



Bellevue Friendship Garden – Garden Agreement 2026

Revised: February 26, 2026

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

The Bellevue Friendship Garden brings together people of all ages, cultures, and backgrounds to grow food, 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.

Our 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

We are committed to organic and sustainable gardening principles. The use of synthetic herbicides, insecticides, or chemical fertilizers (including non-organic Miracle-Gro® or similar products) is not permitted in personal beds or communal areas. If you are unsure whether a product is allowed, please consult the Garden Coordinator before use.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

We welcome 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.

Membership Overview

- Garden beds are assigned for one growing season at a time.
- Membership is renewed annually. Gardeners who meet the volunteer and maintenance expectations outlined below are given the first opportunity to renew their beds before available spaces are offered to individuals on the waitlist.
- Returning priority is not automatic or permanent. It is earned each season through active participation, responsible care, and adherence to this Garden Agreement.
- Each member may rent one bed per season.
- Membership includes access to compost bins and finished compost. A separate compost membership is not necessary.

Residency Requirements

Because the garden is intended to serve the North Boroughs community, new applicants must reside in or operate a business in Bellevue, Avalon, or Ben Avon at the time of application, with Bellevue residents receiving priority for available beds. Gardeners who were previously accepted and remain in good standing may continue renewing their membership even if their residence changes. This exception applies only to existing members and does not extend to new applicants

Garden Meetings

Community Garden meetings will be held two to three times per year, with dates and locations announced in advance of each meeting. Members are encouraged to attend, as participation and input contribute to the garden's success.

Membership Expectations

To help keep the garden healthy, welcoming, and fair for everyone, members agree to:

- Complete at least 12 volunteer hours annually
- Actively maintain their garden bed throughout the growing season
- Fully winterize their bed by November 30

These expectations ensure that limited garden space is actively used, shared responsibilities are distributed equitably, and all members contribute to the success of the garden.

Active maintenance includes preventing weeds from going to seed, harvesting mature produce in a timely manner, and keeping beds orderly and productive. Because this is a shared and highly visible community space, consistent care matters. Weeds that go to seed spread into neighboring beds and create additional work for others. Unharvested produce results in food going to waste and negatively impacts the appearance of the garden.

Members who do not meet volunteer, maintenance, or winterization expectations may lose returning priority for the following season. In cases of significant neglect, beds may be reviewed and reassigned during the season to maintain fairness for other active garden members and individuals on the waitlist.

We understand that life circumstances vary. If challenges arise, communication is essential. Gardeners experiencing temporary difficulties should contact the Garden Coordinator as early as possible.

Volunteer Participation

The Bellevue Friendship Garden thrives because of shared effort. 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.
- Picking-up soil-building materials from Grow Pittsburgh's Garden Resource Center, located at 147 Putnam St, Pittsburgh, PA 15206.
- Assisting with educational programs or social events.
- Supporting administrative needs.

Volunteer hours may be completed during scheduled workdays or independently. Members are responsible for tracking and reporting independent hours.

Caring for Your Garden Bed

Beds must be planted by **June 7** and actively maintained throughout the growing season.

Active maintenance includes:

- Regular weeding and preventing weeds from going to seed
- Watering and general plant care
- Responsible pest management
- Harvesting produce in a timely manner

Because garden space is limited, beds that remain unplanted, significantly overgrown, or consistently unharvested may be reviewed and reassigned.

Winterization

By **November 30**, beds must be:

- Cleared of annual plants and debris
- Free of stakes, cages, and temporary structures
- Covered with natural mulch (e.g. straw or shredded leaves)

Proper winterization protects soil health and prepares the garden for the following season. Failure to winterize by the deadline may result in loss of returning priority.

Garden Courtesy

- Be mindful of neighboring beds when planting tall or sprawling crops.
- Harvest only from your assigned bed or designated communal areas.
- If you will be away for an extended period, arrange for someone to tend your bed.
- Produce grown in communal areas is available for all community members to enjoy.