

2018 GreenThumb Bylaws Template

GreenThumb will require all community garden groups under Parks jurisdiction to submit copies of their bylaws to their Outreach Coordinators as a prerequisite to being relicensed. We offer quarterly workshops on group structure and bylaws, and we encourage members of your garden groups to attend these workshops if you haven't already. This is a great opportunity to bolster the strength of your gardening group through a shared understanding of membership rights and responsibilities, rules and procedures, governance structure, and how the group makes decisions. Please connect with your GreenThumb Outreach Coordinator for more details.

This template should be completed in a group setting, inviting collaboration and discussion among garden members, and should not be the work of any single individual. Please work through this document collectively and choose only the options that apply to your garden and your garden group. Remember, establishing garden bylaws is a process and will likely require multiple meetings and conversations. On the last page, GreenThumb has provided a signing section as a reminder that the most successful bylaws have the support of the garden group.

GARDEN BYLAWS

Date Ratified (month, day, year): _____

A. Name and Location

The name of the garden is _____.

The garden is located at [address: _____,]

between [cross streets: _____].

For the purposes of this document, the garden will be referred to as "the Garden."

B. Mission

The purpose of the Garden is to

C. Membership (check all that apply, and only those that apply)

C.1. Eligibility

- The Garden does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical ability, nationality, or religion.
- All adults must join as individuals regardless of household
- A household may join the Garden under a single membership
- You must be [number: _____] years of age to join as an individual
- Children under the age of 18, whose parent or parents are members, do not need to pay dues and do not have a work requirement.
- Other: _____

C.2. Process for Joining

A person interested in becoming a member of the Garden shall follow this procedure:

- Contact our (circle one): GreenThumb Primary Contact Garden Coordinator
Membership Coordinator Other: _____
- Complete a total of _____ volunteer hours over the course of [amount of time: _____]
- Join a committee
- Attend [number: _____] garden meetings

- Attend a new member orientation
 - Attend [number:_____] hours of garden open hours
 - Attend [number:_____] hours of a garden event
 - Attend [number:_____] hours of a garden workday
 - Attend [number:_____] free classes/workshops offered by GreenThumb, NYBG Bronx Green-Up, BBG, Citizens Committee for NYC, Farm School NYC, Just Food, etc.
 - Fill out a membership application
 - Sign a copy of the bylaws
 - Sign a membership agreement
 - Other:_____
-

C.3. Membership Levels

Some community gardens offer different levels of membership, e.g. member with plot, member without plot, friend of the garden, etc. Under “Additional rights and responsibilities,” you can include any communal areas that require maintenance, including sidewalks that must be shoveled and kept clean of snow during the winter.

The Garden has [number:_____] levels of membership:

1. Level 1 (or standard) Membership:_____
 - a. Dues: Sliding scale from _____ to _____
 - b. Key/code to the garden: · YES · NO
 - c. Voting rights: · YES · NO
 - d. Number of hours required to hold open hours and/or volunteer in the garden: [number:_____] every · MONTH · YEAR/SEASON
 - e. Meeting attendance requirement: · YES · NO
If YES, please describe:_____
 - f. Committee requirement: · YES · NO
If YES, please describe:_____
 - g. Additional rights and responsibilities:

2. Level 2 Membership:_____
 - a. Dues: Sliding scale from _____ to _____

- b. Key/code to the garden: YES NO
- c. Voting rights: YES NO
- d. Number of hours required to hold open hours and/or volunteer in the garden: [number:_____] every MONTH YEAR/SEASON
- e. Meeting attendance requirement: YES NO
If YES, please describe:_____
- f. Committee requirement: YES NO
If YES, please describe:_____
- g. Additional rights and responsibilities:

3. Level 3 Membership:_____
- a. Dues: Sliding scale from _____ to _____
 - b. Key/code to the garden: YES NO
 - c. Voting rights: YES NO
 - d. Number of hours required to hold open hours and/or volunteer in the garden: [number:_____] every MONTH YEAR/SEASON
 - e. Meeting attendance requirement: YES NO
If YES, please describe:_____
 - f. Committee requirement: YES NO
If YES, please describe:_____
 - g. Additional rights and responsibilities:

(If the garden has more than three levels, please describe them on a separate sheet of paper and attach.)

C.4. Garden Plots

C.4.A Communal Plots

This garden offers members access to communal garden plots: YES NO

If you checked NO, please move on to the next section. If you checked YES, please complete the following:

In addition to the requirements outlined in Section C.3., the Garden requires the following:

Rights of communal plot members:

- Participate in crop planning (i.e. the decision about what to plant)
- Tend to the plot(s) - planting, weeding, trellising/staking
- Enter the garden at any time to tend to the plot(s)
- Harvest from the plot(s) to take home
- Access to communal tools
- Access to compost, soil, lumber etc., produced by the Garden, donated to the Garden, or supplied to the Garden by GreenThumb
- Additional rights of communal plot members:

Responsibilities of communal plot members:

- Upkeep of the plot(s) - this includes weeding, cleaning out the plot at the end of the gardening season, and additional requirements:

- If the plot is left unattended:

(For example: Should a plot be left unattended for more than 4 weeks and/or weeds/pests take hold in or around the plot, the plot holder(s) will be asked to rectify the situation within a month or their membership will be forfeited. May also include protocol for if a plot holders are out of town for an extended period of time.)

Additional responsibilities of communal plot members:

How are the communal plots managed? Who decides what to plant? Please describe:

Who has access to the food crops that are grown in communal plot(s)? Please describe:

C.4.B Individual Plots

This garden offers members individual/family garden plots: • YES • NO

If you checked NO, please move on to the next section. If you checked YES, please complete the following:

In addition to the requirements outlined in Section C.3., the Garden requires the following:

Rights of individual/family plot-holders:

- Decide what to plant in their plot
- Enter the garden at any time to tend to their plot
- Take home the harvest from their plot
- Access to communal tools
- Access to compost, soil, lumber etc., produced by the Garden, donated to the Garden, or supplied to the Garden by GreenThumb
- Additional rights of plot-holders:

Responsibilities of individual/family plot holders:

- Upkeep of their plot - this includes weeding, cleaning out the plot at the end of the gardening season, and additional requirements:

- If the plot is left unattended:

(For example: Should a plot be left unattended for more than 4 weeks and/or weeds/pests take hold in or around the plot, the plot holder will be asked to rectify the situation within a month or their membership will be forfeited. May also include protocol for if a plot holder is out of town for an extended period of time.)

- Additional responsibilities of plot-holders:

How are the plots managed? Is there a waitlist? Who is responsible for managing who gets which plot? Please describe:

C.5. Meetings

Does the Garden group have an annual meeting? YES NO

If YES, please describe (when, what is decided there, how is it announced, etc.):

Does the Garden have regular membership/general meetings?

YES NO

If you checked NO, please move on to the next section. If you checked YES, please complete the following:

Garden meetings are organized as follows:

- Meetings occur every · ___ week(s) · ___ month(s) · ___ as needed
 - On a regular date (e.g. the 2nd Wednesday each month):

 - At a regular time: _____
- Any member of the public can attend a general meeting
- A minimum number of members are required if there is going to be a vote of any kind: [number or percentage of total membership: _____]
- Announcements about upcoming meetings are shared:
 - At the previous meeting
 - On the garden's email list
 - Over the phone
 - On the garden fence or bulletin board
 - On the garden's social media platform(s)
 - Other: _____
- Notes from the meetings are shared:
 - On the garden's email list
 - On the garden's website
 - On paper somewhere inside the garden (please describe: _____
_____)
 - On the garden's social media platform(s)
 - Other: _____

C.6. Process for revoking membership

The Garden reserves the right to deny or revoke membership to any person or people whose behavior is deemed:

- In violation of the Garden rules, bylaws, and/or GreenThumb License Agreement
- In violation of city, state, and/or federal law
- Disruptive to the causes of the garden
- Destructive to or theft of the garden property, plants, tools, furniture, plots, and amenities
- Disruptive or abusive of the peace and wellbeing of the garden, its members, and/or the public: verbal altercations, hate speech, sexual harassment, etc.
- Unauthorized duplication/distribution of the garden key or code
- Unauthorized changing of the Garden lock
- Other: _____

Revocation of membership for any of these violations occurs through this process:

- Three strikes, you're out! If the gardener violates the garden rules and/or bylaws three times, this is grounds for expulsion
- One violation of the garden rules and/or bylaws is grounds for expulsion
- A series of warnings or membership probation (please describe):

- The gardener is notified through these method(s): _____

- The gardener has this much time to respond: _____

- The decision is made by (i.e. a steering committee or general membership, via vote or consensus, at a general meeting or special meeting, with a quorum of ____, etc.):

- Membership may be reinstated if: _____

- Other:

D. Garden Governance (check all that apply, and only those that apply)

D.1. Garden Leadership

The Garden is governed by *(please select one)**:

- One Garden Coordinator
- Two or more Garden Co-coordinators
- Steering Committee, Management Committee, Board of Directors, or other such group
 - Please list all roles within this group (e.g. Treasurer):

- Non-hierarchical governance structure
- Series of committees, with one representative from each committee on a central board
- Other: _____

Please describe the expectations and responsibilities of each of the roles listed above:

Do these leadership positions have terms? YES NO

If YES, please describe: _____

Do these leadership positions have term limits? YES NO

If YES, please describe: _____

The Garden Leadership above is selected through (check all that apply):

- Elections at an Annual Meeting held every [month or season: _____]
- Elections held as needed
- A nominee must receive [percentage: _____] of the vote to be approved, even if unopposed
- Any member in good standing can nominate themselves or another member in good standing
- A minimum/quorum of [number: _____] members must participate in the vote
- Members may vote via email or proxy (a signed statement authorizing someone at the meeting to vote on behalf of a member who can't make the meeting)
- Other: _____

For the purposes of this document, the garden's governing body or person is referred to as "Garden Leadership."

D.2. Meetings of the Garden Leadership

Can the Garden Leadership as described in section D.1. meet outside of regular/membership/general meetings?

· YES · NO

If you checked NO, please move on to the next section. If you checked YES, please complete the following:

The Garden's Leadership meetings are organized as follows:

- Meetings occur every · ___ week(s) · ___ month(s)
- Any member in good standing can attend and observe a Garden Leadership meeting
- A minimum number of members of the Garden Leadership are required if there is going to be a vote of any kind: [number or percentage of total: _____]
- Announcements about upcoming meetings are shared:
 - At the previous meeting
 - On the garden's email list
 - Over the phone
 - On the garden fence or bulletin board
 - On the garden's social media platform(s)

- Other: _____
- Notes from the meetings are shared:
 - On the garden's email list
 - On the garden's website
 - On paper somewhere inside the garden (please describe: _____)
 - Other: _____
- Other: _____

D.3. Garden Committees

Some gardens have different committees to handle specific administrative or garden-related work, such as a membership committee, events committee, fundraising committee, compost committee, communal areas committee, etc.

Please list* all committees at the Garden, if applicable:

1. Committee Name: _____

Please describe the roles, responsibilities, and rights of this committee:

2. Committee Name: _____

Please describe the roles, responsibilities, and rights of this committee:

3. Committee Name: _____

Please describe the roles, responsibilities, and rights of this committee:

4. Committee Name: _____

Please describe the roles, responsibilities, and rights of this committee:

5. Committee Name: _____

Please describe the roles, responsibilities, and rights of this committee:

6. Committee Name: _____

Please describe the roles, responsibilities, and rights of this committee:

E. Decision-Making

Please complete the following table describing how decisions are made in the garden. Some questions to consider: Who decides what? Can committees and/or chairs make decisions on their own? Can the general membership overturn a decision of the Garden Leadership or a committee? Please include all committees listed in Section D.3.

Use a "1" to indicate that the entity is authorized to make decisions on their own.

Use a "2" to indicate that the entity can make decisions that need to be brought to the full membership for final approval.

Use a "3" to indicate that the entity can make decisions that need to be brought to the Garden Leadership for final approval.

Example:

	Committee	Chair	Membership
Approve new members	1		
Approve new projects in the garden	2	1	
Approve event proposals			1

Approve new members									
Approve new projects in the garden									
Approve event proposals									
Revoke membership privileges									
Assign plots									
Approve purchases using garden funds									
Approve emergency expenses									
Vote members into the Garden Leadership									
Prune trees/shrubs									
Amend the bylaws									

The decisions outlined in the table above are made by:

- Vote (51% or majority)
- Vote (2/3)
- Vote (other: _____)
- Consensus
- With a quorum of: _____
- Other:

Additional considerations:

- Members who are unable to attend the meeting may still vote
 - If so, how? _____
- Members who are unable to attend the meeting must respect the decision of the vote regardless of outcome
- Members who are not on the winning side of a vote must respect the decision of the vote regardless of outcome

F. Conflicts and Disputes (check all that apply, and only those that apply)

Disagreements are inevitable. The Garden handles conflicts and disputes as follows:

- Consult the garden rules and bylaws for an answer, and ensure that the subject of the dispute does not break any city, state, or federal laws.
- Conflicting parties must resolve the conflict amongst themselves
- If a garden member or volunteer accuses another member of misconduct, they should have proof in the form of another witness, photos, video, etc. Should they not have proof, the Garden Leadership will maintain a record of the incident(s).
- If conflicting parties cannot resolve the conflict, the disagreement must be brought to the attention of the Garden Leadership. The Garden Leadership will work to resolve the conflict and will maintain a record of the incident(s).
- If the conflicting parties cannot resolve the conflict, the disagreement must be brought to a free mediation service (please see the “Conflict Resolution” chapter of the GreenThumb Gardener’s Handbook)
- If the conflicting parties cannot resolve the conflict, the disagreement must be brought to a special committee within the garden or the garden’s network that is specifically designated to handle conflict.

G. Finances (check all that apply, and only those that apply)

The Garden handles finances as follows:

G.1. Account

- The Garden has a bank account
- The Garden has a fiscal sponsor who holds the garden's funds: _____
- The person/people/committee with access to the bank account is:

- The person/people/committee who holds the garden's credit and/or debit card is:

- The person/people with access to the garden's bank account for petty cash and reimbursements is/are: _____

G.2. Purchasing Proposals

- Any garden member can propose the purchase of a particular item.
- Garden funds may not be used for personal items.
- If the requested purchase is over \$____, the decision must go to the general membership.
- If the requested purchase is under \$____, the decision can be made by the
 - Garden Leadership · Treasurer · Finance Committee ·

Other: _____

- Other: _____

G.3. Reimbursements

- Gardeners may request petty cash for small purchases under \$_____.
- Gardeners may use their own money for approved purchases and get reimbursed.
- The timeline for reimbursement is: _____
- Gardeners must get prior approval before purchasing items for reimbursement from:

- All purchases must have a receipt to be kept with the garden's financial records

- Other: _____

G.4. Reporting

- A financial report including income and expenses will be shared at all general/membership meetings.
- Financial records will be shared with members upon request.
- An annual budget will be prepared by the Garden Leadership and presented for approval by the membership once per year
- Any financial decisions made and executed will be announced at the following general/membership meeting.

Other: _____

G.5. Fundraising

- Any person can bring up a grant opportunity to the general membership and/or Garden Leadership
- Garden members must get approval from _____ in order to apply for grants for the Garden
- Any garden member can participate in the grant application process.
- All grants for the garden are to be written and managed by:
 - Garden Leadership · Treasurer · Finance Committee · Member(s) who proposed the grant · Other: _____
- Garden members may propose fundraising ideas (markets, yard sales, events, grants, online fundraisers, etc.)
 - At membership meetings
 - To the Garden Leadership
 - To a committee (finance, events, other: _____)
 - Other: _____
- Grant funds are stored in the Garden’s bank account or with the Garden’s fiscal sponsor

H. Amending the Bylaws (check all that apply, and only those that apply)

Garden members may propose changes to the bylaws as follows (check all that apply):

- Once per year at an annual meeting
- At any membership meeting
- To the Garden Leadership
- To a special bylaws or arbitration committee
- Over email to the garden membership
- [number of weeks or months:_____] In advance of a membership meeting or annual meeting
- Other:

Changes to the bylaws will be announced to the garden membership:

- Over email
- In the meeting notes
- On the garden fence/bulletin board
- At the next general/membership meeting
- A new copy of the bylaws will be distributed to all members
- Other:



J. Agreement and Gardener Signatures

Establishing bylaws should be a collective process, one that allows a garden group to develop a shared sense of responsibility and stewardship. Garden members can sign and date below to indicate their involvement in these processes and support for the resulting bylaws. Subsequent members should sign and date below to indicate that they have read and agree to uphold a group's bylaws.

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