

## Factors for Garden Groups to Consider when Reopening to the Public

Community gardens are resuming the standard NYC Parks GreenThumb requirements for open hours and public access starting April 1, 2022. GreenThumb is asking all registered gardens to complete [this form](#) by **Friday, March 25** in order to update information posted on [our website](#) about public open hours.

Licensed and registered GreenThumb Gardens must remain open and accessible to the public for a minimum of 20 hours per week during the official GreenThumb garden season from April 1st through October 31st. A sign with a schedule indicating at least 10 of those 20 hours a week must be posted on the garden gate. For garden groups operating under the GreenThumb License Agreement, GreenThumb Gardens must be open for at least five (5) hours each weekend (Saturday and/or Sunday) during the season.

- **Garden group support and communication:** Does the garden group understand this season's public access and open hours requirements? How will the group continue to communicate and keep in touch? Will the group resume in-person meetings? How will the group communicate any changes and new guidelines to the group and the general public?
- **Group capacity:** How many members does the garden have, and what is their availability to meet open hours and public event requirements?
- **Open hours:** Groups should consider what public open hours will be, how will they be determined, and how the garden group will identify members to be present at the garden during open hours.
- **Public events:** Gardens are required to host at least two (2) free public events per year. Groups must obtain prior written approval from NYC Parks GreenThumb by using the [Event Request Form](#).
- **Garden size:** How large or small is the garden? Does the garden group plan to set their own COVID-19 guidelines for visitors, garden members, public events, and/or volunteer projects due to the garden size and design?
- **Expected garden usage:** How do members of the public typically use the garden, and how might that change in the current environment?
- **Community composting:** If the garden group has an active composting operation, will you continue accepting food scraps from neighbors? Can you do this safely? How will the group respond if the amount of food scraps overwhelms the group? The [COVID-19 Composting Safety Guide](#) offers guidelines and resources.
- **Signage:** You can request open hours signage from GreenThumb in multiple languages [here](#).
- **Garden clean-up:** What debris and other obstructions must be cleared up or stored away by the garden group before reopening to ensure that the garden is safe for visitors?
- **Garden Membership:** Garden groups must accept new members in accordance with the GreenThumb license agreement and public access requirements. The [GreenThumb Gardeners' Handbook](#) (Page 75) includes guidance on membership procedures that should be included in garden group bylaws. Consider the garden group's plans and

processes to resume accepting new members. Does the group need assistance with recruitment and retention?

- **Review Current COVID-19 Information:** Gardeners should review current information and guidelines on COVID-19 on the [CDC](#) and [DOHMH webpage](#), especially with regard to populations at risk. GreenThumb updated the COVID-19 policies in community gardens and full details can be found on the [website](#). We will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation in New York City and provide updates to garden groups if needed.
- **Bylaws:** Are your group's bylaws and governance documents able to guide decision making, and even disagreements, on the many topics that are likely to arise in the coming months? GreenThumb can help your group update them if needed.