



COVID-19: Action Plan for Opening of Community Gardens

On April 25, 2020, the province of Ontario announced that Community Gardens are considered essential services during the COVID-19 emergency orders. Community gardens are an essential source of fresh food for some individuals. Community gardens are now permitted to open, provided that recommendations and instructions from local public health agencies are followed. These include physical distancing and cleaning and disinfecting commonly used equipment and surfaces.

Community garden coordinators should consider measures that can prevent the spread of COVID-19.

This action plan is a tool to help community gardens in Hiawatha and Curve Lake First Nations, and the County and City of Peterborough with meeting the [recommendations and instructions](#) specified by Peterborough Public Health. The setup and resources of local community gardens vary, and each may need different or additional measures to support safety. Some gardens may take more time to safely open than others. Coordinators and members of community gardens are encouraged to use this tool as they plan to safely re-open gardens.

NOTE: Peterborough Public Health will provide signage for: Handwashing, Hand sanitizing, Physical Distancing, and "Should I enter the community garden?" Links to these resources are included below.

Before your garden opens, take the time to think about how you will meet the following:

Physical Distancing

Community gardeners **must maintain a physical distance of at least 2 meters (6 feet)** from each other while at the garden, except for members of the same household. **A maximum of 5 people** are allowed in the garden at any given time. Children should only be brought to the garden on an as-needed basis; physical distancing should be considered when bringing children to the garden. Pets should not be brought to the garden. Service animals are permitted.

Here are some additional examples that may help your garden with physical distancing:

- Eliminate access to areas where individuals can gather in groups, such as communal seating and picnic areas
- Create a schedule to ensure a maximum of 5 people in the garden at any given time. Consider scheduling gardeners based on the location of their plot to maintain physical distancing.

For your community garden, what strategies can you use to promote physical distancing? (e.g., schedules, closing communal areas, etc.)

Member List and Attendance Log

A list of community garden members for each community garden should be maintained by the community garden coordinator. The list should include the name and contact information for all community garden members, volunteers and staff who may have access to the community garden. Garden members should provide updated contact information to their community garden coordinator. Please see link for a sample [Tracking Tool for Community Garden Coordinators](#).

In addition, individuals coming to the garden must sign in before entering and after leaving the garden. This can be a paper or electronic sign-in sheet. This is so that public health can reach out to gardeners who may be affected in the event that another gardener becomes ill. If your garden uses a paper sign-in sheet, encourage gardeners to bring their own pens. See below for an example of a sign-in sheet. A printable template is also included at the end of this document.

Name	Date	Time In	Time Out

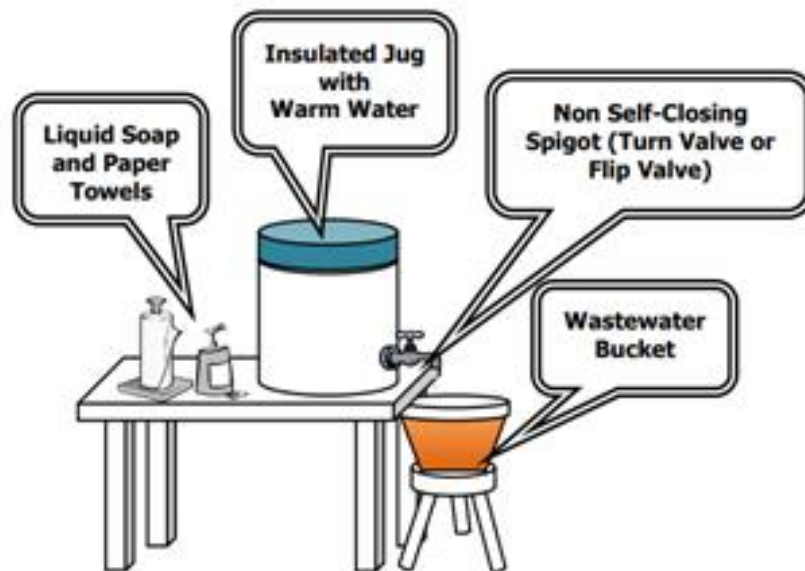
For your community garden, what needs to be done to create an updated contact list? (e.g., notify gardeners to share updated contact information with the coordinator, by a specific date).

For your community garden, what would the best option be for a sign-in sheet? (e.g., Electronic? Paper? Other?) **Where should it go? How will the sign-in sheet be communicated to gardeners?**

Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is an important means of preventing the spread of COVID-19. A way for gardeners to wash their hands must be available and easily accessible. Individuals accessing the community garden must ensure proper hand hygiene before entering and after leaving the community garden. In addition, hand hygiene should be practiced before or after touching your face, and before or after touching common touch areas, shared tools or other objects. Signage must be posted instructing community gardeners to maintain proper hand hygiene. Gardeners may wish to bring their own hand sanitizer with them to use. The following methods for hand hygiene in a community garden setting are acceptable. Think about which method will work best for your garden.

- Handwashing sink equipped with hot and cold running water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Temporary handwashing station prepared as per the picture below. This method may only be used if wastewater can be discarded appropriately, such as into a sink or toilet. Wastewater containing soap may not be discharged onto the ground.



SOURCE: www.fraserhealth.ca/-/media/Project/FraserHealth/FraserHealth/Health-Topics/Food-Safety/Temporary_Food_Premises_Application.pdf

- Hand wipes to remove debris, followed by alcohol-based hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol).

For your community garden, what actions can be taken to help facilitate handwashing and hand hygiene? (e.g., set up a temporary handwashing station, ask gardeners to bring their own handwipes and hand-sanitizer, etc.)

Cleaning and Disinfection

Garden coordinators are encouraged to create a list of frequently touched surfaces/items which should be cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily or more often as required. Examples of frequently touched surfaces/items include garden hoses and door handles. Items must be cleaned and free of debris before they are disinfected and the manufacturer's recommended contact time for disinfection must be followed. Refer to Public Health Ontario's [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#) handout.

Commonly used disinfectants are effective against the COVID-19 virus. Health Canada has prepared a [list of approved disinfectants](#) that are effective against the COVID-19 virus.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions when using the approved disinfectant.

A bleach-water solution may be used as an effective disinfectant. To prepare a bleach-water solution, add 4 teaspoons of bleach for every litre of water. Allow a contact time of at least 45 seconds before wiping away the disinfectant or allow the disinfectant to evaporate. If using a bleach-water solution as a disinfectant, it must be prepared daily.

Vinegar is not approved as a disinfectant by Health Canada as it is not effective against pathogens such as the COVID-19 virus.

For your community garden, what actions can be taken to make sure that proper cleaning and disinfection takes place? (e.g., make bleach available, with a container for mixing and sign with instructions; choose another disinfectant from the health Canada list, etc.)

Garden Tools

Gardeners must wear their own gloves while at the garden. If possible, discourage gardeners from sharing tools and encourage gardeners to bring their own tools.

If it is not possible for each gardener to have their own set of tools, shared tools should be cleaned and disinfected between each use. When cleaning garden tools, ensure all debris is removed prior to disinfection. Disinfect garden tools using a disinfectant which has been approved by Health Canada.

For your community garden, what actions can be taken to make sure that gardeners have their own set of gloves and use their own tools, or that tools are disinfected between uses? (e.g., post signs, provide disinfectant, etc.)

Wellness Check

Gardeners must not enter the garden if they are feeling unwell or showing any signs of illness. As of March 30, 2020, those over the age of 70 or those with compromised immune systems or underlying medical conditions, are advised to stay home.

Prior to opening the garden, garden coordinators are to post a sign instructing gardeners with illness to not enter the garden: "[Should I enter the community garden?](#)" Each gardener must self-screen prior to entering the garden. A decision tree has been created to help gardeners make a decision on whether they may enter the garden. The decision tree includes signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and information on where to seek assistance if gardeners have symptoms.

If gardeners have symptoms of respiratory illness they must return home immediately and either complete the online Ontario Self-Assessment tool (covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/) or contact Peterborough Public Health at 705-743-1000. Recommendations from the self-assessment tool or Public Health must be followed. If testing for COVID-19 is indicated, gardeners are encouraged to contact Peterborough Public Health at 705-743-1000 or the Peterborough Regional Health COVID-19 Assessment Centre at 705-876-5086 to arrange for testing.

What are some strategies your garden could use, if some gardeners cannot use their plots this season? (e.g., gardeners temporarily giving plots to others; using open plots to grow food to donate to community programs, or those who are unable to garden this year, etc.)

Resources:

Peterborough Public Health (2020). **Recommendations and Instructions for Safe Community Gardening and COVID-19 Prevention.** Available from: www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Recommendations-and-Instructions-for-Safe-Community-Gardening-COVID-19-Prevention.pdf

Public Health Ontario (2020). **Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings.** Available from: www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-environmental-cleaning.pdf?la=en

Health Canada (2020). **Hard Surface Disinfectants and Hand Sanitizers (COVID-19).** Available from: www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19.html

Community Garden Sign in Sheet (See Below).

Signage:

Peterborough Public Health (2020). **The Six Steps of Proper Handwashing.** Available from: www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2020-PPH-Six-Steps-of-Proper-Handwashing.pdf

Peterborough Public Health (2020). **Hand Sanitizing: Stop the Spread of Germs.**

Available from: www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2020-Hand-Santizing-for-Kids.pdf

Peterborough Public Health (2020). **Physical Distancing.** www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Physical-Distancing-2-Metres.pdf

Peterborough Public Health (2020). **Should I enter the community garden?**

www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Should-I-Enter-the-Community-Garden-Decision-Tree-April-28-2020.pdf

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Peterborough Public Health for support, at 705-743-1000. Thank you for helping to keep community gardens healthy and safe.

Community Garden Sign-In Sheet

Community Garden:			
Name	Date	Time In	Time Out