

2026 FOSS FARM COMMUNITY GARDENS

RULES AND PLOT APPLICATION

Applications for community garden plots at the Foss Farm Conservation Land will be accepted through March 27, 2026. Applications received after this date will be considered as first-time requests for garden plots. Send the attached application along with a check to: *Carlisle Conservation Commission, Carlisle Town Hall, 66 Westford Street, Carlisle, MA 01741*. Please make the check payable to the Town of Carlisle.

If you are a new gardener, please include a self-addressed stamped envelope so you can receive a garden key. You will be notified of the opening date by email or regular mail. This will include a garden map indicating plot assignments. Please do not drive into the garden area before the opening date.

Plot Size: Plots are offered in two sizes.

- The fee for a standard full-sized plot is \$25 for an area approximately 25'x30'.
- The fee for a small plot is \$10 for an area approximately 10'x12'.
- Gardeners are limited to at most two plots, independent of plot size.

Plot Assignments: One person per household (individuals residing at the same street address) may apply as the designated the *principal gardener*. The *principal gardener* may select up to 3 additional persons, not members of the household, who may share equal access to the plots assigned to the *principal gardener*. These individuals are designated *co-gardeners*. No person can be listed on more than one application form.

Plots are assigned to the *principal gardener* in priority order as follows:

1. Returning gardeners* who had a garden plot in one of the previous two years**
2. Returning gardeners displaced for any reason***
3. Returning gardeners requesting plot reassignment
4. New gardeners who have been previously wait-listed****
5. New gardeners making their first request*****
6. Returning gardeners requesting a second plot
7. Gardeners requesting a lottery plot (3rd plot)
8. Any remaining plots may be used for community food banks, wildflowers, or cover crops

* By default, gardeners will be offered the same plot back each year.

** Returning gardeners may skip one gardening season without losing their "returning gardener" status

*** Gardeners may be displaced by a gardener who took a year off.

*** Gardeners of small plots may also be displaced if there is a need to consolidate small plots together.

**** If there is a waiting list for plots, new gardeners will be limited to 1 plot per household.

Garden Abandonment:

- By June 10, if a plot is not substantially cleared of weeds and there is no clear evidence of active gardening, the Garden Manager, may at his/her discretion, reassign the plot to another gardener.
- By July 1, if a garden has clearly been abandoned (i.e. plants have not been tended for over a month), the Garden Manager may at his/her discretion, reassign the plot to another gardener.

In either case, the application fee will not be refunded and the gardener may lose his/her "returning gardener" status. The Garden Manager's discretion will be based on the outcome of efforts to communicate with the gardener. Garden plots that become available due to abandonment, relinquishment or substantial inactivity will be reassigned for the rest of the growing season by first addressing the waiting list and then by lottery among interested existing gardeners.

Garden Rules: The principal gardener is responsible for adherence to the garden rules.

1. Each plot must be tended primarily by the *principal gardener* and associated *co-gardeners* assigned to that plot unless you notify the Garden Manager of extenuating circumstances. Individuals who fail to observe this rule will not be considered for plot assignment the following year.
2. Do not plant outside the plot area as delimited by the yellow plot boundary stakes.
3. All gardeners are expected to maintain their plots regularly and follow good gardening practices. Do not use wood chips or bark mulch to manage weeds. These materials do not break down quickly and tend to deplete soil nitrogen.
4. Keep plots weeded (including the 24-inch buffer strip between plots). This allows access around the sides and rear of the plot and also permits your neighbors to access their plots and the water pumps. If your plot is next to a pump, please help remove the weeds around the pump.
5. Keep all roadway edges outside the yellow plot boundary stakes clear to permit occasional mowing by the Garden Manager. Do not store rocks, bricks, stakes, tools, chairs, hay bales or mulch in this area or in the 24-inch buffer strip. Since there is no trash service, you are responsible for taking all non-plant material trash off site.
6. Do not remove or relocate the yellow plot boundary stakes or attach fencing to them.
7. Place all weeds and waste plant materials in the compost areas shown on the plot map.
8. Do not plant mint or other invasive perennial plants.
9. **Garden Road and Garden Gate** – Plots are accessible by automobile. Please drive slowly on the road to reduce ruts and dust. Please watch for pedestrians and wildlife. If you are the last one to leave the garden area, please lock the gate to help prevent theft and unauthorized vehicle entry.
10. **Pesticides** – Use of herbicides is prohibited. Only insecticides and fungicides listed by the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) are permitted ([see OMRI.ORG for more information](http://OMRI.ORG)). For your own protection and the protection of other gardeners, familiarize yourself with proper use methods or ask experienced gardeners for help before applying any remedies.
11. **Well Operation and Etiquette** – To operate well pumps, prime the pump first by filling the opening at the top of the pump with water from the barrel while operating the pump handle. After you have finished watering your garden, please refill the barrel. The Carlisle Board of Health considers water from these wells to be non-potable – Do not drink!
12. **Pets** – Pets in and around the gardens must be kept under strict control to avoid damage to plants. Please be considerate of your fellow gardeners.
13. **Motorized Equipment** – Small farm tractors, rototillers, weeders and water pumps are permitted for plot maintenance. Construction and landscape equipment, including bulldozers and excavators, are prohibited.
14. **Fall Cleanup** – By November 30, please remove all non-plant material including: plastic mulch, tools, stakes, logs, boards, fencing, rocks, bricks, string, cement blocks, etc. Late season crops may remain until harvested. Move all plant material including corn and sunflower stalks to the compost plots. If you planted perennials, remember to remove them at the end of the gardening season since the plots will be plowed the following spring.

2026 FOSS FARM COMMUNITY GARDENS PLOT APPLICATION

Principal Gardener

NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

NO. OF STANDARD FULL-SIZED PLOTS REQUESTED (check at most 1 box) 1 full plot 2 full plots

NO. OF SMALL PLOTS REQUESTED (check at most 1 box) 1 small plot 2 small plots

Would you like to participate in a lottery for an additional plot? Yes No

Co-Gardeners

NAME 1: _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

NAME 2: _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

NAME 3: _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

I have read the above rules governing gardening at Foss Farm Community Gardens and agree to abide by them.

I understand that failure to comply may result in the loss of my assigned plot without refund and the loss of future gardening privileges.

I agree to hold harmless the Town of Carlisle and/or its employees and volunteers from claims or liability related to any accident and/or injury that may occur as a result of gardening at Foss Farm Community Gardens.

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE _____

Fee Calculation

Number of full-sized plots: _____ * \$25 = \$ _____

Number of small plots: _____ * \$10 = \$ _____

Donation to the well maintenance fund: \$ _____

Total: \$ _____

Applications and checks may be mailed or dropped off at Town Hall:

Foss Farm Community Gardens
Conservation Department
66 Westford Street
Carlisle, MA 01741

MAKE YOUR CHECK PAYABLE TO THE "TOWN OF CARLISLE".

IF YOU ARE A NEW GARDENER:

INCLUDE A SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE WITH YOUR APPLICATION

Office use Date recd. _____ Pmt Total. _____ Check No. _____

Optional Request for Feedback

Dear Gardeners,

A number of gardeners have requested that we consider transitioning to no-till gardening. At the same time, many gardeners prefer to continue to have the gardens plowed each year. As Garden Manager, I am hoping to find a solution that can accommodate both points of view, and so I'm requesting your feedback to gauge the level of interest or concern in this topic so we can plan a path forward for future years.

There is no change planned for this year!

The proponents of no-till gardening cite a number of good reasons why they wish to try this. Some would like to be able to grow perennial plants such as asparagus, strawberries, and garlic. Others would like to be able to keep the fencing and trellises they install up from year to year so gardening is less work. Many cite the ecological benefits of minimal disturbance of the soil and the positive effect that has on the plants they grow. Early season crops such as peas would also be easier as we wouldn't have to wait for the plow to finish before planting. As garden manager, no-till would substantially reduce the amount of work we have to do to prepare for plowing and re-staking the plots.

The proponents of continuing to plow the gardens also have many good reasons for their position. Some note that tilling the soil makes it much looser so it is easier to plant in. Others really like the fresh slate that each new year brings allowing them to start anew. Many point out that the plow does most of the job of weeding each spring which makes the job of starting the year much easier. New gardeners in particular have a much less daunting task as they don't have to cleanup whatever mess was left by the previous gardener before they can begin. As garden manager, tilling substantially reduces the work we have to do to address the problem of invasive woody shrubs that overwhelm fencing and overrun gardens that get abandoned mid-season.

The difficulty we face in trying to accommodate both points of view is that the plow needs room to work and so we can't simply have each gardener select whether they would like their plot tilled or not. The plow needs to be able to do an entire row of the gardens, thus requiring all gardeners in a given row to make the same choice. As a result, if we try to accommodate both choices, some gardeners will have to move to a new location.

Sincerely,

Jonathan DeKock, Garden Manager, Foss Farm Community Gardens

Question 1: Would you prefer no-till or continuing to plow for your garden plot(s)?

No-till Continue to plow Either is fine

Question 2: Would you be willing to move to a different row to match your choice?

Yes No

Question 3: Would you be willing to participate in a working group help address this?

Yes No

Comments: