

# REOPENING RACINE COUNTY

## *Best Practices for Community Gardens*

As the “Safer at Home” order comes to an end, Racine County businesses are preparing to reopen. Below are the best practices for your business to safely reopen and operate during the next phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The following are best practices and considerations for garden coordinators and gardeners to support the safe operation of a critical community food source while minimizing the spread of COVID-19. Each garden should proactively take action to provide a safe environment, while considering the unique needs of the community. Not all recommendations will be suitable for all gardens.

### **Employee Health:**

- Pre-screen employees for symptoms prior to starting shift.
- Do NOT allow symptomatic people to work. Send them home if they arrive at work sick.
- Require employees and gardeners to wear facemasks.
- Provide the opportunity for staff to wash hands often (or provide hand sanitizer).
- Educate all staff to cover coughs and sneezes using elbow (not hands).
- Practice social distancing by setting up workstations at least 6 feet from other staff.
- Provide proper personal protection equipment for all staff as needed.
- If any worker has tested positive for COVID-19, they will need to remain home in isolation for a minimum of 10 days and 72 hours asymptomatic.
- If any worker is named as a close contact of a positive patient, they will be put in quarantine by the local health department for 14 days from last exposure.

### **Disinfection:**

- Disinfect restrooms on a hourly basis with a posted sign and sign off of time of cleaning.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces as much as possible. Item to consider are doorknobs and handles, cart and basket handles, bathroom faucets, service counters, service kiosks, check out stations and payment keypads.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces in between customers (x, y, z).
- Provide hand sanitizer for clients use.
  - If client is sick with any undiagnosed illness, delay the appointment until they are symptom free for 72 hours.

### **Social Distancing:**

- Limit the number of individuals in the business to no more persons then the current emergency order allows.
- Cancel all events and group work days and make other arrangements or garden tasks, such as tilling by machine or hand, planting, fertilizing and soil amending, planting, watering, pest management, maintenance and harvesting
- Create a garden schedule based on plot location or number.
- If anticipating large numbers of gardeners (for examples, weekends), create a schedule to stagger times for arrival and availability to reduce crowds and allow for safe spacing.

One option is to divide the plots into two groups based on a checkerboard design, having separate shifts (for example, AM/PM, Sat/Sun) for each group to increase spacing.

- Consider creating designated work hours only for vulnerable populations and those at [higher risk](#).
- Limit access to or do not supply common or shared tools.
  - If limiting access, provide information on proper cleaning and disinfection of tools and instructions on where to dispose of cleaning material safely off-site.
- Items that cannot easily be cleaned (for example, garden hoses) could be a site for the transfer of the virus.
  - Require gardeners to wash hands before and after handling the hose.
- If possible, hoses could be locked up permanently and alternative sources for watering could be used, such as providing individual watering cans or gallon jugs.
- Commonly touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected regularly (for example, gates, railings, water spigots, tables, doorknobs).
  - Leave garden gates open during hours of operation to avoid frequent contact with gate and handles.
- Remove or block off public benches, picnic tables, or any other shared spaces that may promote close contact
- Post signage at garden to encourage washing of hands and tools; gloves do NOT replace proper hand hygiene and can transmit disease from one surface to another, including to yourself and others.
- Post signage reminding individuals to practice physical distancing of 6 feet or more while working.

**Supplies:**

- Hand and tool washing soap and facilities at each garden.
- See: How to build a hand-washing station for \$20
- Hand sanitizer if a washing station is not possible
- Cleaning materials to sanitize commonly touched surfaces such as spray bottles with a bleach mixture of 5 tablespoons bleach per gallon of water or 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water.
- Secure place to lock up common tools so they can't be a source of transmission.
- Nonporous plastic tables that can easily be cleaned and disinfected.
- Automatic irrigation systems when possible.