



# SUGAR HILL COMMUNITY GARDEN BY-LAWS

*To provide a safe and friendly community garden for members to learn, educate and share the experience with others.*

## 1. NAME

The name of this organization shall be called the Sugar Hill Community Garden (SHCG). The garden is located at Gary Pirkle Park on Austin Garner Road, Sugar Hill, Georgia 30518. The land is located on the property of the Gary Pirkle Park and was set aside as a community garden by the city council of Sugar Hill for the sole purpose of growing vegetables, fruits, flowers, and herbs. Upon completion of the garden plots in Spring 2011, approximately 90 garden plots were made available for gardeners to cultivate and grow their own produce and flowers.

## 2. GARDEN MEMBERSHIP

First priority will be given to residents of Sugar Hill, Georgia. Applications will be processed on a first come first served basis through the Parks and Recreation office of Sugar Hill or by an officer of the SHCG at a future date. Applicants for garden plots will be accepted according to plot availability. A waiting list will be maintained for applicants for whom no plot is available. Each gardener must submit an application with required payment and sign a copy of the Sugar Hill Community Membership Application, as well as the Sugar Hill Community Garden Gardener's Agreement before plot assignment. Use of garden plots will run for one year beginning on January 1st until December 31st. Gardeners from the previous season will have first preference and may choose either the same plot or a vacant plot if one exists. The renewal period will be from January 1st until March 1st. Gardeners must renew their plot(s) by March 1st or their plot(s) will be reassigned.

## 3. ADVISORY BOARD DUTIES

The SHCG Advisory Board is a volunteer group elected by the general membership of the garden. The Board makes recommendations to the city of Sugar Hill for operation of the garden where city input, maintenance or resource is required. The Board also manages the general operation of the garden for the city of Sugar Hill and reports such operations to the city on a regular basis. The city of Sugar Hill owns the garden land and retains the right to a final decision on any operation within the garden.

## 4. MEETINGS

Two meetings will be held per year with the date, time, and location to be determined by the Board with the Spring general membership meeting taking place around March 31st and the Fall general membership meeting taking place around October 31st. Each gardener or their representative must attend at least one (1) of the two (2) general membership meetings held to retain membership in SHCG. Board meetings will be held prior to each membership meeting and any special meeting as called by the Board President or a majority of the advisory board members. Gardeners are welcome to attend any board meeting if they so choose. Gardeners are encouraged to attend, particularly if they wish to speak on a matter before the board but must be placed on the agenda by making it known to any member of the Board prior to the meeting. All plot holders will be entitled to one (1) vote at any of the general membership meetings. The Secretary of the Board will be responsible to take minutes at all meetings and make them available for all gardeners to view.

## 5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Elections for Members of the Advisory Board will be held at the Spring general membership meeting. General members wishing to hold a board position may submit a nomination form to the board of directors. The deadline for submitting a nomination form will be 14 days before the Spring general membership meeting. In the event a board member resigns or is unable to complete their term of office and/or perform their duties, the board will temporarily appoint someone from the general membership to fill this vacancy until an election can be held at the Spring general membership meeting. Board members will be elected for a two (2) year term. In the inaugural year of the board (2012), 2 board members will serve 1 year terms and rotate off the board while the other 3 board members will serve 2 year terms. This will assure that a majority of the board remains intact each year for continuity. Board members rotating off may submit nomination forms for election as long as they have not met their maximum number of terms. No board member may serve for more than two (2) terms consecutively. Each board member will be entitled to one (1) vote and a minimum of three (3) members will constitute a quorum, which is needed to conduct any official business. In the event of a tie vote the President will cast the deciding vote. The officers of the Board of Directors shall consist of the (5) board members:

- President - Represents the Sugar Hill Community Garden members to the city of Sugar Hill. President will preside at all meetings and will construct an agenda prior to each meeting with other officers' input and prepared by the Secretary.
- Vice-Presidents (3) – Responsible for one or more committees as necessary.
- Secretary - Keeps the minutes of all meetings and makes them available to the general membership. Keeps a record of membership attendance for all meetings with a sign-up sheet made available. Assists the President in preparing the meeting agendas and supports the President in communicating with the community.

## 6. COMMITTEES

Committees may be established and abolished as needed by the Board. All committees will be staffed by general membership. A committee will be directed by a committee chairperson who will report to the board on the committees' members and activities. A board member (usually a Vice President) will be assigned to oversee each committee.

Examples of such committees:

- Compost - committee will set up a composting station at the garden, define signage to help gardeners place garden waste in the proper bins, members will educate the general membership on proper composting procedures
- Food Bank - committee will define procedures for gathering and delivering donations to the local food bank, members will harvest crops and deliver them to the local food bank
- Social/Event - committee will plan and execute social and educational events for the general membership as well as the community at large
- Water/Drainage - committee will work with the city of Sugar Hill to improve garden drainage and determine ideal watering schedules, members will monitor garden drainage and watering and propose improvements when needed
- Maintenance - committee will schedule work days and provide details of work to be accomplished, members will educate gardeners in work to be done and propose maintenance improvements as needed
- Communications - committee will manage updates to the garden page(s) on the Sugar Hill website, publish garden newsletter and support other communication to the garden membership and to the community at large.



## Sugar Hill Community Garden Gardeners Agreement

*To provide a safe and friendly community garden for members to learn, educate and share the experience with others.*

The Sugar Hill Community Garden (SHCG) is provided by the city of Sugar Hill for the community to use and enjoy. It is managed by the Sugar Hill Community Garden Advisory Board, an all-volunteer group elected by the general membership of the garden. The Advisory Board makes recommendations to the city of Sugar Hill for operation of the garden where city input, maintenance or resource is required. The Advisory Board also manages the general operation of the garden for the city of Sugar Hill and reports such operations to the city on a regular basis. The city of Sugar Hill owns the garden land and retains the right to a final decision on any operation within the garden.

The Advisory Board appoints committee chairpersons who run the garden committees. Examples: Compost, Food Bank, Social/Event, Water/Drainage, Maintenance, Pollinator Garden, and Communications/social media. These committees are staffed by volunteers from the general membership of the garden.

Sugar Hill Community Garden Policies and Rules for Gardeners:

### Membership

- Garden plots are made available for use on an annual basis, from January 1st to December 31st.
- Plots are available on a first come first served basis. Priority is given to current SHCG gardeners and to City of Sugar Hill residents.
- The annual fees are per plot. The fee is set each year by the Advisory Board, with approval of the City of Sugar Hill. Plot fees may be paid at the Sugar Hill Parks and Recreation Department (online or in person).
- Gardeners are required to provide current, valid contact information where they may be reached. It is the gardener's responsibility to assure their contact information is up to date.
- Communications are sent via email or posting on the Community Garden Facebook page to notify gardeners of upcoming meetings, scheduled workdays, social events, education classes, garden news and any changes to the by-laws, rules, or policies.
- New gardeners start with one (1) plot for their initial year.
- After a gardener's first year, gardeners can request one (1) additional plot per year with a maximum of three (3) plots per member. Gardeners must be in good standing with the garden regarding service hours and plot maintenance for a request to be granted.
- Gardeners must email all requests for plot changes (increase, reduce, location etc.) to the main garden email ([sugarhillcg@gmail.com](mailto:sugarhillcg@gmail.com)) for them to be considered. Requests will be handled on a first come, first served basis.
- Sub-leasing or transferring one's plot is not allowed.

- Members are not allowed to share the gate code with anyone that is not a registered garden member.
- Guests are welcome in the garden, but they must always be accompanied by the plot owner. Spouses, adult children, and other family members of the plot owner who will be in the garden without the registered plot owner present, must complete a short garden orientation and have a signed waiver on file. The plot owner is responsible for notifying the garden board of any family member(s) that might be using the plot during the season, and ensuring they have a signed waiver on file with the City of Sugar Hill.
- If a guest will be tending to a garden plot in the absence of the plot owner, the plot owner must seek approval from the garden board in advance. The guest will be required to attend a garden orientation and sign a waiver with the City of Sugar Hill before the board provides them with the gate code.
- If a member needs assistance tending to their garden plot, they should first contact the garden board, place a white flag in their plot, and/or post a request for assistance on our Facebook page.
- Sharing the gate code and/or failure to follow these guidelines may result in the plot owner's membership being terminated.
- Returning gardeners must pay their plot fees no later than March 1st. If fees are not paid by March 1st their plot(s) will be considered abandoned and will be re-assigned.
- All gardeners are required to contribute 12 hours of community service annually toward the general care and upkeep of the garden. Gardeners who have not completed their service hours for the current year of gardening are at risk of not being allowed to renew their plot(s) for the new season.
- Gardeners are required to attend at least one (1) of the two (2) annual General Garden Meetings or an orientation at the garden. The General Meetings are held in the spring and in fall. The exact dates, times, and locations of the General Meetings will be determined each year by the SHCG advisory board. Gardeners who attend a General Meeting will receive three (3) hours of credit toward the community service 12-hour requirement.
- Gardeners are required to clean and prepare their plot(s) when they terminate their membership in the garden. All personal items in the garden or barn must also be removed. Gardeners who fail to leave their garden plot ready for the next gardener will not be allowed to return to the garden for at least two years, and at the discretion of the board

### Gardening

- The garden is intended for growing fruits, vegetables, flowers, and herbs ONLY. No illegal plants may be grown.
- Pets are not allowed in the garden.
- Pots, containers etc. are not allowed to be used in the garden for permanent planting areas. Permanent planting is any planting longer than 14 days.
- Any gardening supplies will not be kept on or by your plot(s) longer than 14 days (i.e., bags of soil, fertilizer, compost, tools, etc.). Pathways/areas around plot(s) need to remain clear of obstructions.

- All plants must be planted within the plot. All vegetation growth must be contained within the plot (i.e., vines/overgrowth should not reach the ground outside the plot).
- Any produce grown in the garden is for the consumption by gardeners and their families, or for donation to a food bank or charity. The garden may not be used for commercial purposes, and anything grown in the garden is not to be sold.
- Tall plants (such as corn and pole beans) must be planted so that they do not shade the plots of other gardeners.
- Trees, shrubs, bushes, and invasive plants such as bamboo, mint, Jerusalem artichokes, raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, and others that may be determined by the SHCG advisory board as potentially harmful to the garden are prohibited.
- Gardeners should not harvest, water, or tend to another gardener's plot without the prior permission of the gardener or the SHCG advisory board.
- Gardeners will plant their garden plot or prepare their plot for planting, by May 15th. Plots which have not been planted or prepared will be considered abandoned and may be re-assigned. Tarped/weed fabric covered plots are not considered prepared.
- The intent of the garden is to have actively worked plots. Non active plots are any bed not used for growing in 30 days. Gardeners not actively using their plots may be asked to relinquish their plot(s).
- Gardeners are expected to control all weeds and grass in their plot and the area surrounding the plot. No trash/litter, supplies, tools etc. should be left in their plot or surrounding area. Periodic inspections will occur throughout the year to monitor this.
- The area from a gardener's plot to the adjacent walkway, adjacent fence and/or halfway to the adjacent plot is considered the area a gardener is to keep mulched and clear of weeds/grass.
- During inspections if a garden plot is deemed weedy or unkempt it is considered out of compliance. The gardener will be notified via email about the violation(s). They will have 14 days to address the violation(s). On the 15<sup>th</sup> day, if the gardener has taken no action to clean up their plot the plot may be considered abandoned and re-assigned.
- General garden inspections will occur on or around the following dates and may be done at other times as needed. May 16<sup>th</sup> (to confirm Spring preparations and general compliance), first weeks of July, August, September, October (general compliance), the 2nd Monday in November (to confirm winter preparations and general compliance)
- At the conclusion of the summer growing season gardeners will clean up their garden plot or plant their fall/winter crops. Plots which have not been cleaned-up or planted by 2nd Monday of November will be considered abandoned and may be re-assigned.
- If you have abandoned your plot, you will not be allowed to garden with Sugar Hill Community Garden for two (2) years following the abandonment.
- All plot structures (non-plant) must be sturdy and anchored, unobtrusive in color and must be removed each Fall. The board reserves the right to review any structures for compliance.
- Temporary structures such as row covers, and cold frames must be approved by the Board.
- All plot structures (non-plant) must be less than 6 ft (72 in) in height when measured from the ground outside of the plot to the top of the structure inside the bed.
- Nothing is allowed to be screwed, nailed, stapled, or otherwise attached to the wooded plot frame.
- No writing, marking and/or drawing is allowed on the plot frame.

- Art/decorations (not used for planting) are not encouraged in the garden but may be approved by the board with the gardener's request.
- Rocks, stones, and sticks removed from garden plots are to be put in specified areas or containers at the garden labeled for that purpose and not into other plots, walkways, or the grassy areas surrounding the garden.
- Weed control INSIDE the garden plot(s) - Fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides, and fungicides that are approved by the EPA for use in home vegetable gardens may be used in your garden plot(s). Gardeners must take care when applying to not inadvertently spread any chemicals outside their own garden plot(s). Chemical herbicides or pre-emergents (such as Roundup, Preen, and weed/grass killers) may not be used inside the garden plot(s).
- Weed control OUTSIDE the garden plot(s) - Chemical herbicides or pre-emergents (such as Roundup, Preen, and weed/grass killers) may be used outside the garden plot(s) on the slate pathways and on the mulched areas around the plot(s) and fence line. Please note that "Outside the garden plot(s)" means from a gardener's plot(s) to the fence line and/or slate path and/or halfway to an immediately adjacent plot(s). Gardeners must take care when applying to not inadvertently spread any chemicals outside their intended area.
- Garden plots may be mulched with herbicide/pesticide-free organic materials such as dried leaves or grass clippings. Wheat Straw (aka Hay) in loose or in bale form is not allowed. Biodegradable mulches such as newspaper and cardboard may be used if properly secured and not considered unsightly. Bales (partial or full) of any material are not allowed in the garden. The only allowable non-organic 'mulches' are weed-block fabric and black plastic, which must be properly secured.
- Compost and other organic soil amendments are always welcome in the garden. Compost must be aged, not have an offensive odor, or attract insects. Raw manure is not permitted as an amendment.
- Gardeners are encouraged to plant extra produce to share with the local food bank.

### General

- Gardeners are expected to follow the general park and garden rules posted on the signs in the garden area. Failure to do so may result in termination.
- Behavior on garden property deemed inappropriate by the SHGB may result in termination.
- Gardeners are responsible for any guests they bring to the garden and assuring that their guests understand and follow the rules.
- Gardeners should respect and take care of all community tools, equipment, community spaces and facilities.
- Gardeners will lock all gates and barn if they are the last gardeners to leave the garden.
- No personal garden deliveries are allowed without board approval. If approved, no equipment is allowed inside the garden gates or off the parking lot surface without board and City approval. All deliveries should be addressed and cleaned up within the same day of delivery unless written approval from the board. Gardener is responsible for all damages caused by 3<sup>rd</sup> party deliveries to the garden.

These Rules and policies are subject to change by the SHCG board or the City of Sugar Hill. The City of Sugar Hill reserves the right to reclaim a gardener's plot for failure to comply with the above policies and rules, in which case the gardener's fee will not be returned.

Who to contact with garden questions, how to get involved, and (for inexperienced gardeners) who to contact to get help with gardening:

Committee Chairperson – for information on the specific committee (posted in the barn)

Advisory Board members - for any other information ([sugarhillcg@gmail.com](mailto:sugarhillcg@gmail.com))

**Email is the official means of communication for the garden.** Be sure to regularly check your email for Sugar Hill Community Garden news, announcements, calendar of events and any changes to the Sugar Hill Community Garden policies and rules.

WAIVER:

I, the undersigned, have read the "Sugar Hill Community Garden Gardeners Agreement" and I agree to follow the rules and policies set forth in the agreement. I understand that my failure to abide by these rules and policies may result in my membership in the garden being terminated and my garden plot re-assigned. I also assume all risks and hazards incidental to participation, including transportation to and from these activities and do hereby, for myself, my child, my heir, executors, and administrators, waive, release, absolve, indemnify and agree hold harmless the City of Sugar Hill, Sugar Hill Parks and Recreation Department and its representatives, sponsors, affiliated associations, organizers, officers, officials and participants for any and all damages suffered by myself or my child in connection with this activity. Also, I agree that I will abide by all the rules and policies set by the Sugar Hill Parks and Recreation Department.

I, the undersigned, give permission to the Sugar Hill Parks and Recreation Department to photograph and video programs and activities and use those materials in advertising, promoting, and reporting Parks and Recreation programs and activities.

Signature (Gardener)

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_