

# South Orange Community Garden Group By-Laws

To facilitate establishment and ongoing viability of South Orange Community Garden, community volunteers developed these By-laws and Operating Rules & Regulations to govern the initial creation and ongoing operation of the Garden. Participating gardeners will convene to modify, as they collectively deem fit, these By-laws and Operating Rules & Regulations.

**Revised: January 2020 by South Orange Community Garden**

**Article I – Name and Structure :** The name of this organization shall be the “South Orange Community Garden Group”

**(“SOCGG”).**

## **Article II – Mission**

SOCGG shall be dedicated to supporting and operating a recreational, community garden (“Garden”) for the residents of the Township of South Orange Village (“South Orange”), for the promotion of education and sustainable, ornamental and edible plant culture. The benefits of Gardens are both providing a space to garden and improving the quality of life, stimulating social interaction among South Orange residents, beautifying neighborhoods, producing food, preserving green space and providing opportunities for cross-cultural, multi-cultural, and inter-generational connections.

## **Description**

SOCGG shall be a nonprofit, community organization operating in South Orange, and shall be governed by an elected Executive Committee. The Gardens that it supports shall be located within South Orange, and generally shall be comprised of individually- assigned garden plots in a designated area, as determined by the South Orange Board of Trustees.

The Gardens shall operate based on the organic method of gardening. The use of inorganic pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, inorganic rodenticides or inorganic herbicide shall not be permitted. Only biological pesticides, beneficial insects, and organic cultural practices shall be allowed for the control of garden pests. Gardeners also will be required to use approved organic gardening, watering and soil conservation methods. Use of non-organic materials can result in termination of gardening privileges.

An unpaid, volunteer elected SOCGG Executive Committee shall govern SOCGG. (See Article V.)

## **Article III – Registration and Fees**

1. Garden registration shall be for South Orange households, for use by South Orange residents, and shall be limited to one Garden Plot (“Plot”) per household.

2. Registration shall be available to any South Orange household that agrees to comply with these By-Laws and Operating Rules & Regulations of the SOCGG and all Garden- related rules, regulations, and ordinances adopted by South Orange (collectively “Registrants”).
3. Plots shall be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis to Registrants for each annual gardening season, which shall be defined by the Operating Rules & Regulations, as may be amended from time to time.
4. A new waiting list of applicants, who were not assigned Plots, shall be maintained for each Season.
5. Registration Fees (“Fees”) shall be set annually, and must be paid in full at the time of registration. In the event that all Plots have not been assigned or a Plot is abandoned by a Registrant, and in the event that there is no waiting list of applicants, South Orange residents may apply to register during the Season.

#### **Article IV – SOCGG Membership**

Registrants automatically shall become members of the SOCGG (“Members/Gardeners”).

1. Each Member shall be entitled to one vote in matters concerning revisions to the By- Laws, Operating Rules & Regulations, and other matters put before SOCGG’s membership for approval.
2. Each Member annually shall donate a minimum amount of volunteer time, as specified in the Operating Rules & Regulations, to the SOCGG to ensure its viability by helping with SOCGG projects and maintenance of the garden. Members with specialized skills, experience, or interests should notify the SOCGG Executive Committee.

#### **Article V – SOCGG Executive Committee**

The SOCGG Executive Committee (“Executive Committee”) shall consist of seven (7) elected members of the SOCGG:

Chairperson – Chair Executive Committee meetings, sets the agenda, and maintains order at meetings.

Secretary/Membership Recorder – Maintain a complete list of Members and a registration waiting list; assign plots from waiting list to Registrants; keep up-to-date membership forms; record meeting minutes at Executive Committee meetings and general meetings, and work closely with South Orange Recreation & Cultural Affairs Department personnel.

Treasurer – Establish annual budget, collect registration revenue information from South Orange Recreation & Cultural Affairs Department, maintain records of all expenditures,

reconcile monthly all revenues and expenditures, and act as a liaison with the South Orange Finance Department and Village Administrator.

Garden Liaison – Maintain ledger of active gardeners, responsible for coordinating and recording the volunteer hours, state of garden supplies, needs/ equipment and gardening issues in the garden; serve as liaison between gardeners and Executive Committee.

Research Gardener/Master Gardener – Research and prepare guidelines for acceptable plants; gather resources for organic and non-toxic pest control; help further organic garden education. (Appointed by the Executive Committee.)

At-large Members (2) – Appointed by Executive Committee and may assume responsibilities of the Chairperson, Secretary/Membership Recorder and Garden Liaison. In addition, Executive Committee members shall perform other duties, which may arise from time to time, to fulfill the mission of the SOCGG. Election by closed ballot for Executive Committee members shall be conducted annually at an Annual General Meeting held after the Garden registration. Each member shall be allowed to cast one vote for each open, elected office.

1. Any Member who wants to hold a position on the Executive Committee shall submit a Nomination Form to the current Executive Committee. Each year, Nomination Forms shall be made available to all Members two weeks prior to the annual meeting via email. Completed Nomination Forms must be mailed or e-mailed to the Executive Committee's Secretary/Membership Recorder or presented at the beginning of the Annual General Meeting.
2. Vacancies for any office may be filled for the un-expired term by majority appointment by the Executive Committee.
3. The Executive Committee, by majority vote, shall establish and abolish standing and special committees.

#### **Article VI – SOCGG Meetings**

1. In addition to the Annual General Meeting, a second General Meeting shall be held during the planting season at a date established by the Executive Committee. Additional General Meetings may be scheduled by the Executive Committee. All General Meetings shall be scheduled at a place and time, in South Orange, determined by the Executive Committee, and shall be publicized and open to all Members and to the general public.
2. Decisions of the Executive Committee shall require a simple majority of the Executive Committee present, at any Executive Committee meeting, as long as a quorum comprised of a majority of the Executive Committee is present.
3. At General Meetings, decisions shall be made by a simple majority of the Members present. When the place and time of a General Meeting is announced to Members with at least two weeks prior notice, no fixed quorum is required. When less than two weeks' notice is given, a quorum shall consist of at least one-third of the Members.

## **Article VII – Amendments**

These By-Laws of the SOCGG may be amended at any General Meeting, when approved by two-thirds of the Members present. Prior to the vote, notice of the changes, along with a copy of the changes, shall be provided to Members a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to the meeting at which the vote shall be taken. The amendments shall be read to Members before the close of the meeting.

No amendment of the By-Laws shall become effective until two weeks after ratification by the Executive Committee and communication to all SOCGG Members.

The Operating Rules & Regulations of the SOCGG may be amended at a meeting of the Executive Committee, when approved by a majority of the Committee's members. Prior to the vote, notice of the changes, along with a copy of the changes, shall be provided to Members a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to the meeting at which the Executive Committee vote shall be taken.

No amendment of the Operating Rules & Regulations shall become effective until two (2) weeks after ratification by the Executive Committee and communication by email to all SOCGG Members.

## **Article VIII – Standing Rules**

1. All SOCGG expenses shall be pre-approved by the Executive Committee. Receipts shall be submitted for any reimbursement.
2. The South Orange Recreation & Cultural Affairs Department shall coordinate and monitor all the monetary accounts of the SOCGG, and those accounts and expenses shall be presented to Executive Committee and general membership at the year-end meeting.
3. All records of the SOCGG shall be available to the South Orange community.

## **South Orange Community Garden Group Operating Rules & Regulations Garden Season Permits**

1. Garden Season Permits shall be issued by the Township of South Orange Village for the use of individual Garden Plots for one annual planting season. The Garden Season Permit fee shall be determined each season.

## **Planting Season & Hours**

1. The 2020 Garden planting season shall be March 28<sup>th</sup> – October 31<sup>st</sup> (affected by weather).
2. Garden operating hours shall be 8:00 am to 8:00 pm, Monday – Sunday, or dawn to dusk, whichever is more restrictive.

3. Prior to the start of the garden season, all members are required to attend a Mandatory Educational/ Information Annual Session. Failure to attend voids membership in the garden.

### **Garden Plots**

1. Garden Plots shall be four (4) feet by twelve (12) feet raised beds with affixed perimeter boards measuring 10"-12" in nominal height.
2. Garden Plots shall be assigned by random lottery drawing at least one week prior to the opening of the garden each year.
3. Assigned Plots shall be maintained by registered household members. Maintaining a Plot is a member's responsibility. Plots are to be weeded on an on-going basis and planted by the end of May. Plots are to be maintained for the entire Season. Please check the Grid/Look to the Right for clarification of your responsibilities.
4. Failure to maintain your Assigned Plot and the area around it can result in loss of your garden plot in that season. Gardeners who fail to maintain their plots can also lose garden privileges for the following season.
5. All Members must notify, in writing or text, the Executive Committee of inability to maintain a Plot.

### **Garden Conduct & Etiquette**

1. All Members must maintain good conduct and civil behavior at all times.
2. The use of amplified devices and noise shall be prohibited.
3. Smoking shall be prohibited in or within 25 feet of the Garden's perimeter.
4. All Garden paths must be kept free of obstructions and weeds.
5. All Plots must remain free of trash, dead plants, and trellises, except as specified in #9 of this document.
6. All waste/trash must be disposed of offsite, subject to requirements Township of South Orange Village. There is no waste disposal service available.
7. Tires and open structures that retain or allow standing water shall be prohibited.
8. Gardeners shall be permitted to install temporary structures not exceeding 5 feet in height in their plots without written approval from the Executive Committee. Permanent structures in a gardener's plot are not permitted.

9. Basic plant support shall be permitted; e.g. basic tomato cages and stakes that are no higher than 5 feet.
10. All soil, pesticides, fertilizers and, mulch, must be pre-approved by the SOCGG Executive Committee. Please see list of approved items. The use of non-organic products in the garden are prohibited (e.g. Miracle Grow, Preen)
11. No dogs, cats, or other animals shall be permitted in the garden. No pets! Any violation of this rule will result in immediate loss of privileges/membership in the garden.
12. All children must be closely supervised. No playing is permitted within the Garden area. Parents/guardians/adults are responsible for direct supervision and teaching children using tools or gardening.
13. Members must be at least 18 years old. Anyone under 18 shall require parental permission to garden.
14. Gardeners and visitors are not permitted to enter, water, or garden another Gardener's Plot, nor permitted to dig for worms, cut plants, or harvest from another Gardener's Plot, unless the other gardener has provided explicit permission to do so. The Registered Gardener must inform the Committee of that arrangement.
15. Each Member must commit a minimum of 2 hours per month of volunteer time to the Garden's maintenance and operation during the garden season, precluding pre-season preparation.
16. Failure to contribute volunteer hours a result in loss of garden plot as well as loss of garden privileges for the upcoming season.
17. All Gardeners are part of the Community Garden and will contribute 10% of their produce on an ongoing basis during the growing season to the Food Bank.

### **Plants & Tools**

1. Only plants approved by Executive Committee shall be permitted (see SOCGG Checklist of Prohibited Plants)
2. Growing or use of illegal substances shall result in immediate expulsion and revocation of Garden registration.
3. Tools and equipment of the SOCGG must not be removed from the Garden area and must be stored in the Garden shed after use.
4. The Garden gates and sheds must remain locked; all tools and equipment returned to their respective places; and water must be turned off and hoses stored.

### **Grievances**

Gardeners should direct all grievances to the Executive Committee. Verbally and physically abusive behavior will not be permitted or tolerated.

**Maintain communication with fellow Gardeners. A conversation about an issue often can lead to great ideas, suggestions, and a quick resolution.**