



The Union Grove Community Garden INC.

# HANDBOOK



*Let's Grow Together!*

[www.UGWCommunityGarden.org](http://www.UGWCommunityGarden.org)

*Created by the Union Grove Community Garden Board of Directors*

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# Introducing the Union Grove Community Garden Inc.

This Handbook serves the purpose of outlining the rules and expectations regarding the Allotment Beds (*hereafter referred to Raised Beds*), the Cooperative Garden and the Union Grove Community Garden area as a whole.

The Union Grove Community Garden Inc (*hereafter referenced as UGCG*) is a 501(c)3 Nonprofit organization with the mission to provide gardening space to the greater Union Grove community and surrounding areas. It is our mission to operate exclusively to provide educational gardening programming and access to gardening space to the public, as well as distributing produce to those facing food insecurity.

The UGCG operates on a Hybrid Cooperative-Allotment model. The Cooperative component of the garden functions as a Membership Program with shared duties, responsibilities and volunteer opportunities. The Allotment (*Raised Beds*) component of the garden are boxes available for rent. For more information on both, refer to their respective section of this document.

To get the most out of your gardening experience, we strongly encourage you to be part of the *community* at your community garden. Talk to your garden neighbors, ask for and share gardening ideas, seeds, plants, and volunteer to work on shared tasks. Helping your garden become an interactive community, volunteering, and taking or leading classes are the best ways to become involved with, and support, these gardens. Most of all, have fun and enjoy!

## About UGCG

### Community Gardens

UGCG has been a 501c3 non-profit, community gardening organization since 2024. Located at the west end of Leider Park on land leased from the Village of Union Grove, Wi. On this parcel, the UGCG hosts several raised garden beds available for rent, a shared Cooperative Garden area and maintained native pollinator gardens. The UGCG will be utilizing its Cooperative Garden to assist in fighting food insecurity within the Community.

### Schedule

Out of respect for the board, volunteers and Village it is requested that set hours and season schedules are adhered to. Unauthorized presence may be considered as trespassing.

## Season Open

The last Saturday of March - This will also be an on-site Open House information and planning event. UGCG Members or Raised Bed Renters should not be within the garden area prior to Season Opening without a Board Member present.

## Season Close

1st of November, each year. At which point all members and participants should have their items cleared or winterized for the season and shouldn't be within the garden area without a board member present.

## Hours

Access to the garden is aligned with the same rules for park operation within the Union Grove community. During the open season, the garden site is open to the daily from 6 a.m. to dusk. During the closed season, a board member must be notified or present.

## Important Dates

- Mid-May: Season Open, year-to-year notifications will be communicated
- June 15th - unused raised beds will be reclaimed for the season.
- November 1st Garden Closed for the Season.

# Opportunities

## Apply to be on the Board

The UGCG Board of Directors (BoD) are a volunteer group and can have up to nine (9) members per the Bylaws. The BoD is the backbone of the UGCG operations and are primary caretakers of the gardening space. Members of the BoD agree to take responsibility for the UGCG and its related activities; the board functions as a group, bringing decisions to vote in what is in the best interest of the community.

## Join a Committee

The UGCG has committees tasked with key focuses that are important and relevant to the purpose and mission of the UGCG. Committees are made up of volunteers and at least one (1) UGCG Board Member either as a chairperson or as a general committee member. Committees operate under a charter and are required to submit reports to

the Board of Directors per their charter. More information on any past or existing committee can be found within their respective charter.

### Cooperative Garden Membership Committee

Members of the Cooperative Garden have a standing invitation to the CGM Committee. This committee decides the aspects of what all is involved with the cooperative garden space.

### Educational Committee

This committee is responsible for creating, organizing and scheduling all educational opportunities.

### Become A Volunteer

Whether you are needing community service hours or are looking to volunteer to have a positive impact on the community there is always an opportunity to volunteer.

### Education and Programs

UGCG also offers classes and workshops to anyone who would like to expand their garden knowledge. You do not need to be a member of the community garden to attend these educational opportunities. Please check our website and social media for updates.

### Special Events

Throughout the year, UGCG may hold annual events celebrating gardening that reach out to the public and develop connections with Union Grove residents. Check our community calendar and watch the newsletter for announcements about these events.

### Governance and Operation

UGCG is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors as a 501c3 Non-Profit and day-to-day business and program management are carried out by the President or assigned persons. Various operations of UGCG are headed up by Committees.

Information on the current board members and director can be found on the website, [www.UGWICommunityGarden.org/about](http://www.UGWICommunityGarden.org/about).

Board meetings are on the select Tuesdays or Thursdays of each month at 6:30pm. The meetings are held either via Zoom, or in person at a select location. The most

up-to-date information and agenda can be found on the website.

All board meetings are open to the public. If you are interested in attending a meeting, please contact the Managing Director at [UGCommunityGarden@gmail.com](mailto:UGCommunityGarden@gmail.com) to find out how to attend the next meeting.

## Finances

The largest source of dependable income for the UGCG are the Raised Beds & Membership fees. However, these fees only partially cover the costs of running the garden.

Expenses generally include:

- Water, soil care and general grounds keeping and infrastructure
- Gardening tools and equipment
- Insurance, accounting, marketing and other administrative services

Sponsorship and Donations of materials and funds from our members, community supporters and fundraising help to cover the rest of the costs and to keep UGCG financially healthy. There are several sponsorship & fundraising opportunities, visit the website for the most up to date opportunities.

## Volunteers

Community volunteers play an essential role in fulfilling our mission, from garden support and committee involvement to special events planning, and program facilitation. If you are interested in volunteering with UGCG, please email [ugcommunitygarden@gmail.com](mailto:ugcommunitygarden@gmail.com) to find out what opportunities there are and how you can help. We welcome both individuals and groups seeking a one-time community service experience, as well as those who want to be involved in an ongoing way. Volunteering at your community garden and at UGCG events is to everyone's benefit.

## Communication

UGCG announces important events via email, ENews and social media. UGCG Raised Bed gardeners & members will receive a quarterly E-newsletter as well as special announcements such as reminders to register, and notices of events and annual meeting(s). Please ensure your email is accurate and add the UGCG email to your 'not spam' list so that you receive these important UGCG.

# Operation of the Garden

By participating in the UGCG individuals, families and the community have an opportunity to *grow together* and we don't just mean the seeds we plant or the plants that are tended to although those may be the *roots* of it, what we mean is growing the community. In communication, in time sharing, in circumstance.

## Participant Expectations

The UGCG does not implement any residential restrictions for being a member or the renting of Raised Bed spaces or the Cooperative Garden Membership.

## Communication

When it comes to members, renters, and volunteers there is an expectation for communication especially when it comes to scheduled tasks or events. Life happens and unexpected events take place. The UGCG has an email and phone number that also has text enabled.

Due to the evolving nature of social media, it is recommended by UGCG that the email or phone number be the primary source of communication if you need to reach us directly.

## Social Media

The UGCG currently has a Facebook Page and YouTube channel and may utilize Facebook Groups for committee and volunteer communications. We encourage community involvement on social media platforms even if it's to celebrate individuals' home gardens. Be sure to read and follow the rules set within the page and groups.

## Reliability

When accepting a task, there is an expectation for that task to be completed as scheduled. Frequent demonstrations of unreliability may ultimately result in the termination of membership, inability to renew membership, inability to rent in the future or refusal of volunteer opportunities.

## Indemnification Form

Whether it's the Raised Beds or the Cooperative Garden Membership Program, all participants will be required to sign an agreement that states that rules will be agreed to as well as liability every season.

## Behavioral Conduct

Be respectful and courteous to other users of the space, the space itself and neighboring properties. If you witness something not right, please report it to a board member or if necessary, law enforcement.

## Engagement

Though not necessarily an expectation, we encourage you to volunteer in one of the UGCG various committees. The UGCG operates on a group effort model and encourages everyone to provide feedback for a more fluid operation.

However, before engaging in any efforts where you intend to 'represent' UGCG in any capacity, please connect with a board member first.

## Responsibilities of the Board Members

Board members are usually long time members of UGCG and seasoned organic gardeners who volunteer to help manage the site. They oversee the opening, operating, and closing of the garden each season, schedule and notify gardeners of site meetings and work parties, current problems at the site, and closing day and its requirements.

Your board members can answer questions about the garden site, gardening in general, and the responsibilities of individual gardeners. Be sure to let them know of any problems in the garden. They know what is happening at the site and can usually answer your questions. All board member contact information is in the Welcome email you receive after registering for a raised bed.

There are a total of nine (9) board member seats on the UGCG Board of Directors. Board Members are interviewed and onboarded by the current board until all seats are filled. In the event of additional interest, elections will be held. Current terms and election process information can be found in our bylaws.

# Raised Bed Guidelines

Thank you for taking interest in our Raised Bed Rental program. Updated rental pricing is available on our website through our booking portal. The UGCG's Raised Bed garden is run fairly independently. Each has some characteristics and practices that are unique, but all follow the general guidelines presented below..

- The Raised Beds are constructed of quality ground contact premium pressure treated lumber, garden blocks secured with rebar and built around landscape fabric and the exterior pathways of the boxes will be well mulched.
- The structures themselves will be maintained by UGCG, if there are structural issues, please report them immediately.
- Renters are not to modify or mount any additional components or decorate the garden bed structures. If there is a desire for a modification such as a trellis mounted to the bed walls, please contact us.
- Garden participants are not to construct their own boxes. Any unauthorized structures will be disassembled and disposed of.
- Gardening soil and initial soil amendments will be provided by the UGCG.
- Season Open starts after the last frost, usually Mid-May and notifications will be communicated year to year. Season Closes November 1st.

Rental boxes are expected to be maintained. Regular watering and weeding is necessary to maintain a healthy garden space. Spaces that become overgrown will result in a written warning and deadline for the issue to be addressed. If there is a failure to address the issue or the problem becomes reoccurring the renter will be warned one last time. If the issue is still not fixed the renter will get a notification that the space will be considered abandoned and will be reclaimed by the UGCG without a refund.

## Standard Raised Beds

8' x 4' x 10" raised beds made of ground treated 2 inch lumber, garden blocks and surrounded with mulch pathways.

## Wheelchair Accessible Raised Beds

A 'U' shape raised bed 24 inches from the ground made of ground treated lumber and garden blocks.



Accessibility is enhanced with an outdoor mat resistant to mold and mildew for an ease of access with wheelchairs.

## Raised Bed Maintenance

Raised beds that have not been seriously worked by **June 15th** of the current season or are overgrown with weeds taller than 18" at any point in the season may be considered abandoned and reassigned to another gardener or cleared of all growth during work parties. UGCG will issue two (2) warnings with attempts to contact the renter. These renters will also forfeit their right to garden with UGCG in the future.

Efforts will be made to contact the parties involved before any actions are taken, but it is the responsibility of each gardener to inform UGCG of any obstacles that prevent them from gardening in a timely or acceptable fashion.

Raised beds not rented out by **June 1st** may be assigned to Board Members or designated community partners to plant in addition to the efforts of the cooperative garden.

## Raised Bed Assignment

All beds have a bed number assigned to them. Prior to the start of a season, a communication will go out to confirm raised bed assignments for the season. Do not start gardening until you have received the confirmation email. Raised Bed Renters should not start gardening until after the official UGCG open season starts.

## Multi-Year Renting

Garden Beds can be rented for up to five (5) years at a time which will also lock in the price at the time of the rental. Please reach out to the board of directors for multi-year renting.

## Vacation or Extended Leave Services

Raised beds are the renter's responsibility. In the event of an emergency or expected vacation, the UGCG has a service available to temporarily maintain your rental bed(s). Please reach out to the board of directors to coordinate, include the date(s) and bed numbers this would apply to.

## Moving

If you relocate some distance away from your garden, please inform UGCG immediately. It is important because it may adversely impact your garden. Abandoned

gardens are an avoidable burden to UGCG. Contact us before you move. It's much easier to help before the weeds grow.

## Closing of the Raised Beds

Raised Beds must be ready for winterization by dusk on closing day. Here is a checklist to meet that deadline:

- Remove all diseased and solanaceous plant and fruit material (tomatoes, peppers, potatoes and eggplants) and discard at home.
- Pull out all plants with tough stalks or long vines, such as sunflowers, corn, or pumpkins.
- A final walk through of your Raised Bed to collect any remaining plastic debris: plant tags, zip ties, straw/marsh hay roping, etc.
- Give needed volunteer hours for whole garden cleanup, or attend any final work party scheduled for your spot.

If you know you are not returning to the garden next year gardeners must also:

- remove and take home all fencing, cages, stakes, strings, pots, rocks, markers, plants tags, zip ties and any other non-organic material from the raised bed(s)
- Remove all plant materials. Pull out all plants with tough stalks or vines. Remove any straw, marsh hay roping, etc.

## Multi-Year Rental Exceptions

Exceptions will be made for those who have been authorized to plant perennials and desire to winterize those plants.

Multi-year rentals will be permitted for the use of approved coverings such as fresh straw. Multi-year rentals must remove any dead annual plants and weeds.

## Watering

The UGCG has a collection system and satellite water stations at various locations at the garden site. Use this resource respectfully. In times of water shortage, the Public Works department of the Village of Union Grove will top off the water collection totes at a cost to UGCG.

Water supplied from the Village is included in your rental fee. The water is supplied from the Village of Union Grove and is turned on by the village only when they are confident hard frosts and freezes are unlikely to occur. This often happens after the gardens have already opened. If this happens, please be patient about water. We will already be working to try to get water to you. The following practices and guidelines

help avoid wasting water:

- Unattended watering is prohibited.
- Sprinklers are allowed but you must be present the entire time they are in use.
- It is the gardeners' responsibility to turn the water off at the spigot and put away hoses or buckets after watering.
- Please handle hose nozzles and spigots with care. Notify UGCG if they need repair.
- Help conserve this important resource by watering judiciously and mulching well.

## Tools and Equipment

### Hoses

UGCG will have hose reels available for watering your raised bed. While hoses start off each season in good repair, pulling, twisting and the hot sun eventually cause wear and tear. If you encounter a leak, damaged connection, or notice a hose is kinked beyond reasonable use, let us know. Please do not take it upon yourself to discard hoses.

### Tools

We are actively working on acquiring community tools and the means to securely store them on the premises. We will be looking for large tools like shovels, rakes, hoes and wheelbarrows. UGCG tools will be marked and labeled. Tools should be cleaned and ready for the next gardener before being returned. Tools are for everyone to use and should never be left out or stored in or around the garden area. Notify UGCG about broken tools so that they can be repaired or replaced.

## Cooperative Membership Program

The UGCG Cooperative Garden strives to do more than just provide opportunities for the community to have space to garden. This drive to be more has sprouted the concept of a hybrid garden model. Having a Cooperative Garden provides the opportunity for UGCG to give back to the community in various methods. Updated membership pricing can be found under our booking portal.

Produce grown within the Cooperative Garden area will be subject to member harvest rights, donations to the Union Grove Area Food Pantry, the UGCG farm stand and seed harvesting.

Members will have an open invitation to Committee meetings that directly affect the operation of the Cooperative Garden space including important dates, scheduling, delegation of responsibilities, what is to be planted and where.

## Benefits

Memberships come with several benefits

- Harvest Rights - Weekly basket Pick-up
- Exclusive, free and/or reduced costs to educational content
- Input on the varieties of plants to be grown.

## Site Volunteering and Work Parties

The Cooperative Garden Committee (CGC) will host ‘work parties’ to engage collectively on tasks that need to be done to provide continued maintenance to the garden space. Details will be communicated as they become available.

## General Guidelines



## Gardening Organically

UGCG is committed to gardening in socially and environmentally responsible ways. Soil fertility is maintained or enhanced by creating optimal conditions for biological activity, through crop rotation, the addition of organic material and the judicious use of organic and natural mineral amendments. The only fertilizers, herbicides, and disease or pest controls allowed are listed below. The use of prohibited chemicals will result in immediate expulsion from the garden and forfeiture of the right to garden with UGCG in the future. If gardeners are unsure, please reach out to the board before taking action.

Preferred maintenance methods:

- Hand weeding
- Mulch (straw, wood chips, cardboard)
- Crop spacing
- Cover crops
- Companion planting
- Row covers

- Introducing beneficial insects

If weed/ pest control products are necessary, gardeners may only use low-toxicity or organic-approved treatments, such as:

- Insecticidal soap
- Horticulture Oil
- Neem Oil
- Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt)
- Spinosad
- Horticultural Vinegar
- Diatomaceous earth
- Certified organic products by major organic certification agencies, such as the Organic Crop Improvement Association and OMRI

Prohibited products include:

- Glyphosate-based herbicides (Round- Up)
- Broad-spectrum synthetic pesticides
- Systemic insecticides
- Products that pose risks to pollinators or neighboring plots.

Gardeners must:

- Use all products according to the manufacturer's label instructions.
- Apply products only to their own plot
- Avoid spraying on windy days
- Prevent chemical drift to nearby plots
- Never spray common areas, pathways, or compost areas
- Store chemicals at home (not in shared garden sheds)

If you have specific questions, please email the board member, Natalie Kostman at [kostmann@gtc.edu](mailto:kostmann@gtc.edu). Many of your neighbors at the garden site are experienced gardeners and may be able to offer advice and solutions to your problems. Do not overlook them when trying to get answers to your questions.

Failure to follow safe application guidelines may result in warnings or revocation of garden privileges.

## Weed Control

Gardeners are expected to control weed growth in and around the perimeter of their

raised bed. Recommended practices for controlling weeds are preventing the spread of seed, hoeing, hand weeding and mulching.

The absolute best method of weed control is prevention. Make sure to pull any weeds before the flowers are pollinated and the seeds start to set. Once the seeds form they can easily spread by dropping, wind, wildlife, or human contact. Dispose of any seed heads in a garbage can and do not compost seed heads.

Mulching is the second best method to control weeds. It comes with the added bonus of increasing moisture retention in the soil. The UGCG will have a supply of mulch available from the Villages pick-up program. Other mulching material: leaves collected in the fall, chemical-free grass clippings, and even the weeds themselves will work (*with any seed heads removed!*). A layer of cardboard or multiple layers of newspaper laid under other mulches can also be used.

## Insect Control

Gardeners are expected to control garden pests in their raised bed & report any unusual infestations to UGCG immediately. Preferred control methods include crop rotation, hand picking, introduction of predator species such as ladybugs or lacewings, biological controls such as *Bacillus thuringiensis*, companion planting, soil solarization, and row covers. Row cover works best with vegetables that don't require fertilization by preventing insects from getting to the crops to lay eggs or feed. These include lettuces, arugula, spinach, beets, or chard.

## Disease Control

Most problems with diseases, especially soil borne ones, can be controlled by maintaining a clean garden and healthy soil. Here are some ways you can help:

- Rotating crops- Keep track of what you plant and where from year to year and do not plant the same crop in the same location year after year.
- Correct watering practices
  - Infrequent deep waterings
  - Add water to the soil
  - Do not get any of the leaves wet
- Select disease-resistant and healthy plant varieties.
- Remove diseased plants from the garden as soon as possible. Do not place it in the compost.
- Solanaceous plants and fruit, such as tomatoes, peppers, potatoes and eggplants, should be buried at least 12 inches deep or removed at the end of

the season, to minimize the presence of disease spores that can devastate these crops the following year.

## Fertilizers and Soil Amendments

In general, well-maintained soil should not need fertilizers. Rather, efforts should be directed to improving the quality of your soil, by the addition of organic material of plant or animal origin, such as compost, leaf mulch, aged livestock manure, blood and bone meal, and fish or plant meals. Natural mineral amendments, such as greensand, granite dust, ground limestone, or rock phosphate are also good. Should other fertilizers be required, liquidized seaweed, fish emulsions, and commercially prepared organic fertilizer blends are acceptable.

## Prohibited Plants

UGCG cannot allow plants with the following characteristics to be grown in any of the gardens:

- Invasive species (Mint varieties, lemon balm or bee balm, horseradish, jerusalem artichokes, morning glory, bamboo, comfrey, raspberries)
- Trees
- Illegal or dangerous plants

## Fencing

Use of any fencing must be approved by UGCG. We share these sites with many wildlife creatures. Fencing can improve harvest by providing a barrier.

## Other Garden Components

### Pollinator Gardens

Attracting pollinators is a key role in successful gardening and maintaining native plants vital because they support local ecosystems by providing food and shelter for native wildlife, increasing biodiversity, and maintaining a healthy food web. They also offer environmental benefits like improved stormwater management and reduced pollution, while being more resilient and low-maintenance once established, preserving the state's natural heritage.

## For-Donation Farmstand

*(Currently under construction)* We are hoping that our For-Donation Farmstand will service those in the community in need as well as those who want to enrich themselves with the fruits of our labor. The goal is for our Farmstand to be a place where fresh vegetables from our cooperative garden can be available to the public. We also want to implement a seed library, in-need pantry and a little library component to our Farmstand.

## On-Site Composting

Gardens inevitably create weeds and refuse that need disposal. Do not dump organic waste in brush, woods near the garden, or in trash receptacles. An area at the garden site will be designated for composting garden waste.

Dumping of weeds into unused areas of the garden site is strictly prohibited.

Currently restricted to disposal of garden clippings and remnants resulting in winterizing garden beds. *(Larger program is currently under consideration)*

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## Farmstand Guidelines

*(Pending acquisition)*

Giving back to those in need, especially those within the community, is one of our core pillars of our mission. The UGCG will have a mobile, for-donation farm stand located primarily on the garden premises. All proceeds will go towards facilitating the operational needs of the UGCG. The hope is that the farmstand will also be able to be present at other local community events spreading awareness of UGCG.

The primary source of produce available will be provided by the Cooperative component of the UGCG. However, those who desire to contribute their excess produce are welcome to do so.

The UGCG does plan to expand the farmstand to include a seed sale and pantry locker to further serve those in need.

# Donations, Sponsorships & Fundraisers

There are several ways to help the UGCG continue to strive and contribute to the community. Updated opportunities can be found under our booking portal.

## Donations

Giving to the UGCG is also giving to a nonprofit, whether it's goods and services or monetary, the UGCG can provide a receipt for your gift and it is tax deductible.

## Sponsorships

### Sponsorship-A-Box Program



Ideal for businesses or organizations who want to support UGCG but don't have time or desire to maintain their own garden space.

These are also great opportunities to dedicate a box to someone as a memorial.

Funds from this program are prioritized to acquiring materials needed to construct and maintain the boxes.

## Fundraiser Programs

### Rain Barrel Fundraiser

By participating in our rain barrel fundraiser you are doing so much more than collecting rain to help conserve water use around your home, you're helping the UGCG *grow* to further serve our great community. We currently have three (3) Rain barrel options ranging in quality. All are 30-gallon HDPE 2 Plastic barrels with locking lids. The barrels are built to order. Check the Donations & Sponsorships portal for current prices.



## Resources

The UGCG website [www.UGWICommunityGarden.org](http://www.UGWICommunityGarden.org)

The UGCG Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/UGCommunityGarden>

The UGCG YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/@UGCommunityGarden>

## Union Grove Community Garden Contact Information

Office: 262-558-8396

Email: [UGCommunityGarden@gmail.com](mailto:UGCommunityGarden@gmail.com)

[www.UGWICommunityGarden.org](http://www.UGWICommunityGarden.org)