

**BEAR CREEK GARDEN ASSOCIATION**  
**In Cooperation with**  
**El Paso County Parks**

**Garden Rules 2026**

**I. Membership Obligations.**

**A. Membership in Association.** All gardeners who hold a garden plot by having paid their annual garden fees are members of the Bear Creek Garden Association (herein referred to as “BCGA”). Garden plots (herein referred to as “plot” or “plots”) are registered with the members leasing the plots who are paying the annual rental fees. Association members may not sublet all or part of their plots. Keys to the gardens may be issued only by the association and may not be duplicated or transferred to persons who are not members.

As a community garden association, BCGA promotes education, volunteerism, camaraderie and a spirit of cooperation among its members. Members shall conduct themselves in a pleasant and civil manner and shall respect the rights and safety of other members. Failure to comply with these principles and the rules contained herein may result in the revocation or non-renewal of membership by the BCGA Board of Directors.

**B. Plot Assignment and Fees.** Garden fees are determined by the BCGA Board of Directors (herein referred to as “Board”) annually. Plot assignments are made by the Board with returning gardeners having an opportunity to reserve a plot as set forth below.

(1) **Returning Gardeners:** Returning gardener registration renewal will open on February 1. Returning gardeners will receive an email at that time with a link to the online registration form, along with instructions and other resources. Returning gardeners will have until the end of February to complete their online registration renewal and make payment for their plot(s).

(2) **New Gardeners:** All other persons wishing to garden at the Charmaine Nymann Community Garden in the upcoming gardening season shall (after completing the online registration forms and paying the plot fee and cleanup deposit) be assigned plots on a first come, first served basis. Registration for New Gardeners begins on March 1.

**C. Deposit:** A \$25.00 deposit will be required from all first-time gardeners and any other gardeners who did not sufficiently clean their plots from the previous gardening season. In the event the plot for which

the deposit was paid has been left in an acceptable condition on Closing Day, as determined by the Board, the deposit shall be refunded to the gardener who paid the initial fee. If the plot is not sufficiently cleaned, as determined by the Board or a representative thereof, the deposit shall be forfeited.

**D. Badges and Keys:** Gardeners must purchase badges and wear or have them in their possession when in the garden. Keys to the garden gate locks will be sold on Opening Day or will otherwise be available for purchase from Board members.

**E. Maintenance hours:** Every person who rents a plot at the Charmaine Nymann Community Garden must complete a minimum of FOUR hours of maintenance work (other than on their own plot and the aisles around their plot) during the season. The tasks to be completed shall be determined by the Board on an as-needed basis, but shall, generally, consist of weeding and/or cleaning abandoned plots, caring for charity plots and weeding/cleaning inside and outside the garden fence in areas for which BCGA is responsible, including the landscaped area north of the main parking lot.

Hours spent assisting another gardener when that the gardener is ill or out of town do not count as volunteer hours.

Gardeners who fail to complete their maintenance work obligation may be assessed a non-refundable fee of \$40.00 payable before the gardener is permitted to re-register for a plot at the Charmaine Nymann Community Garden.

**F. Familiarity with County Rules and Promise to Comply.** By gardening at the Charmaine Nymann Community Garden, each gardener represents that he/she has read, and agrees to comply with, these Rules, and also with the El Paso County Parks Charmaine Nymann Community Garden Rules (herein referred to as “Park Rules”) **attached hereto as Exhibit A**. Failure to comply with these Rules may result in forfeiture of any and all fees and deposits paid, and prohibition from further gardening at the Charmaine Nymann Community Garden.

## **II. Plot Preparation**

**A. Plot Boundary:** In order to make weeding and working between plots easier, **each gardener must set the plot boundaries into their plot 12” from the BCGA boundary stakes** where plots touch each other to create 24” wide paths between plots. (See the Garden Layout diagram in the Garden Handbook.) Please do not permanently remove stakes as they are reused each year.

**B. Layout of Rows:** The garden slopes from west to east. Plant rows must run north-south to prevent erosion.

**C. Raised Beds:** Raised beds and/or lowered walkways or ditches or trenches between beds of any kind are not permitted. Berms inside the plot must not be higher than 3”.

**D. Berm.** Each gardener is required to place a 3” to 4” high soil berm (no higher than 4”) around the perimeter of the plot to keep water from running off of the plot and into the aisles when plants are watered. During heavy rain storms the berm will also keep rainwater running down the aisles from flooding into plots and washing out plantings. Gardeners must not take dirt from aisles to create berms. Berms must be kept weeded and free of plants—whether they be weeds, flowers or vegetables.

**E. Plot Construction: BEFORE BEGINNING ANY CONSTRUCTION PROJECT, PLEASE CONTACT THE BOARD.**

**(1) Structures:** Structures that are primarily decorative are not allowed. Structures are allowed on plots if:

(a) they directly protect the plant(s), and are less than 3’ high;

or

(b) they directly support the plant(s) and the stakes or supports are no higher than the North parking lot fence (5’) and consist of materials that are no heavier than 2x2s. U and T posts are also permissible. An exception is made only for bean poles and bean teepees, which may be no more than 7 ½’ tall.

(c) orange plastic construction fencing, or similar support material, is not permitted.

(d) hose reels, sound devices, bird houses, bird baths and solar lights are not permitted.

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**(2) Materials:**

**(a) Plastic:** Plastic plant protectors may be used to enclose INDIVIDUAL plants, not groups of plants. Plastic may NOT be more than 2’ high. Walls-o-Water and plastic milk jugs are recommended.

**(b) Tunnels or Row Cover Structures:** Row covers that otherwise comply with the rules may be used but must not be wider than 4’ or higher than 3’.

**(c) Row Cover Material:** Only Remya or non-plastic row cover material can be used.

**(d) Hail Protection:** Wire mesh hardware cloth is strongly recommended. Hail cloth or sun screen cloth is also permitted. Earth tone (green or brown) fabric sold as hail cloth must be horizontally installed no more than 5' high and must be well secured. Hail cloth should not extend down the sides of the plants. For esthetic reasons, black or white hail cloth is not allowed, and any hail cloth protection which is higher than 3' can not cover more than one-quarter of the gardener's plot.

**(e) Ground Cover:** Landscape fabric that is breathable and water permeable is allowed; impermeable plastic material is not. Mulch is preferred for weed management. (See II(F)(3)(c) below.)

## **F. Soil Amendments and Mulches:**

**(1) Polymers:** Polymers are not allowed as a soil amendment because they do not decompose and cannot be removed by future gardeners.

**(2) Fertilizers:** Commercially sold fertilizers and soil amendments are permitted so long as they are worked into the soil and do not result in a raised bed or plot. Manure used in gardens must be aged (no odor). Homemade compost is not permitted.

### **(3) Permitted Mulch:**

**(a) Straw** may be used to control weeds and retain moisture. All straw must be spread on the plot no later than July 31<sup>st</sup> to ensure that it will start to decompose by the end of the gardening season. All straw must either be removed or incorporated into the soil at fall cleanup.

**(b) Cotton Burr Compost** is permitted.

**(c) Weeds** pulled in and around the plot may be laid down in a thin layer on the plot as mulch. However, vines, heavy stalks or roots that would interfere with rototilling in the fall must be removed from the garden and not used as mulch.

**(4) Prohibited Mulch:** Leaves, newspaper, wood chips, shredded bark, gorilla hair and any other wood-based mulch are prohibited.

**G. Vegetable Garden:** Plots are to be used primarily for growing vegetables. Some flowers, preferably those which deter pests (such as marigolds and nasturtiums) or attract pollinators may be grown.

**H. Prohibited Crops: SUNFLOWERS, MARIJUANA OR HEMP, NICOTIANA.** Sunflowers are not permitted due to shading, difficulty of root removal and toxicity to soil. The BCGA also prohibits growing marijuana or other varieties of hemp on its garden plots. Gardeners must request board approval before planting any ornamental plant that is poisonous. Nicotiana, a flowering tobacco plant, can spread tobacco mosaic virus, which can infect tomato and pepper plants along with other produce.

**I. Cover Crops:** Gardeners may not use “cover crops”. Cover crops such as clover, alfalfa and buckwheat are planted thickly by farmers and tilled under to improve the soil. However, in the community garden setting these crops tend to self-propagate and spread over the entire garden.

**J. Treated Seeds:** Seeds treated with pesticides or fungicides are not allowed in the Charmaine Nymann Community Garden. This includes transplants started at home from treated seeds. Please check seed packages, catalogues and seed racks carefully before you buy seeds.

**K. GMO:** All GMO (Genetically Modified Organism) crops are prohibited.

### III. Plot Maintenance

**A. Aisles:** Aisles are to be kept dry, clear of all plants and hoses, free of weeds, clean and level. No foreign matter, manure or straw shall be added to them.

#### **B. Weeds and Pest Control:**

**(1) Control:** Gardeners are responsible for keeping their garden plots, adjoining aisles and walkways free of weeds. In addition, gardeners with plots adjoining the fence are responsible for keeping the fence line and a one-foot strip outside the fence clear of weeds. If the weeds on any plot are not controlled in accordance with these rules, the gardener will be notified. If the gardener does not rectify the problem, the Board may deem the garden abandoned and the gardener’s cleanup deposit will be forfeited.

**(2) Non-Organic Pesticides, Herbicides, and Fungicides are NOT PERMITTED.** This includes any product containing Diazinon, Malathion, Rotenone, Neonicotinoid pesticides, or Sevin. The gardens are organic when it comes to pesticides. No hose-end sprayers are to be used for disbursement of organic pesticides. (A list of organic products will be discussed at the spring garden class and orientation meeting and also appears in your handbook.) Germination inhibitors, like corn gluten, are also prohibited.

**C. Watering:** All watering is to be done using a watering can or a hand-held hose equipped with a positive shut-off nozzle. Ditch or flood type

irrigation is prohibited. Soaker hoses are prohibited. No sprinklers are allowed. All water must be turned off before you leave the gardens. Keep water from aisles to prevent them from becoming muddy and slippery. Please report any leaks to the Board.

Before the full water system is turned on in the spring, the white faucets in the center of the main aisles may be turned on, weather permitting, to enable gardeners to use watering cans to carry water to early plantings.

**D. Watering Hours.** As we have for the past few garden seasons, we will again suspend our rule restricting watering to the hours before 10 a.m. and after 4 p.m. Though gardeners may water at their convenience anytime of the day, it is still strongly recommended, both for water conservation and the health of the plants, to water before 10 or after 4. The rule prohibiting watering between 10 and 4 will remain on our books and can be reinstated at any time if heat and drought conditions drive up our water costs up too high.

Gardeners may water with one hose for a maximum of 30 minutes per day for a full plot and 15 minutes per day for a half plot. Please note that this is the maximum time permitted for watering. Watering the maximum permitted time every day is rarely necessary and can be detrimental to your vegetables.

**E. Hose:** Remove the hose from the faucet each time you finish watering and before you leave the garden. All leaking hoses must be repaired. Please make sure you have a good washer at the faucet end of your hose and in your nozzle or wand. You are responsible for having these washers in place. Do not ever let your hose leak into the aisles or around the faucets because this creates a hazard.

**F. Tool Storage:** Pursuant to county rules, NOTHING is to be stored on your garden plot except your hoses and one watering can. The watering can must be stored on the ground inside the plot and secured so that the wind will not blow it around. During spring planting, bags of soil amendments and bales of straw may be kept on plots prior to being spread.

**G. Decorations.** Decorations, signs and garden ornaments are not permitted on plots. Any items, including tools, left on a plot may be removed by the board to ensure compliance with El Paso County rules.

**H. Washing Produce and Hands:** Do not wash produce or hands at the faucets because it will make the aisles muddy and slippery. Use your hose and wash them on your plot or wash them at home instead.

**I. Refuse and Trash:** Remove all refuse and trash from your plot. Take it with you for disposal each time you leave the garden. **DUMPING OUTSIDE OF THE GARDENING AREA IS PROHIBITED EXCEPT IN**

DUMPSTERS PROVIDED BY BCGA. Dumpsters are provided only from Labor Day until the gardens close in mid-October.

**J. Plant Diseases and Corn Smut:** Plant diseases can damage your garden and spread to other gardens. Carefully remove corn smut or diseased or insect infested plants, place in a plastic bag and take home for disposal. Please refer to the Charmaine Nymann Community Garden Handbook for descriptions and information about plant diseases.

#### **IV. Plot Cleanup**

**A. Fall Cleanup:** The deadline for fall cleanup is Closing Day. Furthermore, gardeners with work to be done must arrive at the garden by 10 a.m. on Closing Day or volunteers may be assigned to clear the plot and the plot owner may lose garden privileges. Gardeners who do not comply will forfeit their deposit and may not be permitted to renew their gardening privileges. All large or heavy plants (corn, broccoli, amaranth) and all weeds, vines and roots must be removed by this date. Straw used as mulch, light plant debris and any amendments (compost, garden mix, manure) may be left on the plot to be tilled in after the garden closes. Gardeners should not delay fall cleanup until the last minute because the dumpsters become overloaded, inconveniencing everyone.

**B. Garden Equipment:** Any garden equipment (including tools, hoses, Walls-o-Water, tomato cages, fencing, weed fabric, etc.) left in the garden at the end of the day the garden closes becomes property of the BCGA.

**C. Composting:** Compost piles and in-ground compost pits and trenches are not allowed. Do not bury diseased or insect-infested plants or “viney” roots.

#### **V. General Rules**

**A. Members and Guests:** Guests are permitted in the gardens only when accompanied by a member who is responsible for them.

**B. Gates:** Gates must be locked at ALL times after June 15<sup>th</sup>. At all other times, please make sure to lock the gates if you are the last to leave the gardens.

**C. Children:** Children must be properly supervised and kept out of other people’s gardens. Running in the aisles is not permitted.

**D. Pets:** Pets are not allowed in the gardens at any time and may not be tied to the outside of the garden fences. This does not apply to people requiring the assistance of a companion or seeing eye dog.

**E. Wheeled Vehicles:** The only vehicles allowed within the gardens are carts, wheelbarrows, strollers or wheelchairs.

**F. Produce:** Produce is to be used for private consumption only. No produce from the gardens may be sold, as that would violate our agreement with El Paso County.

**G. Unconditional Release:** Pursuant to the BCGA agreement with El Paso County, any adult (18 and older) participating in garden activity must sign an Unconditional Release (liability waiver), which is completed as part of the online plot registration process, before doing any work in the garden. Plot owners are responsible for making sure their garden helpers 18 and older sign their own liability waiver by completing their online Garden Helper registration. Friends and family members who ONLY water a plot while the plot owner is out of town are not required to sign an Unconditional Release.

Individuals who have completed the unconditional release may operate rototillers inside the garden (no additional release is needed).

Motorized weed whackers are prohibited in the garden. Weed torches are banned in the garden, in accordance with fire prevention rules in county parks.

**H. Abandoned Plots:** Plots not under cultivation by June 1<sup>st</sup> may be declared by the Board to be abandoned and assigned to another gardener. Plots not worked for more than 15 days without the gardener informing the Board will be considered abandoned, and the produce forfeited. A gardener who abandons their plot will forfeit any deposit and all other fees paid related to that plot. For purposes of this provision, a plot will be deemed “not worked” when no noticeable activity, including watering and weeding, has occurred. If the Board has determined that a plot has not been worked, it will send notice to the gardener of the plot, indicating that the gardener has a specified time period to rectify the condition or the garden plot will be considered to be abandoned.

**I. Allocation of Unused Plots.** Gardeners may apply to the Board for the opportunity to rent any plot which is not under cultivation by June 1<sup>st</sup>. Regular fees apply. Any plot remaining unplanted after July 1<sup>st</sup> may be rented at a reduced rate to be determined by the Board.

**J. NO SMOKING, VAPING, OR TOBACCO PRODUCTS OF ANY KIND ARE PERMITTED IN THE GARDEN.** Tobacco can carry a virus harmful to plants in the tomato family.

**K. Gardening Hours:** Gardening is allowed during daylight hours only. No one is permitted in the garden after dark.

**L. Notice:** For purposes of these rules, any notice required is deemed

given if:

**(1) To the Gardener:** If notice is given in writing and sent by regular mail or email to the address which was supplied by the gardener on the registration form or in a notification of change of address. (In the event more than one gardener is sharing a plot, notice will be sufficient if sent to the first gardener listed on the registration form);

**(2) To BCGA:** If notice is given in writing and sent by regular mail to BCGA, P.O. Box 38326, Colorado Springs, CO 80937-8326 or by email to [hello@bearcreekgardens.org](mailto:hello@bearcreekgardens.org).

**M. Interpretation of Rules:** These Rules have been developed over the years to benefit the gardens and gardeners. They may be modified from time to time at the discretion of the Board of the BCGA. In the event of a disagreement about the interpretation of any rule, the gardener may present his/her concern to the Board for consideration.

**N. Rules Violations:** Violations of these Rules may result in the loss of gardening privileges.

**O. Facility Use Agreement:** BCGA operates the garden pursuant to a Facility Use Agreement with El Paso County. Please respect Bear Creek Regional Park. Do not toss weeds or trash over the fence onto county property and do not pick, dig or remove any flowers, grasses or other vegetation from county property outside the garden.

(Last revised 1/28/26)

## EXHIBIT A

### EL PASO COUNTY PARKS CHARMAINE NYMANN COMMUNITY GARDEN 2026 RULES

1. Alcoholic beverages are not allowed in the park.
2. Posts of any kind higher than the front (North) parking lot fence are not permitted. The only exception to this rule is that stakes supporting pole beans may be seven and one half feet tall.
3. Green horse manure is not allowed because of the odor.
4. Watering practices must comply with the Charmaine Nymann Community Garden Rules (a hand-held hose must be equipped with a positive shut-off nozzle).
5. Compost piles are not allowed in the gardens.
6. Large amounts of wood, plastic or other garden construction that show above the fence line and/or beyond the gardens are not permitted.
7. Storage of tools, equipment, or trash is not permitted on the garden plots.
8. Driving off roads is not allowed.
9. Dumping of trash or weeds outside or inside the garden fence is not allowed.
10. Please use the dumpsters provided by the BCGA. (The dumpsters are only available from Labor Day through Closing Day).
11. Planting outside the garden fence is not allowed. Plants on the inside may be allowed to climb the fence. All plant residue must be cleaned off by Closing Day.
12. All gardeners must have signed an Unconditional Release liability waiver.
13. Grass clippings are not allowed in the gardens
14. Gardeners with fence plots are responsible for removing all weeds in the one-foot strip outside their fence line.