

Proposal: Revise the Bruin Park Master Plan to Incorporate a Community Garden

A Herndon Environmental Network pilot project for healthy homegrown food in cooperation with the Town of Herndon and the Fairfax County Park Authority

July, 2014



Photo courtesy of Blue Heron Farm at www.blueherontexas.com

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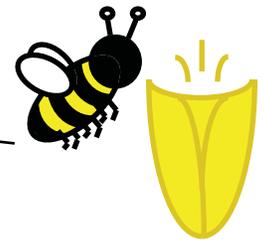


Table of Contents

I. Purpose, Property Description and Park History	5
A. Purpose	5
B. Property Description	5
C. Park History	6
II. Park Classification and Facilities	6
A. Community Park	6
B. Existing Facilities and Master Plan	7
III. Conceptual Development Plan	8
A. Characteristics of the Proposed Garden Site	8
B. HEN Garden Committee Preliminary Planning Work	8
C. HEN Recommendation	10
D. Background and Benefits of Community Gardens	10
E. Description of Proposed Master Plan Elements	12
1. Size of the Community Garden	
2. Times of Use	
3. Capacity	
4. Containment	
5. Proposed unfenced areas	
6. Education	
F. Conceptual Site Plan: Potential Garden Plot Layout	13
G. Management and Operations	13
1. Oversight and Guidance	
2. Kiosk	
3. Records	
4. Site maintenance	
5. Complaints	
6. Trash and debris	
7. Water access	
8. Sewer fee waiver request	
9. Equipment	
10. Dogs	
Appendices	15
Appendix A: 2015 Herndon Garden Plot Rules and Guidelines	
Appendix B: Typical Flyer	
Appendix C: About Us: Herndon Environmental Network	
Appendix D: Helpful Links & Resources	

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I. Purpose, Property Description and Park History

A. Purpose

The purpose of this proposal is to update the Bruin Park master plan. This revision will reflect the addition, development and management of a community garden. The plan will describe the proposed location within the park, where it will be constructed, and how it will be operated in conjunction with other areas of the park and existing uses. Bruin Park currently provides several successful recreational assets. An undeveloped part of the park is ideal for community gardening and presents a special opportunity to maximize use of the park.

Members of the Herndon Environmental Network (HEN) and the surrounding community have identified the many benefits that a community garden would bring to the Town of Herndon and to Bruin Park visitors from across Fairfax County. Availability of healthy food and outdoor activities plays a critical role in any community. Locally grown organic food and personal connections with growing food can make a difference in quality of life for residents. A community garden would serve the surrounding population well in those capacities.

B. Property Description

Bruin Park is located on Van Buren Drive and bounded by Alabama Drive and Virginia Avenue in the Town of Herndon. It includes two tennis courts, a tot play area, a youth baseball field, a basketball court, a picnic shelter, and parking. The park is classified as a community park under the Fairfax County Park Authority classification system. The proposed community garden would occupy the undeveloped western corner of the park between the tennis courts and the Waterford Townhouse community.



C. Park History

Bruin Park was established in 1966 and is owned by the Town of Herndon. The park was originally master-planned by the Fairfax County Park Authority under a partnership agreement with the town. The park was subsequently developed and is currently maintained by the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA).



II. Park Classification and Facilities

A. Community Park

Bruin Park is a community park. Community parks provide a variety of individual and organized recreation activities conveniently located for short term visits. These parks may be located in residential neighborhoods or suburban centers. Community parks support active recreation including organized sports and may be intensely developed.

All facilities planned for a neighborhood park can be located in a community park. Facility development may include: lighted or unlighted athletic fields, court facilities, picnic areas, playgrounds, tot lots, garden plots, fitness courses, trails and parking. Parking is provided on-site.

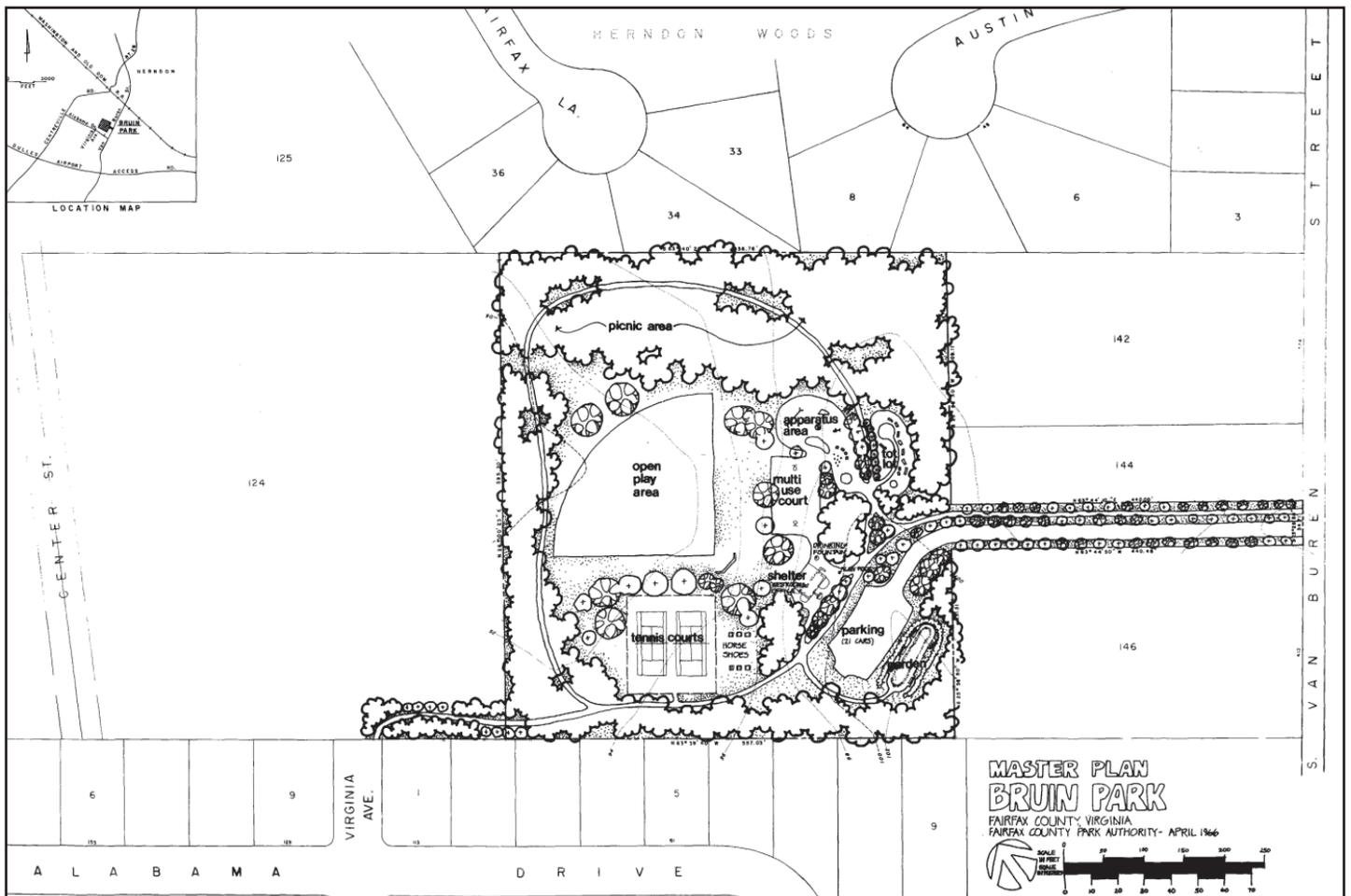
Community parks are typically 10-50 acres in size serving several neighborhoods. The service area is measured by a 5 to 10 minute drive or 15 to 20 minute bicycle trip. Depending on the density of surrounding communities, the service area generally extends up to three miles.



B. Existing Facilities and Master Plan

The following facilities are currently in place at Bruin Park:

1. Youth baseball diamond
2. Tennis courts (2 courts)
3. Playground/tot lot
4. Basketball court
5. Parking lot (21 spaces)
6. Open space



III. Conceptual Development Plan

The purpose of this Conceptual Development Plan (CDP) is to incorporate a description of the proposed community garden with maps and information that depict the general location and specific physical and functional features of the recommended facility.

A. Characteristics of the Proposed Garden Site



The present open space is grass-covered, with a large oak tree stump.

B. HEN Garden Committee Preliminary Planning Work

A collaborative group of 34 local citizens and members of the Herndon Environmental Network have been working to establish a community garden since the summer of 2012. The group represents varying interests and levels of support, ranging from those who want to secure a garden plot to community experts who are willing to offer garden knowledge and workshops when the project is in operation.

HEN contacted community gardeners and garden managers in the area. Discussions included fact finding on benefits, day to day management, community outreach and donating to food pantries, as well as general information-sharing about costs, rental rates, and establishing rules to keep the garden running smoothly.

Many sites were surveyed and prioritized for the best possible outcome. Land is definitely at a premium within the Town of Herndon, but this fact actually enhances the potential for this project to be successful. The primary determining factors were:

- size of land area
- accessibility to water
- growth factors, such as sunny exposure and relatively flat area
- locations on Town or County public land or church property were favored due to potential support



Public support

HEN members obtained over 50 signatures in support of a Community Garden while walking through the Herndon Farmers' Market and downtown area in less than an hour, and we are confident that many more are interested due to the extremely long waiting lists to obtain plots in nearby Community Gardens.

Dulles Chamber of Commerce

HEN reached out to the local Chamber of Commerce in hopes of contacting local businesses for support.

Waterford Homeowners Association (HOA) and private homeowners adjacent to Bruin Park

HEN contacted the HOA Board to communicate our efforts and potentially enlist homeowners to support the project both as volunteers and plot leasees.

Financing

As a group, HEN is actively pulling together strategies to gain funding for this project by seeking corporate sponsorships, as well as by applying for grants that would supplement local community financing. HEN intends to run a Kickstarter campaign once approval for the community garden is finalized.

Town and County Officials

HEN introduced the idea to Mayor Lisa Merkel and the Town Council members. HEN also met with John Dudzinsky, Community Forester, to discuss locations, benefits, and potential roadblocks

Staffing

HEN volunteers are dedicated to seeing the garden established and will provide the necessary volunteer commitment. In addition, HEN will seek corporate sponsorships and grants to fund start-up and initial operations.

Rental fees

HEN is aware of FCPA rental fees and recent increases. We will establish reasonable fees and are also working out possibilities for scholarship plots.

Garden Management

Once the community garden is established, the Herndon Environmental Network will agree to manage the day-to-day operations of the garden for a period of three years, in cooperation with the Town of Herndon and FCPA as needed. During that time, HEN will establish a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated solely to community gardening, similar to Herndon Dogs that operates the Chandon Dog Park.

Garden Design

HEN has documented various potential configurations for the site. This is a small area. Therefore, we plan to encourage intensive gardening methods rather than use the larger plot sizes that are standard for Fairfax County facilities, allowing many more people/families to participate.

In order to ensure an aesthetically pleasing garden year round, HEN will enforce rules that ensure the land is maintained. Additionally, the fencing structure will be mesh and essentially covered by various border plants to lessen the visual disruption that an otherwise more obvious fence structure might introduce.

HEN is reaching out to adjoining neighborhoods, knowing that their input and support is essential to a successful garden.

This is an ongoing process.



Additional Considerations

The park is located in a densely populated sector of the town where many residential units have no suitable space for growing food gardens. Census data shows 33.8% of town housing units are in multi-unit structures (Census data 2007-2011).

Town of Herndon Population and Housing		
Dwelling Units	Number	Percent*
Single Family Detached	2,979	38%
Single Family Attached (Townhouses)	2,398	30%
Multifamily (Apartments & Condos)	2,512	32%
TOTAL	7,889	100%

*Percentage of total dwelling units

Current as of January 1, 2012

Source: <http://www.herndon-va.gov/Content/AboutHerndon/Demographics/default.aspx?cnlid=23>

Approximately one-third of housing units are townhomes, and another third are single-family detached structures. Therefore, residents in two-thirds of town have little-to-no yard space to use for gardening—especially for food gardening (<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/51/5136648.ht>).

Additionally, a town water line in the Waterford HOA can be extended to provide metered water for the garden plots. The vacant park area is primarily sunny, with the exception of the areas where trees will eventually produce shaded areas. This is compatible with the gardening objectives. The location is highly accessible.

Other Community Gardens

Members of the Garden Committee have visited existing community gardens in Fairfax County and in other parts of Northern Virginia. HEN is familiar with the Fairfax County Garden Plot program administered by Green Spring Gardens staff and has met with their garden plot coordinator. HEN also has reviewed the rules for Fairfax County, Reston Association, Leesburg’s Ida Lee Community Garden, and several other local municipal community gardens, as well as general operational guidelines of the American Community Gardening Association.

C. HEN Recommendation

HEN recommends establishing a pilot community garden on this open space at Bruin Park. A community garden at this location would add diversity to recreational opportunities in the town; provide significant food, health, and educational value to the community; might help to manage and mitigate stormwater runoff on the parcel by judicious placement of plots as well as possible additional plantings; and would be an environmental asset to expand the town’s green initiatives and support Fairfax County’s sustainability objectives.

D. Background and Benefits of Community Gardens

Community gardens are usually on public land, owned by the government or non-profit associations. Occasionally, they are privately owned and function as businesses.

Community gardens are found in urban areas throughout Fairfax County. Sometimes they are collectively gardened with a shared harvest. Most of the time individuals tend to their own plots. Garden plots are used to grow vegetables, fruit, flowers, and herbs... a wide variety of crops the community or its individual members wish to grow.



Implementing a community garden will not only increase access to affordable, healthy food for residents, but will create an opportunity to engage residents in taking a hands-on approach to improving their community. It will help to engage residents in physical activity through maintenance of the gardens and to promote healthful eating. Community gardens are areas of unused open space where neighbors gather to collectively manage and care for a piece of land. These areas serve as a way for urban residents to grow their own food and to interact with both the environment and their neighbors.

Several community gardens are located in Virginia including: Reston, Arlington, Alexandria, McLean, Leesburg, Purcellville, and Round Hill. A majority of these gardens have a wait list which prevents the residents of Herndon from utilizing these facilities.

Community gardens provide unique benefits to residents. People grow their own produce, thereby reducing grocery bills; engage in exercise and enjoy the outdoors while tending the garden; and enjoy the social aspect gardening provides. Gardens also help to increase fruit and vegetable consumption by increasing the availability of these items and improve skills in food preparation if combined with nutrition education. Residents will benefit from having increased access to land for food production, resulting in an innovative way to create food security. Community gardens do not require large areas of land and can be as simple as a few raised beds in a park or residential area.

Further benefits of a community garden include, but are not limited to:

- Improves quality of life for people using the garden
- Provides a catalyst for neighborhood development
- Stimulates social interaction
- Encourages self-reliance
- Beautifies neighborhoods
- Produces nutritious food
- Reduces family food budgets
- Conserves resources
- Creates opportunity for recreation, exercise, therapy, and education
- Reduces crime
- Preserves green space
- Provides a resource of donations to local food banks
- Provides opportunities for intergenerational and cross-cultural connections

Community gardens improve food security by increasing the availability of nutritious foods, such as fruits and vegetables. Community gardening offers other benefits to society such as reductions in crime, vandalism, and health care costs as well as increased social cohesion.

Studies suggest that environments in disrepair often attract more crime (Frumkin, 2005). Gardens can turn these vacant areas into a resource that benefits the community. A garden provides opportunities for informal gatherings that help build a sense of community and pride. Neighborhoods near community gardens consistently experience a decrease in reported criminal activity (Bremmer, 2003). The safety and vitality of a community relies upon the pride and sense of ownership that residents have for their neighborhood. Community gardens offer a focal point for neighborhood organizing and can increase safety by providing more eyes on the area.

Community gardens are also known to improve residents' sense of well-being in their neighborhood. In addition to creating a more attractive area, gardens promote a sense of connection in neighborhoods. By promoting pride in one's home, residents may take better care of their home and the surrounding area.



Additionally, gardens help lower stress and improve diets. As a result, residents may decrease the number of sick days away from work and enjoy more stable employment (Armstrong, 2000). The health, social and economic benefits of a garden will all help improve resident retention.

Gardening connects people with the rhythms of life in the natural world. Studies have revealed just viewing a garden has healthy psychological benefits. One study found that older adults who regularly garden have higher levels of overall life satisfaction (Sommerfeld, 2010). Gardening can be especially beneficial for people with special needs or those recovering from illness.

Gardening promotes an increased range of motion, develops eye-hand coordination, improves motor skills and increases self-esteem (Mason, 2005). Over the past few years special tools and garden designs to make gardens more accessible have become readily available.

Gardening is a moderate form of exercise, promoting increased physical activity among residents (Dorn, 2009). Community gardens provide a unique outlet to combat obesity and chronic diseases by increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, and by providing a space and positive incentive for physical activity. Gardening provides regular physical exercise to aid in the prevention of heart disease, obesity, type-2-diabetes and high blood pressure.

One of the primary steps in diabetes management is getting enough physical activity. Gardeners can easily achieve the recommended 150 minutes per week of exercise. It also provides moderate strength training, which is a step in the prevention of osteoporosis. Carrying a gallon sprinkling can full of water in each hand is like lifting 8 pound dumbbells. Pushing a wheelbarrow is a good bicep workout. Additional activities such as pulling weeds, carrying soil and compost, and digging holes are activities that will also give you a workout (Main, 2011).

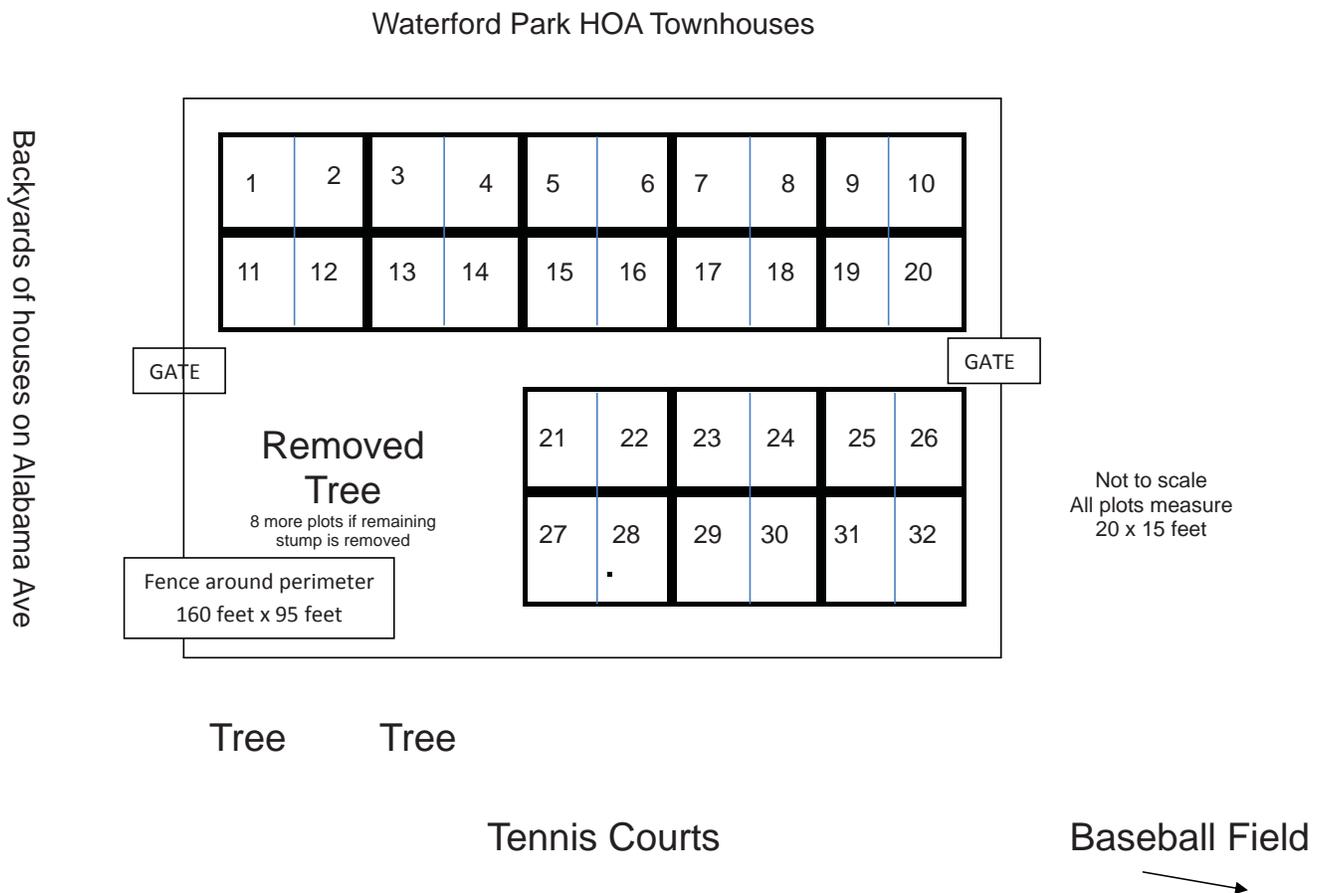
In addition to the regular physical activity of gardening, gardens produce a wide range of fruits and vegetables that are also important in the prevention of chronic disease. Gardening is a great way to improve your diet and to participate in activities that will help to improve your health.

E. Description of Proposed Master Plan Elements

- 1. Size of the Community Garden:** The proposed garden plot area would be 15,200 square feet (160 feet by 90 feet or about 1/3 of an acre).
- 2. Times of Use of Garden:** hours shall be consistent with Bruin Park, from dawn until dusk.
- 3. Capacity:** 32 garden plots 15'x20', with the possibility to expand to 40 plots if the existing tree stump can be removed.
- 4. Containment:** The designated garden plot space will be fully enclosed by a 7-foot nylon fence to discourage deer and the potential for theft and vandalism. Fencing the entire perimeter of the plot area is preferable functionally and aesthetically to having individual fences around each plot. Estimated cost (quote by Long Fence): \$5,000, plus one double swing gate for equipment and one 5-foot wide swing gate for garden plot owner access.
- 5. Educational Element:** HEN is planning on conducting periodic gardening clinics that would be open to the community.



F. Conceptual Site Plan: Potential Garden Plot Layout



G. Management and Operations

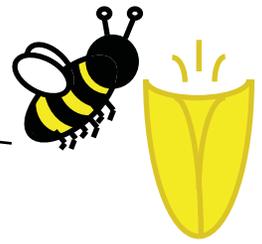
1. **Oversight and guidance.** HEN volunteers will collect rental fees and manage assignment of rental scholarships. A volunteer garden manager will monitor gardeners' activities to ensure compliance with the garden rules. Qualified volunteers also will serve as instructors to conduct periodic workshops and provide references in basic methods and choices of approach for new gardeners.
2. **Kiosk.** Volunteers will establish a kiosk where garden rules will be posted and informational materials will be provided.
3. **Records.** HEN volunteers will maintain records as necessary and practicable.
4. **Site maintenance.** Garden manager will monitor and manage general site conditions and conduct mowing operations within the fenceline.
5. **Complaints.** A point of contact for complaints, concerns, or questions shall be posted at the garden. The point of contact (garden manager or other designee) shall act as liaison between garden users and others, such as neighbors and groups using adjoining park areas. If a complaint first comes to the attention of the Town, FCPA, or HEN, it must be referred back to the garden manager or at least the manager must be kept apprised of resolutions. If the complaint has not been resolved in 30 days, the manager and complainant will meet with whomever the FCPA designates to mediate a solution.
6. **Trash and debris.** Gardeners will remove their own trash or debris from the site, similar to "leave no trace" when camping.
7. **Water Access.** HEN is working with Town of Herndon personnel on how best to bring water access to this



site. The closest water connection is approximately 20 feet from the park boundary in the Waterford HOA. The estimated cost to run water to the garden is \$10,000. Two standpipe faucets with hose splitters would be installed within the fenced garden. Hose bibs would be opened only by keys that would be issued to registered gardeners. Garden management would pay for initial and replacement hoses and hose splitters.

- 8. Sewer fee waiver request.** We hope to work with the town to waive the sewer fees associated with the typical water account since there will be no sewer involved.
- 9. Equipment.** The garden sponsor will facilitate acquisition of 2 heavy-duty wheelbarrows or utility wagons and garden hoses for use by the gardeners. Gardeners will be responsible for providing their own tools.
- 10. Dogs.** No dogs will be allowed within the fenced garden plot area.





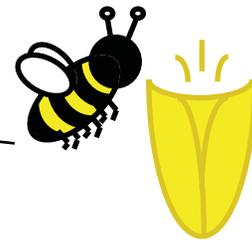
Appendices

The appendix contains references, guidelines, and/or learning resources used as part of the planning process. Some information herein will become part of operating references and resources. Some items will be finalized after the proposal for the community garden is approved.



Photo courtesy of Bonnie Averbuch and Tim Thumb at www.foodtank.com

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2015 Herndon Garden Plot Rules and Guidelines

The Herndon Garden Plot Program is a community garden plot rental program administered by the Herndon Environmental Network (HEN). Residents participating in the program enjoy nature, grow fruits and vegetables for food, and get exercise from the practice of gardening. The Garden Plot Rules and Guidelines provide the gardeners, their families, and the entire gardening community with basic principles for a successful garden plot program.

Table of Contents

- I. Purpose of the Program**
- II. Gardener Eligibility**
- III. Rules**
- IV. Guidelines**
- V. Administration**

I. Purpose of the Program

HEN provides Town of Herndon (TOH) and Fairfax County residents the opportunity to participate in a community gardening experience through the Herndon Community Garden Plot program. Preferential plot distribution will be given to residents with a Herndon zip code. All garden plots measure 20 feet by 15 feet. Gardening is permitted when the park is open, generally from dawn to dusk.

The rules and guidelines for the Garden Plot Program ensure that all participating gardeners have the opportunity for a positive gardening experience, that garden plot sites are an asset to the community, and that all plots are used in a productive manner.

Many residents want to garden, and we anticipate having a waiting list of willing gardeners. By following the rules and guidelines, you show that you want to garden successfully in a community garden plot program. All gardeners agree to follow the rules and guidelines of the Garden Plot Program.

II. Gardener Eligibility

The following criteria establish eligibility for having a garden plot:

- 1.** Must be residents of the Town of Herndon or Fairfax County. If you move from the county, you must return your plot at the end of the growing season.
- 2.** Must sign and return rental contracts with payment by the date on the contract.
- 3.** May have only one garden plot per name, household, or address.
- 4.** Food grown in the rental gardens are meant for personal consumption and not intended for commercial use. HEN does encourage plot usage to allow for use by charitable and non-profit organizations.
- 5.** Must agree to comply with rules identified in Section III for the duration of the rental agreement.

III. Rules

This section lists the rules that govern the program. These rules ensure that the plots are gardened, that the area is safe, and that policies and laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Fairfax County, and the Fairfax County Park Authority are followed (Source: Code of Virginia:§15.2-5704 <http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?000+cod+15.2-5704>).

Please note that all Fairfax County Park Authority Regulations apply to the garden plots as well: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parkpolicy/app7regs.pdf>. When gardeners sign the Garden Plot rental contract each year, they acknowledge that they have read and understand the following rules:

1. All gardening activities must be contained within the plot boundaries as marked by the Garden Plot Coordinator.
2. Prepare your entire plot for gardening and begin planting by May 1. Garden must be “active,” which means having two-thirds of the land in cultivation. Complete fall clean-up by November 15. Cleanup activities include removal of dead plants and weeds, removing plant supports, and mending fences. Plant a cover crop such as rye grass, if desired.
3. The entire garden plot has a seven (7) foot tall mesh fence. No interior fencing may be constructed.
4. Simple, non-permanent structures, such as trellises or raised beds are permitted. Neither solid walls nor roofs are permitted.
5. Poured concrete may not be used to anchor fence posts or other structures.
6. Gardeners may not dig channels or create berms outside of their plots.
7. Mulches such as stone, carpet and artificial turf are prohibited. You may use fabric, straw, and/or other natural biodegradable mulch materials (including newspapers) to help with weed control and help keep moisture in the ground, but the fabric must be removed by November 15th. The use of black plastic will not be permitted for weed control.
8. If you use a pesticide, you MUST follow these rules.
 - a) READ THE LABEL. It is against federal law to use a pesticide on a pest or crop that is not listed on the label.
 - b) NO restricted pesticide (pesticides requiring a permit for use) is permitted under any circumstances, even if the person is a licensed pesticide applicator.
 - c) Research the problem pest and the guidelines for managing it in the Virginia Pest Management Guide, <http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/pmg/index.html> .
 - d) Mix and apply the pesticide according to the label. Increasing the dose or frequency may harm your crop or other people.
 - e) For everyone’s safety, NO commercial, chemical or organic pesticides and NO fertilizers may be stored anywhere in the garden plot at any time, including locked storage bins.
 - f) Flamers or torches for weed control are NOT permitted due to the risk of fire and personal safety (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parkpolicy/app7regs.pdf>., §1.07).
 - g) According to state and local game regulations, it is illegal to bait or trap or transport any animals across property lines. (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parkpolicy/app7regs.pdf>, §1.10).
9. Take all trash and plant debris that you do not compost within your plot to your home, or to a citizen trash

collection location, such as the center on West Ox Road. DO NOT dump plants or trash anywhere outside of your plot, or in surrounding park or wooded areas. It is illegal to dump anywhere on Commonwealth of Virginia and Fairfax County property. (Source: Code of Virginia: § 33.1-346, [<http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?000+cod+33.1-346>].

10. Gardeners may not store excess lumber, fencing mesh or other materials not needed for gardening at their plots for aesthetic and safety reasons.

11. Weeds must be kept under control throughout the year and must be kept below 8". If weeds exceed 8", the plot owner will be notified. If weeds reach a height of 24", the participant's use of the plot will be terminated immediately. Any produce in the plot will become the property of HEN and the plot will be mowed. Participant will be notified by mail that such action has been taken and that participant//household/address will not be permitted to register the following season. It cannot be stressed enough the importance of harvesting produce as it ripens and keeping weeds under control so as not to interfere with other gardens by harboring vermin and shedding weed seeds.

12. Any gardening supports/structures you erect/install on your plot should be made of wood or recycled wood type products, be natural or earth-tone in color, and cannot exceed 60" in height. No rebar or metal materials will be permitted. This will be strictly enforced. No support/structure may extend, overhang, or interfere with movement through an adjoining plot. Do not cultivate beyond the aisle stakes so the established width of the aisle can be maintained.

13. Do not block off-road garden paths and aisle ways with structures, equipment, debris, or vehicles

14. Gardeners who are not in compliance with these rules will:

- a) Receive a notice by email or phone from the Garden Plot Coordinator;
- b) Have 14 calendar days to correct the problem upon receipt of the notice; and,
- c) If the problem(s) is/are not corrected or addressed within the allotted time frame, the garden plot may be reclaimed and reassigned.

Receiving more than one notice of non-compliance in a single calendar year may result in the plot being reclaimed. Receiving the same notice in consecutive years (such as allowing your plot to become weedy while you are on vacation each year) may also result in a reclaim.

IV. Guidelines

These guidelines are designed to make gardening enjoyable and successful for you and your garden plot neighbors. For more gardening information, visit the Green Spring Gardens library, the Green Spring Gardens website, <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring/plots.htm> , and the Virginia Cooperative Extension website, <http://www.ext.vt.edu/> .

1. Fences

The garden is surrounded by a 7-foot tall deer fence encompassing all plots. Gardeners may not erect fences around their individual garden plots.

2. Structures

The gardener supplies the materials and labor for non-permanent structures.

- a) Raised beds are permitted. Wood is recommended for the bed edging, but not required.
- b) Simple trellis structures are permitted if they do not shade other gardens. DO NOT use poured concrete for anchoring. Neither solid walls nor solid roofs are permitted.

- c) Storage bins for tools are not permitted.
- d) Row covers are to be prevented from blowing away, and remove them when not in use.

3. Making Good Plant Choices

Gardeners may grow a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers. Choosing from among the wide range of plants for the garden is challenging and fun! The guidelines below will help you make good choices for gardening in a community garden plot program. Talk to your gardening neighbors to share ideas for good plant choices for success.

- a) Herbaceous vines are permitted.
- b) No plants may be grown that are listed on the Virginia Invasive Plant List ... www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/documents/invlist.pdf

4. Mulch

Using mulch in your garden plot has many benefits. As organic mulches break down, they add valuable nutrients to your soil. You will need less fertilizer. They also help conserve water.

- a) Organic mulches, such as compost, leaves, straw, and shredded bark are highly recommended to conserve water and add nutrients to the soil.
- b) Non-biodegradable mulches, such as stone, plastic, carpet, and artificial turf, are prohibited.
- c) Composting plant materials within the plot is an excellent way to reduce trash and conserve nutrients. Do not compost food scraps (such as meat, oils, or fat), as this attracts animals.
- d) Avoid fresh manure which may contain weed seeds, smells bad, and may have sanitary issues that could affect neighboring plots. Composted manure is permitted.
- e) Mulch delivery to Fairfax County Parks is determined by the Fairfax County Department of Solid Waste Management. Garden Plot renters may obtain mulch at the following parks: Baron Cameron, Lewinsville, Pine Ridge/Bo White, and Grist Mill. Gardeners can also pick up mulch from E.C. Lawrence, Bull Run Regional Park, the I-95 Citizens' Recycling and Disposal Facility, and the I-66 Citizens' Recycling and Disposal Facility. For Fairfax County mulch delivery information, refer to the Fairfax County website: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/trash/dispmulch.htm> . The mulch is available for use by all Fairfax County citizens, not just garden plot renters.

5. Watering

The community garden plot has two water spigots with Y-splitters. We recommend using water conservation methods such as mulching and selecting plants that use less water. Earth-friendly and low-water gardening methods are encouraged.

- a) Water standpipes will be fitted with a Y-splitter attached to the main faucet enabling two gardeners to water simultaneously.
- b) All hoses must be stored in areas that do not present a safety problem to other gardeners.
- c) All gardeners should be considerate when using the water. If someone is waiting to water, please limit your time to 15 minutes.
- d) Please report water faucet problems to the Garden Plot Coordinator.

6. Managing Pests

There are many potential pests in the garden, such as weeds, insects, fungi, small mammals, etc. Most can be controlled using good gardening practices. We ask all gardeners to try these actions first. Remember the garden plot community is like a crowded neighborhood. Your actions can affect everyone. Please use any commercial pesticide very sparingly and only as a last resort. See the Rules for specific guidance on pesticide use.

- a) Choose plant varieties that are appropriate for our area and are resistant to pests.
- b) Keep plants healthy by using compost for fertilizer and mulches to retain water. Overwatering can cause diseases to increase.

- c) Remove insects by hand, or trap insects with soapy water.
- d) Clean up dead and diseased plants immediately.
- e) Get ideas from the Garden Plot Coordinator, your fellow gardeners, bulletin boards, books and magazines, and the Internet to help you resolve your pest problems safely. Small mammals, such as mice, voles, rabbits, squirrels and groundhogs can be a problem.

7. Existing Plot Condition

All plots are rented in their existing condition.

V. Administration

1. Program Management

The Herndon Garden Plot Program is managed by the Herndon Environmental Network (HEN). The HEN point-of-contact is Barb Welsh and can be reached via email at barb@herndonenvironment.org. However, for issues within the garden plots, please address the Garden Plot Coordinator, Eric Kephart, who manages the day-to-day operations and can be reached at 703-435-0772. You may also e-mail the Garden Plot Coordinator at ekepha@hotmail.com.

2. Rental Procedures

- a) The annual garden plot rental period is from March 1 through November 1 each year.
- b) Renewal contracts are mailed in December and must be signed and returned with payment by the date on the contract (generally this is January 31).
- c) Gardeners in good standing will be automatically mailed renewal contracts by US mail to their street address.
- d) As a garden plot renter, the gardener agrees to abide by the rules and guidelines of the program. He or she also accepts responsibility for family members and others who enter the plot.
- e) A gardener whose plot is in compliance may request a trade to a different plot, if one is available.

3. Garden Plot Waitlist and Offers to New Gardeners

Gardening is popular, and a waitlist of potential new garden plot renters will be maintained. Aspiring gardeners may enter the list by completing the form on the website www.herndonenvironment.org or emailing garden@herndonenvironment.org.

- a) Plots are offered throughout the year as they become available. Offers are sent by email.
- b) A potential gardener is offered a particular plot. He or she may accept or decline the offer. If the offer is declined or if no response is given within the allotted time for reply, the person is removed from the wait list. The time allotted to check out a plot and reply is 7 calendar days.
- c) Persons who are removed from the wait list may re-apply and will be placed at the end of the list.
- d) Names remain on the list from year to year, if no plot is offered.

4. Inspections

- a) The Garden Plot Coordinator will inspect and send written notices to gardeners whose plots are not in compliance with the rules, who interfere with neighbors; or, whose plots are not used appropriately.
- b) The Garden Plot Coordinator will contact the garden plot renter to address problems.
- c) Gardeners who fail to address a rules violation within 14 calendar days, or within an alternative time-frame specified by the Garden Plot Coordinator, risk losing their garden plot rental.

5. Plot Return Policy

- a) Gardeners may return their plots at any time by contacting HEN via email at www.herndonenvironment.org or the Garden Plot Coordinator at 703-435-0772.
- b) Garden plot renters may not give away or sublet their rented plot to other renters. All garden plot trades

or plot rental terminations must be managed by the Garden Plot Coordinator.

c) Fees are not returned or prorated if a garden plot is returned early or if it is reclaimed.

6. Safety

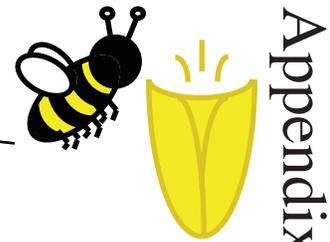
a) Renters garden at their own risk.

b) Since all plot locations are in public parks, the public cannot be banned from these areas. HEN, the Town of Herndon, and/or FCPA assume no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal property, plants or produce at the Garden Plots.

c) Should you observe illegal activities, such as theft, alcohol use, malicious damage, etc., please contact the Herndon Police Department at 703-435-6846. You may file a report at the Herndon Police Department website, https://www.herndon-va.gov/Content/public_safety/.

Please be a responsible member of the Garden Plot community while enjoying the benefits of gardening in the Garden Plot Program. If you have any questions, please contact the Garden Plot Coordinator at 703-435-0772.

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About Us: Herndon Environmental Network



Herndon Environmental Network is a nonprofit founded by a small group of Herndon-area residents concerned about the state of the planet. Our activities began in 2012 and are all organized and led by volunteers. We are committed to improving awareness about environmental issues through education, projects, and events in and around the Herndon area.

Our mission is to establish a presence in the community and give voice to important issues affecting our lives and the environment. We believe a cleaner, healthier Earth starts with action and awareness right here in our own community.

Current projects

Community Garden Initiative - HEN is working to set up a community garden pilot program in the Town of Herndon.

Winter Environmental Film Series - Held in cooperation with Herndon Parks and Recreation at the Herndon Community Center. Events in 2013 and 2014; planned for 2015.

Habitat Heroes - Mission is to enable community members to help protect Herndon's plants and wildlife while spending time outdoors, meeting people, and restoring natural habitats. Meets monthly to remove invasive plants from local parks.

Hens for Herndon - A grassroots movement supported by HEN that ran a successful campaign to change the ordinance governing chickens in Herndon. Currently, up to four backyard hens are allowed (changed from one bird previously).

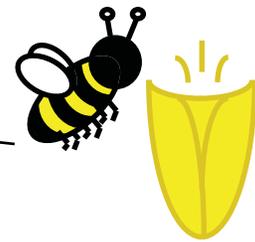
NOVA Climate Action Network - A coalition of environmental organizations, including HEN, working in Northern Virginia to fight climate change.

Past projects

- Stream and trail cleanups
- Tables at events such as Farmers Market, NatureFest/Quest, Bike to Work Day and more
- Neighborhood recycling contests "Battle of the Bottles" held in 2012 and 2013
- Tours of recycling centers and gardens
- Produced a series of videos aired on HCTV and posted online explaining how to identify and remove six invasive plant species
- Worked with several local elementary "green" programs
- Co-sponsored a successful e-cycling event in 2014
- Founder Carlin Anderson won a Cox Conserves award in 2013 that funded our grants program, awarded to local projects in 2014
- Received the 2013 Fairfax County Environmental Excellence Award (organization category)

More information about HEN projects, or how to get involved, can be found at www.herndonenvironment.org.

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Helpful Links and Resources

Green Spring Gardens, Community Garden Plots: Locations and Directions

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring/plots-locations.htm>

Alleycat Acres: Urban Farming Collective

<http://www.facebook.com/AlleycatAcres/notes>

American Community Garden Association

<http://communitygarden.org>

The Gardeners' Share

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Gardeners-Share/211244315584812>

Fairfax County: Grants Available Through Neighborhood Enhancement Partnership Program

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news/2009/neighborhood-enhancement-program.htm>

Fairfax County Neighborhood Enhancement Partnership Program

<https://www.reston.org/ParksRecreationEvents/Parks-Facilities/GardenPlots/Default.aspx?qenc=HzT9ACzZbNs%3d&fqenc=%2fa9S7ogq3ove8G1aYs1xXg%3d%3d>

Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund

<http://www.nfwf.org/chesapeake/pages/home.aspx>
The Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund (CBSF) issues grants and technical assistance to help local communities restore and protect water quality and vital habitats within the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Pesticides: Topical & Chemical Fact Sheets

<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/ipm.htm>

Research Reveals Problems and Potential of Rain Gardens

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/nvswcd/newsletter/rgresearch.htm>

WhatIsIPM.org (Integrated Pest Management)

<http://www.whatisipm.org/>

EarthWormDigest.org: The #1 Earthworm Information Website in the World

<http://www.wormdigest.org/>

Virginia Tech Department of Entomology: Insect Identification Lab

<http://www.insectid.ento.vt.edu/>

The Atlantic City Lab: “What I learned about community by working with community gardens” by Julie Mendoza

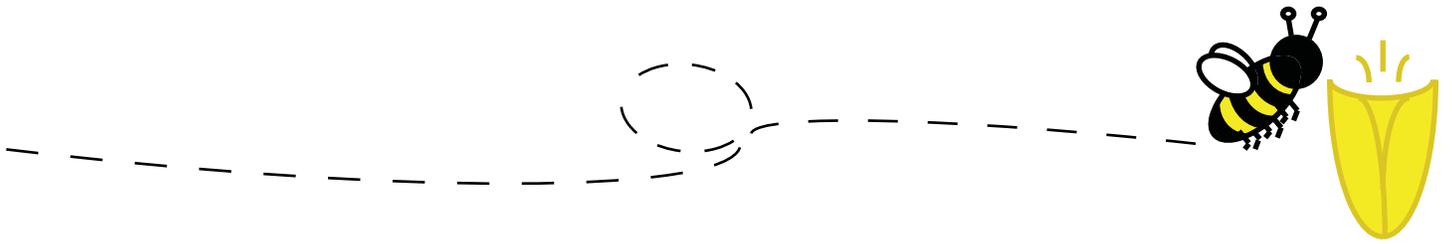
<http://www.theatlanticcities.com/arts-and-life-style/2012/04/what-i-learned-about-community-working-community-gardens/1775/>

ChangeLab Solutions: Ground Rules - A legal toolkit for community gardens

<http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/ground-rules>

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