing	garden space	e or create a	new garder	n space (check one)?
_	New						
How are	adjoining spac	ces used i	n or near y	our proposed	area? (such	as; playgro	und, athletic
field, ope	n grassy spac	e, parking	lot, etc.				
SHELTEI	R & RESTRO	OMS					
Are there	public restroc	om facilitie	s near the	area?			
Yes	Approximately	y how clos	e to the ar	ea?feet/	yards?		
NoV	Vhat is your g	roups solu	ition for ga	rdeners to hav	e access to	shelter and	/or restrooms?





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WL	\TFR	X S	ПV

Is there a water source nearby that you are able to use? Yesor No
If Yes, describe the water source: spigot, lawn hydrant, etc.
If No, what do you plan to do to ensure that the gardeners have access to water?
The area is: Full Sun Partial ShadeComplete Shade
STRUCTURES & SIZE
Are there existing structures (building, shed, fences, arbours, etc.) in and around the area? Yesor No
If Yes, please provide a brief description, including how close to the garden they will be:
Describe the areas landscape features (trees, shrubs, grass, pathways, etc)
How large would you like the garden space to be?
Would this area be able to generously accommodate that size?
- Yesor No
Number of individuals observed IN the area:
- Over how many minutes (time span)?
Number of individuals observed NEAR the area:
- Over how many minutes (time span)?





SITE & USAGE SURVEY

What activities are these people participating in?

OTHER COMMENTS:







Appendix B: Form 2 – Application for a New Garden

PARI 1			
Location:		Date:	
Location Address:			
Public/Private Landowners Nai Community Garden Group Nar	me: ne (if any):		
Is this a new garden group? YE to date? Liaison/Primary Leade Phone Number:	er's Name:		
Mailing Address:			
Email: Alternate Contact's Name (if av Phone Number: Mailing Address: Email:	vailable):		-
PART 2 Garden Type Desired	l:		
Ornamentals only	○ Edibles only	○ Combination of Ornan	nentals & Edibles
Describe in detail, the location "Our location of interest is 100 fo			
Estimate the desired square fool Describe type of water source the		ce from the garden:	





APPLICATION FOR A NEW GARDEN (FORM 2)

ease use this page to provide us with any additional information on the proposed garden urpose of garden, intended audience, use of produce), etc.					





PART 3: Include the 3 completed site surveys

PART 4: Include the following information:

- Group Membership Roster (Names of all members)
- Funding Plan
- · Garden Design
- · Installation, Labour and Supply Plan
- Maintenance Plan
- Required documentation (insurance, landowner permission letter)

PART 5: Attach at least 3 pictures showing the proposed location.

PART 6: Please complete this form, and mail or email with photos to:

Sharmini Balakrishnan, MPH, RD Chatham-Kent Public Health 435 Grand Ave W, PO Box 1136 Chatham, ON N7M 5L8

sharminib@chatham-kent.ca





Appendix C: Form 3A – Commitment Letter

After agreeing to abide by the following Community Garden terms, your group will be accepted and ready to begin. Please read this document carefully, making sure that all members of your group understand and agree to the terms listed below. Signing this Letter of Commitment formalizes your agreement with the Chatham-Kent Community Gardens and Chatham-Kent Public Health.

GARDEN/PLOT MAINTENANCE

The Community Garden Group is entirely responsible for the maintenance of the Community Garden. Keep in mind that the space allocated is on private/public land and must always be actively maintained. The Group must follow the Maintenance plan, step 6 of your Written Proposal.

Pathways and areas between garden beds must be mulched and maintained by the Group.

Through the Chatham-Kent Community Garden Committee's independent observation, if the space is deemed unsightly, weedy or unkempt, the designated garden leader will be given two separate warning notices via two different means (for example, phone call and email) each time. If the problem continues thereafter, the agreement will be revoked and the Community Garden Group will be responsible for proposing a plan to restore the garden to its original form.

Gardens are expected to have something planted by May 15th and are expected to be cleaned up/put to bed by November 15th of each year. Any temporary structures or supports must be removed and stored by this date.

WATER

Please conserve water! The water supply is ONLY to be used by gardeners caring for their assigned areas. Washing of cars or other personal non-garden related activities is prohibited. Irrigation systems are discouraged. Drip hoses, rain barrels or other water conserving devices are encouraged.

ORGANIC PRACTICES

For the health and safety of all gardener it is required that all gardening practices be organic. Only organic means of disease and pest control may be used, unless there are extenuating circumstances and prior approval was requested through the Chatham-Kent Community Garden Committee.

COMPOSTING

Composting of on-site garden waste is encouraged; do not bring material from outside sources. Avoid rodent-attracting foods such as meat, starches, cheese, and grease. Also avoid large or thorny branches and diseased plant material. Ensure that all composters are designed to keep rodents out and must be constructed with chicken wire at a minimum with ideal method being done using appropriate composting containers.

PERMANENT STRUCTURES AND SIZEABLE LANDSCAPE MATERIAL

Permanent structures such as sheds, fences, walls, and or sizeable plant material such as trees must be accordance with all municipal by-laws and should be erected only after approval from the Building Department of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent. Trellises are permitted and must be removed and stored by the Community Garden Group at the end of each gardening season.





GARDEN BORDERS

The garden boundaries must remain as submitted on the original design plans. Any proposed expansion requests must be submitted in writing and reviewed by Chatham-Kent Community Gardens Committee.

MONITORING THE COMMUNITY GARDEN

The community, especially the Community Gardens Committee Group members, shall continually monitor the Community Garden for quality control and good management practices. The Chatham-Kent Community Garden Coordinator and the Staff Support from CKPH will monitor the gardens periodically throughout the gardening season.

VANDALISM

Like drought, hail and freezing temperatures, theft and vandalism are among the assumed risks of community gardening. While the Chatham-Kent Community Garden program continues to support efforts to reduce unnecessary vandalism or theft, we cannot guarantee that garden are free from the risk.

MANAGEMENT

Frequent communication with the Chatham-Kent Community Gardens Coordinator and CKPH regarding management of the Community Garden is required. If problems occur with the operation or patrons of the Community Garden, staff support from the CKPHU should be informed and involved in the resolution of any problems.

NEW MEMBERS

The Community Gardens Group shall inform new members of the Community Garden rules and regulations, stressing the importance of ongoing maintenance. The Group must follow a transparent membership process open to all. Anyone interested in joining the Group is to be fairly considered.

LIABILITY

The Chatham-Kent Community Gardens Committee and Chatham-Kent Public Health are not responsible for the garden itself, or to anything in or pertaining to the garden. EACH MEMBER OF THE GROUP MUST SIGN A WAIVER OF LIABILITY [FORM 3B].

FUNDRAISING

The Group may organize fundraising events to finance needs of the Community Garden such as compost bins, water hoses, plants, tools, etc.

SIGNAGE

Each Community Garden will be provided with a sign by the Chatham-Kent Community Gardens Committee/CKPHU

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES IN THE GARDEN

- · Littering, dumping, alcohol consumption and any otherwise unlawful activities
- Smoking is not permitting in the gardens at any time
- Gardeners must not sell his/her produce or use the garden plot to generate income.





LETTER OF COMMITMENT (FORM 3A)

Garden Location:	Date:	
How many active households?		
Garden Leader's Name:		
Phone Number:		
Mailing Address:		
Email:		
Alternate Contact's Name:		
Phone Number:		
Mailing Address:		
Email:		
Garden Group facebook page, website, if any:		
The Primary and Alternate contacts may not be in	the same immediate family and ma	y not reside at the same address
I Group. Each current member of our Garden has re commitment to maintain our Community Garden in_	ad the above terms and agrees to	abide by them and now enters into a
Garden Leader Signature:		
Please return completed form via email, mail, or in	person to:	
Sharmini Balakrishnan, MPH RD		

Chatham-Kent Public Health 435 Grand Ave W, PO Box 1136 Chatham, ON N7M 5L8

sharminib@chatham-kent.ca







Appendix D: Form 3B – Liability Waiver

I understand and agree to all the Responsibilities set forth by the Chatham-Kent Community Gardens Code of Conduct. I am a resident of Chatham-Kent.

Name:	
Address:	
Phone Number:	
Email Address:	
The above information is being collected for the sole Coordinator/Chatham-Kent Public Health and it will no permission from the signed gardener	• •
Please note, only one plot per person, first come/first s	erve. Multi plot rentals permitted after May 1st.
HOLD HARMLESS CLAUSE	
I understand that neither the Chatham-Kent Community nor the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is responsible for AND HOLD HARMLESS THE MUNICIPALITY OF CHA LOSS OR CLAIM THAT OCCURS IN CONNECTION V FAMILY, ASSOCIATES, OR ANY OTHER OF MY GUE	my actions. I THEREFORE AGREE TO INDEMNIFY ATHAM-KENT FOR ANY NEGLIGENCE, DAMAGE, VITH THE USE OF THE GARDEN BY ME, MY
Participant (signed)	Date
Participant (printed)	

If you are interested in being a Garden Leader, please fill out the Garden Leader section on reverse side.





GARDEN LEADER REQUEST

l,	(Garden Leader) understand that as Garden Leader I am responsible for the
following:	·

- 1. Being the person the Municipal staff will contact regarding the site issues (tools left on site, site upkeep, etc.). Duties include but are not limited to: overall site upkeep, fall cleanup and compost maintenance.
- 2. Orienting new gardeners on operating procedures, horticultural information, coordinating trash removal, mulch, composting activities and cleanup days, answering questions, and settling disputes.
- 3. Maintaining a current list of gardeners for communication purposes.
- 4. Arranging to repair any vandalism as quickly as possible.
- 5. In the event of non-compliance with the Garden's Responsibilities, a written notice will be issued to the gardener. If, at the end of a two-week period, the problem has not been solved, the plot may be reassigned and the gardener's gardening privileges revoked.
- 6. Informing the Municipality if the above responsibilities cannot be fulfilled.
- 7. Organizing the annual selection of the Garden Leader.

Signature:	Date:	





Appendix E: Form 3C - Gardeners Code of Conduct

- 1. The garden is intended to be a place of secure enjoyment for all. As a participating gardener, please be respectful and considerate in relations with fellow gardeners.
 - a. Gardeners must abide by all applicable Municipality of Chatham-Kent By-Laws. Any issues, concerns, or disputes will first be brought to the Garden Coordinator and if unable to resolve will be brought to staff at CK Public Health for resolution.
- 2. Communication: Garden leaders and gardeners will share messages, provide updates, and reminders either via a communication board (in the shed at a garden site), Facebook, email, or in person.
- 3. Gardeners must sign in when they arrive at the garden.
- 4. Gardeners will maintain their garden plot organically which means no chemical fertilizers, herbicides or pesticides will be used, unless there are extenuating circumstances and prior approval was requested through the Chatham-Kent Community Garden Committee*.
- 5. Gardeners will have something planted in their garden by **May 15**th and keep it planted all season long.
- 6. Gardeners will keep weeds down and maintain the areas immediately surrounding their plot. They are responsible for ensuring that the garden area is kept free of garbage. Gardeners will not bring garbage from home and leave it onsite. If the plot becomes unkempt without reasonable cause, gardeners will **be given two weeks' notice** (via email or in person) to clean it up. After that time, it will be reassigned or tilled in.
- 7. Gardeners will **pick only their own crops** unless given permission by another plot user.
- 8. Gardeners will help maintain any common garden areas such as herb gardens, and will help with general garden work at the site.





GARDENERS CODE OF CONDUCT (FORM 3C)

- 9. Plot usage is seasonal so fall cleanup is required to be completed by all gardeners. All above ground material shall be removed from assigned plots by the gardener by **November 15**th, unless the gardener is using the garden in the winter and/or has reserved the same plot for the following year, in which case only perennials and mulches may remain.
- 10. All structures must be approved by the Building Department of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent. Installation of fencing, boards, or any other materials to enclose the individual garden plots will require consent from the CK Community Garden Committee*.
- 11. Gardeners must always supervise their children.
- 12. Pets are permitted on the garden site but must always be supervised and controlled. Gardeners are responsible for picking up after their pet.
- 13. Smoking or vaping of any kind is not allowed on the garden site at any time.
- 14. Gasoline and any other flammable or toxic substances shall not be brought to or stored on the garden site. All vehicles must be parked in designated parking areas.
- 15. Gardeners shall promptly report any vandalism, theft, or other concerns to the Garden Coordinator. Any damage to assigned plots shall be repaired by the respective gardeners in a timely manner.
- 16. Gardeners must not sell their garden produce or use the garden plot to generate income. Donations of some produce to local food banks, soup kitchens or giving to family and friends is acceptable.
- 17. Gardeners shall not plant corn or any other tall crops where they will shade another gardener's plot. Trees and other woody plants are <u>not</u> allowed on garden plots unless the gardener can demonstrate that there will not be a negative effect. **Marijuana** plants are <u>not</u> allowed on garden plots. Vegetables, grains, berries, fruits, beans, herbs (annual and perennials), and flowers are permitted within plots provided. In some gardens it may be permitted to have communal plots or food tree areas.
- 18. Gardeners must be present during watering. Please use water sparingly and be mindful of water available in rain barrels for other gardeners. All rain barrels must be covered sufficiently to prevent the growth of mosquito larvae. If there is a water key at your garden, **please return it to its place.**
- 19. Gardeners understand the garden sponsor, the Chatham-Kent Community Garden Committee, CK Public Health, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent or the owner of the land are not responsible for their actions.





GARDENERS CODE OF CONDUCT (FORM 3C)

I have read and understand the above rules and agree with them as conditions of my membership in the garden.

Name (Please Print):	
Signature:	
Date:	
Address:	
Phone Number:	
Email Address:	

The above information is being collected for the sole purpose of maintaining contact with the Garden Coordinator/CK Public Health and it will not be released to an outside group without written permission from the signed gardener.

*To contact the CK Garden Committee, please email sharminib@chatham-kent.ca



