

# COVID-19

*P-Patch TIPS are reference documents that address topics related to the development and ongoing management of P-Patch Community Gardens.*

TIP

PP513

5/18/20

At the City, we continue to follow guidance from our partners at Public Health – Seattle & King County (PHSKC), Washington State Department of Health (DOH), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). During this time of public health crisis, we want to make sure all our gardeners have the information and resources they need to stay safe and healthy.

We know how important community gardens are to everyone, especially for those who were already struggling to put food on their tables.

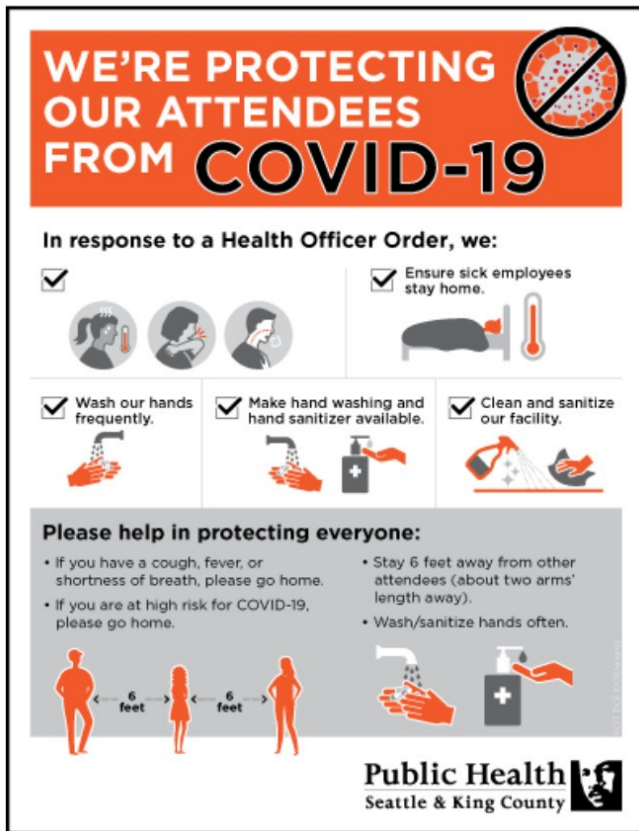
- 62% of P-Patch gardeners live in multifamily households and 78% have no space to grow at home.
- 53% of P-Patch gardeners earn less than \$75,000 annually and, of that, 19% earn less than \$20,000.
- 98% of P-Patch gardeners grow food and 46% medicinal/culinary herbs.

P-Patch Community Gardens continue to have an important impact on our tables and provide much needed exercise and fresh air. And, the gardens are already helping people find some peace in this uncertain time.

**Ongoing Guidance:** We all have an important role to play in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Please follow the below recommendations from our public health partners:

- Stay home while you are sick, or if someone in your home is sick and avoid close contact with others.
- Use advised 6' separation rule or wear a mask or face covering if you can't keep the 6' social distancing rule.
- Wash hands often with soap and water. If not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Wash all items harvested from the garden.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Do not share food or beverages.
- Cover your mouth/nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Be mindful of frequently touched spots such as locks and gates, water spigots, hoses, latches and knobs on sheds, and shared tools.
- Use your own gloves.
- Use your own tools and water keys.
- Sanitize common tools: Diluted household bleach solutions (replaced daily), alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Lightly spray tools after use. Porous and pitted surfaces, such as wood, will not be sanitized. To sanitize the handles of the tools, soaking them is most effective. We will want to do a good soaking later, when normalcy begins to return. Use gloves as your best protection. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/cleaning-disinfection.html>

TIPS should not be used as a substitute for codes, regulations, or rule requirements. Individuals are responsible for compliance with all code, regulatory, and rule requirements, whether or not described in this TIP.



## Reach Out to Your Neighbors

We especially need to open our hearts and connect with the struggles of those most vulnerable. P-Patch Community Gardeners have always been helpful to their neighbors, 37% of you share food a few times a month.

- Now is a good time to think about neighbors who could use some support.
- Think about sending out communication asking if individuals need help in the garden. You can help by keeping neighbors' plots maintained if they need the help and can't make it to the garden.
- Could you call that neighbor who is feeling isolated and vulnerable to check on their welfare and assure them that they are not alone?
- Many gardens are focusing efforts on their Giving Gardens along with their own plots.

## Finding Ways to Connect

It is spring time and normally gardeners would be having gardener gatherings and work parties. You should postpone any meetings/work parties of any size that are already scheduled and not schedule anything further until instructed to resume. Gardens are still finding creative ways to communicate with each other.

- If you have not sent in your yearly application or you are a new gardener please hold on to them. We will check back in with all of you once things settle down. You will not lose your plot due to not sending in an application. We understand the impact this crisis is having on your households and plot fee assistance will continue to be available. **Gardening should be the priority.**
- Think about alternative ways to meet. Some gardens are trying on-line communications like Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, GoToWebinar, free group conference calls, newsletters, listservs, and even message boards to help communicate without close interaction.
- Be mindful of everyone's abilities and resources when doing on-line communication and use more than one form of communication.
- Post common garden work needs at the garden so people can help with common tasks on their own, keeping the 6' distance rule.
- If you need help setting up an alternative way to meet, reach out to your staff person. We are here to help as we can. All P-Patch staff are working from home but can attend on-line or conference call meetings and are always willing to work with individuals.

## Gardening Help

The Garden Hotline will continue to provide full normal service (Mon.-Sat. 9am-5pm) in the coming weeks. With multiple staff and the ability to work remotely, they do not anticipate any outages. The Garden Hotline continues to answer questions and provide outreach on safer yard and garden practices via phone, email, social media, video and web.

### Ways to reach Tilth Alliance Garden Hotline

Call Tilth Alliance Garden Hotline at 206-684-0224. They have one person with access to the phones during their regular schedule. Email Garden Hotline: web form at [www.GardenHotline.org](http://www.GardenHotline.org) or send to [help@gardenhotline.org](mailto:help@gardenhotline.org). Provide your zip code so they can track contacts by area for their sponsors. The Garden Hotline also would love your photos!

Visit the Garden Hotline on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) and chat with them. They post videos, articles, links to great resources and lots of fun photos. Feel free to share photos or ideas and experiences in your garden.

Explore their [Pinterest](#) site. The Garden Hotline has lots of fun boards with great gardening ideas and information. Have a board to share? Send them the link! They have boards about edible flowers, lawn alternatives, beneficial insects, gardening on a budget, and much more!

Visit the Garden Hotline [YouTube](#) channel for more in depth gardening information. They have two series of video contest entries from local gardeners, videos they produced on mulching, moles and bindweed, and links to channels they recommend. The Garden Hotline just posted a [NEW VIDEO](#) on cover crops and mulches, just in time for you to work on your own cover cropped beds.

The Garden Hotline also now has an [Instagram](#) page where they will be sharing personalized photos from each of their [Garden Hotline educators](#) as well as their work in the community. Be in touch!

The Tilth Alliance Master Composter Sustainability Stewards are also still helping Seattle residents learn how to compost, build healthy soil, and manage their waste streams responsibly. Tilth is engaging their help in multiple projects that are safe for them to participate in like helping the Garden Hotline with some translation of garden workshop materials, growing plant starts to share with community partners, resolving tech issues, and they are also primed to be able to help in the community directly as long as it is not in a group setting. If you have compost pile troubleshooting at your community garden in Seattle or want some advice on soil building, please reach out to MCSS volunteer coordinator Reingard Rieger to see if they can help: [reingardrieger@tilthalliance.org](mailto:reingardrieger@tilthalliance.org).

### Online Resources for Community:

- **Community Gardening in the Times of COVID:** A team at NC State University published some very helpful information on their website: <https://nccommunitygardens.ces.ncsu.edu/covid-19-faq-for-community-gardens/>
- **COVID-19: Resources for Community - Mayor | seattle.gov** <http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/covid-19>
- **Novel Coronavirus Outbreak 2020 : Washington State Department of Health**  
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/emergencies/coronavirus>
- **King County Department of Health-COVID-19** [https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/communicable-diseases/disease-control/novel-coronavirus/~/\\_media/depts/health/communicable-diseases/documents/novel-coronavirus-factsheet.ashx](https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/communicable-diseases/disease-control/novel-coronavirus/~/_media/depts/health/communicable-diseases/documents/novel-coronavirus-factsheet.ashx)
- **Need Help?** [This is a list of community resources](#) for healthcare, finances, immigration issues, home schooling, and more. Many area [food banks](#) are still operating. You can fill out [this form](#) to request help picking up groceries or prescriptions, or [this form](#) to volunteer to pick up supplies for others. Call your pharmacy if you want to know how to get your medicine delivered.
- **Tips for washing produce:** <https://www.latimes.com/food/story/2020-03-16/how-to-wash-fresh-vegetables-fruits-during-coronavirus-crisis>
- **Benefit of Nature to well-being:** <https://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/nature-rx-outdoors-can-be-antidote-quarantine-anxiety>
- Seattle Emergency Hubs. Great information for organizing on a neighborhood level: <http://seattleemergencyhubs.org/>