



2024 MANUAL

MAR-DUKE FARM GARDEN PLOTS

DOWNERS GROVE PARK DISTRICT

IMPORTANT DATES

FEB. 1 AT 9AM	Plot renewals open for returning gardeners
MARCH 1 AT 3PM	Plot renewals close for returning gardeners
MARCH 6 AT 9AM	Plot rentals open to all gardeners
MARCH 27 AT 9AM	Plot exchanges may be considered through May 31
APRIL 24	Additional organic plots open to returners
MAY 31	Deadline for all plot rentals

The Downers Grove Park District Garden Plot Program at Mar-Duke Farm provides residents and non-residents the opportunity to enjoy nature, plant flowers, grow fruits and vegetables for food, and get exercise from the practice of gardening. Six elevated plots, 4 x 11 feet, are available first-come, first-served (one per person) to gardeners with disabilities or those who cannot work at ground level.

The Garden Plot Manual provides gardeners with basic rules and guidelines to ensure that all participating gardeners enjoy a positive gardening experience. By following the rules and guidelines, gardeners show that they want to garden successfully in a community garden plot program. All gardeners must agree to follow the rules and guidelines of the Garden Plot Program.



MAR-DUKE FARM

6761 SARATOGA AVE. • DOWNERS GROVE, IL
PHONE: 331.777.4355 • DGPARKS.ORG

GARDENER INFO

GARDENER ELIGIBILITY

The following criteria establish eligibility for garden plot rental:

1. Renewal contracts must be signed and returned by 3pm on March 1.
2. New rental contracts must be signed and returned by May 31.
3. Gardeners must grow food in the rental garden plots for personal consumption. Food may not be grown for commercial purposes.
4. Gardeners must comply with the Agreement and Code of Conduct.

GARDENER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. All plots must be planted by June 1. The Park District will reassign unplanted plots without refund after June 1.
2. Before planting, gardeners should check the numbered stake to be certain they are on the correct plot. If gardeners are not sure of the plot number, they should contact the Park District before planting. The Park District is not responsible for costs incurred for replanting.
3. It is suggested that string be used to mark the boundary of each plot's lines. This makes the boundaries visible to the mower. The Park District will take care of areas surrounding the garden site. Plots are not to extend beyond the designated boundary lines.
4. While the Park District tills the soil at the beginning of the season, gardeners may need to rototill just prior to planting.
5. Gardeners are expected to weed and maintain their entire plot(s) throughout the season until closing on October 31. Trash barrels are provided; do not leave weeds in aisles. The trash barrels are for garden plot waste only and are not to be used for yard waste from home.
6. If weeds are growing 12" tall on more than 1/3 of your plot for longer than seven days or if you have extended your plot beyond the assigned boundary lines, you will be contacted by the Park District by phone/email. Gardeners will then have one week from the day they are notified to take the appropriate action before the plot is mowed. Gardeners are expected to make arrangements for their plot to be maintained during any extended absences.
7. If gardeners fail to maintain their plot, the Park District will resume maintenance and they will not receive priority registration for the following year.
8. Plastic bags, rocks, string, wooden stakes or other materials should not be left in the garden aisles. These objects can be very dangerous and destructive when mowing. It is the gardener's responsibility to remove items from the plot area at the end of the season.
9. Gardeners that do not have all items listed above removed, will be assessed a \$150 clean-up fee.

GARDENER INFO

PLOT IDENTIFICATION

Weather dependent, the program will run from May 15 through October 31. Plots will be staked and ready for planting with consideration to weather and soil conditions. Garden Plots are identified with a numbered wooden stake placed in the center of each plot. Please do not remove the numbered stake. Plots are marked with the letter and number. For example, plots are A1, A2, A3, etc.

When the plots are ready to open for the season, gardeners will be notified.

- An email will be sent to all registered gardeners.
- An announcement will be posted to the District's website at dgparks.org.
- An announcement will be available on the Mar-Duke hotline at 331.777.4355.

WATER

Please note that the use of garden hoses or other devices that hook up to and block the use of the water spigots is prohibited. Gardeners must transport water using other means. If gardeners see someone using a hose or other devices, they should report it to the Mar-Duke Farm phone line. Reported gardeners will be contacted. Hoses may be confiscated and plot owners will not receive priority registration for the following year.

The Village of Downers Grove has water restriction policies in effect. Please follow these policies for watering plots.

- On even numbered days (i.e. May 12, 14, 16, etc.) water is allowed between 4am and 11am and between 4pm and 11pm ONLY.
- NO watering is allowed between 11am and 4pm and between 11pm and 4am.
- NO watering is allowed on odd numbered days.
- NO overnight watering is allowed.

MULCH

Gardeners may bring in mulch to use on their plots with the following provisions:

- Acceptable forms of mulch include: mushroom compost, garden compost, straw, corrugated cardboard, lawn clippings, leaves, and shredded newspaper. If gardeners would like to use mulch that is not listed above, please contact the Mar-Duke Farm phone line. Mulches such as woodchips, stone, carpet, sludge and artificial turf are prohibited.
- **Gardeners wishing to have a bulk delivery must notify the Mar-Duke Farm phone line 48 hours prior to the delivery.**
- Mulch may be dumped on the driveway but must not impede traffic or access to other plots.
- **Any mulch brought in must be spread on the plot(s) within 24 hours. Plot renters are responsible for clean-up of the driveway area.**
- Mulch may not encroach on neighboring plots without permission from that plot owner. The Park District reserves the right to remove mulch materials from gardeners who do not comply with the stated policies and assess a \$150 clean-up fee.

ORGANIC PLOTS

The U and V sections have been designated as organic only. Gardeners in this section must abide by organic gardening principles and use only products listed by OMRI.

EXISTING PLOT CONDITION

All plots are rented in their existing condition.



GARDENER INFO

PARKING

All gardeners will be issued two parking tags. Tags should be hung from the rearview mirror of your vehicle and visible during your time at the garden plots.

Parking for vehicles is located along the garden plot roadway in Mar-Duke Farm. Please notice and obey the parking signs. Please do not park at Divine Savior, Greenbriar Medical Center or in the surrounding neighborhood. Violators may be ticketed and towed. For the safety of all gardeners, we ask that the posted 5-mile per hour speed limit is obeyed.

SECURITY

Should illegal activities, such as theft, alcohol use, malicious damage, illegal dumping, etc. be observed, please contact the Downers Grove Police Department at 630.434.5600.

SAFETY

Renters garden at their own risk. Since all plot locations are in public parks, the public cannot be banned from these areas. The Downers Grove Park District assumes no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal property, plants or produce at the garden plots.

INSPECTION

The Park District will inspect and contact gardeners whose plots are not in compliance with the rules, who interfere with neighbors, or whose plots are not used appropriately. Gardeners who fail to address a rules violation within seven calendar days, or within an alternative timeframe specified by the Park District staff, risk losing their garden plot rental.

PLOT RETURN & TRANSFER POLICY

- Returned before/on May 8: Refund with a \$5 service fee.
- Returned on/after May 9: Refund with a \$5 service fee and \$5 late cancellation fee.
- Returned or forfeited on/after June 1: No refund.
- Plot transfers will be assessed a \$5 transfer fee.

GARDENER RULES

1. All gardening activities must be contained within the plot boundaries as marked by the Park District.
2. Gardeners should prepare their entire plot for gardening and finish planting by June 1. Complete fall clean-up by October 31. For a successful fall cleanup, please clear the plot of any weed blanket fabric, tomato cages, garbage, debris, concrete block, fencing, gardening tools and accessories.
3. The stakes and markers designating the boundaries of plots must not be removed at any time.
4. Plots must be neatly maintained up to the boundaries May 15 to October 31.
5. All non-biodegradable trash must be placed in garbage cans.
6. Watering with a hose is prohibited. Water must NOT be misused. NO hoses or sprinklers can be attached to the water spigots.
7. Fences must have mesh fence materials and may be no taller than six feet. The total height of the fence and strand of string or wire is not to exceed eight feet.
8. Poured concrete and limestone screenings may not be used to anchor fence posts or other structures. Gardeners may not dig channels or create berms outside of their plots.
9. Pets are not allowed inside the plot area.
10. Plot renters that do not plant, maintain, or properly remove debris from plots will lose the following year's renewal privileges and are subject to clean-up fees.
11. Proper attire including shoes and shirts must be worn at all times.
12. Materials and supplies may not be stored at Mar-Duke Farm or adjacent properties.