

Bona Fide Bellevue / Friendship Garden – Garden Agreement 2025

Mission

To create a welcoming space where people can grow fresh vegetables, fruits, herbs, and flowers while fostering community connections, sustainable gardening education, physical activity and overall health and wellbeing.

Vision

The Bellevue Friendship Garden brings together people of all ages, races, cultures, and social backgrounds to grow their own food, increase physical activity, build connections with neighbors, and learn from one another. This natural gathering space supports the physical, social and environmental health of individuals and neighborhoods throughout the North Boroughs.

Goals

- Combat food insecurity by increasing access to fresh locally grown produce.
- Establish and maintain communal gardening spaces to encourage community sharing and provide access to locally grown produce.
- Provide habitats for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators.
- Provide education on sustainable gardening practices while fostering greater engagement with the local food system.
- Build a sense of community and strengthen connections with neighbors.
- Promote intergenerational learning, cultural traditions, and shared knowledge among diverse ethnic backgrounds.
- Support healthier lifestyles through physical activity and enhanced well-being.

Growing Practices

The Bellevue Friendship Garden is committed to organic and sustainable gardening principles. The use of chemicals, including herbicides, insecticides, or chemical fertilizers (e.g., non-organic Miracle-Gro® or similar products), is prohibited in both personal beds and communal areas. If unsure whether a product is allowed, consult the garden coordinator.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

The garden welcomes participants from all ages, abilities, backgrounds, and income levels. To ensure equitable access, one or more beds may be offered at no cost. Applicants interested in this option should email info@bonafidebellevue.org. The Gardening Committee will review requests and notify applicants of their decision.

General Information

- All garden members must adhere to the Garden Agreement and Composting Guidelines and apply for bed space each season.
- Membership is renewed seasonally, with returning gardeners receiving priority.

- Each member may rent one bed per season.
- Membership includes access to compost bins and finished compost; a separate compost membership is not required.

Membership Requirements

Residency

Once a garden bed is assigned, the renter has priority to renew it in future years, regardless of their place of residence. New applicants must reside in one of the Tri-Borough communities (Bellevue, Avalon, Ben Avon), with Bellevue residents receiving priority for available beds.

Garden Meetings

Community Garden meetings will be held two to three times per year, with dates and locations announced at the start of the season. Members are encouraged to attend, as their input and participation are essential to the garden's success.

Volunteer Contribution

Garden members are expected to actively participate in the care and upkeep of the garden and will be required to contribute at least 12 hours of volunteer service annually, as their abilities allow.

Volunteer activities include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining common areas, including the lawn, gathering space, communal plantings, pollinator garden, and front slope along Cliff Avenue (e.g., mowing, weeding, and watering).
- Turning compost piles.
- Picking-up our monthly supply of soil-building materials from Grow Pittsburgh's Garden Resource Center, located at 147 Putnam St, Pittsburgh, PA 15206.
- Assisting with planning and hosting educational events or workshops and sponsoring social activities.
- Performing administrative tasks to support garden operations.

Volunteer hours may be fulfilled during scheduled workdays or independently. Scheduled workdays will be announced at the start of the season. Members are responsible for tracking their hours if working independently.

Personal Garden Bed Maintenance

- **Garden beds must be planted by June 7th** and actively maintained throughout the growing season. Maintenance includes regular weeding, watering, and harvesting of mature produce. Beds that are not planted by this deadline or are neglected during the season may be reassigned.
- By **November 30th**, beds must be cleared of plants that are not overwintering (e.g. garlic, strawberries, other perennial plants), as well as labels, stakes, cages, and temporary trellises. Beds should be covered with natural material (e.g. straw, shredded leaves) to prevent soil erosion and reduce weeds. Failure to complete cleanup by the deadline may result in losing returning gardener priority for the following year.

Garden Courtesy

- The garden is closed from dusk to dawn. Please avoid late-night visits and keep noise, including music, to a minimum to be respectful of our neighbors.
- Avoid planting sprawling or excessively tall plants that could block walkways or shade neighboring beds.
- Harvest produce when it matures and manage weeds and pests responsibly to keep the garden healthy and productive.
- If you'll be away for a short time, arrange for someone to tend your garden bed and harvest any ripe produce so it doesn't go to waste.

Harvesting

- Only harvest produce from your assigned bed or designated communal spaces.
- Vegetables, fruits, herbs, and flowers in communal areas are available for any community member to harvest.