



NYC Parks
GreenThumb

Carlos Martinez
Director
NYC Parks GreenThumb

T 212.602.5300 F 212.602.5334 E carlos.martinez@parks.nyc.gov

Mailing Address: GreenThumb, The Arsenal, Central Park, New York, NY 10065

**City of New York
Parks & Recreation**
nyc.gov/parks/greenthumb

To: Garden Contacts of GreenThumb Community Gardens Operating on NYC Parks Property
From: Carlos Martinez, Director of NYC Parks GreenThumb
Date: November 21, 2022
Re: 2023 NYC Parks GreenThumb License Agreement

Dear GreenThumb Community Gardeners:

We hope that all the garden members are doing well as the 2022 community gardening season comes to a close. On behalf of the entire GreenThumb staff, we wish to extend our utmost gratitude to all the land stewards for their efforts over the years in caring for hundreds of community gardens for all New Yorkers to enjoy. We look forward to many more gardening seasons together.

As you know, over 370 community gardens located on property under the jurisdiction of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (“NYC Parks”) operate pursuant to the GreenThumb License Agreement (“License”). The term for the current 2019-2022 license agreement expires on **December 31, 2022**. In anticipation of the upcoming relicensing cycle, GreenThumb:

- conducted a multilingual survey last summer for garden contacts, garden leaders, members, and anyone involved in Parks gardens to help us understand your familiarity with the rules and regulations governing these spaces;
- created a video tutorial in [English](#)¹ and [Spanish](#)² about the 2023 GreenThumb License Agreement;
- hosted one in-person and four virtual Q & A Sessions about the rights and responsibilities outlined in the License;
- compiled into a document the [Questions and Answers](#)³ discussed in the public sessions; and
- continues to host Office Hours every Friday through December 16 from noon to 1 p.m. to answer questions and provide clarity regarding the License and its process.

As your garden group’s designated Garden Contacts, it is part of your responsibility to help facilitate the relicensing of the garden in order to remain in good standing and continue receiving support from GreenThumb. When submitting the 2023 GreenThumb License and Registration Packet, please make sure to provide all the information requested in the following checklist:

- a signed [2023 GreenThumb License Agreement](#)⁴ by the two (2) designated Garden Contacts;
- a completed GreenThumb Annual Registration Form (available as an [online form](#)⁵ and as a [PDF file](#)⁶);
- a copy of the most up-to-date garden group’s bylaws (groups can use this [template](#)⁷);
- a copy of the most up-to-date membership list (groups can use this [template](#)⁸);

¹ youtu.be/IBYNsF64KTI

² youtu.be/VbBydziTB5E

³ greenthumb.nycgovparks.org/newspdf/Combined%20Q&A%20-%20Final%20Final.pdf

⁴ greenthumb.nycgovparks.org/newspdf/2023%20GreenThumb%20License.pdf

⁵ forms.office.com/g/CKG5FXufhu

⁶ [greenthumb.nycgovparks.org/newspdf/GreenThumb Annual Registration Form for NYC Parks Jurisdiction Gardens.pdf](https://greenthumb.nycgovparks.org/newspdf/GreenThumb%20Annual%20Registration%20Form%20for%20NYC%20Parks%20Jurisdiction%20Gardens.pdf)

⁷ [greenthumb.nycgovparks.org/newspdf/2021%20GreenThumb%20Bylaws%20Template_EN%20\(1\).pdf](https://greenthumb.nycgovparks.org/newspdf/2021%20GreenThumb%20Bylaws%20Template_EN%20(1).pdf)

⁸ greenthumb.nycgovparks.org/newspdf/Membership%20List%20TEMPLATE.xlsx

- ❑ a schedule for the open hours planned for the 2023 gardening season; and
- ❑ a plot waitlist (if your garden assign plots to members *and* if there is a waiting list. Groups can use this [template](#)⁹).

Your garden group can submit the relicensing packet online, by mail, or in-person. GreenThumb must receive the relicensing packet by **December 31, 2022**.

Packets can be submitted online:

Please make sure that text is legible and the documents saved as PDF files. You can send all the following documents via e-mail to GreenThumbRegistration@parks.nyc.gov (use your *garden name* in the subject line):

- [License Agreement](#)¹⁰
- Group Bylaws ([template](#) available)
- Membership List ([template](#) available)
- Plot Waitlist (if applicable) ([template](#) available)
- Registration can be submitted via the [online form](#)¹¹ or as a [PDF file](#)¹²

Printed packets can be mailed to:

NYC Parks, The Arsenal
Attention: GreenThumb
830 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10065

Packets can also be hand-delivered to:

NYC Parks GreenThumb Office
100 Gold Street, Suite 3100
New York, NY 10008

Only between 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. on the following dates:

Wednesday, November 30
Wednesday, December 7
Wednesday, December 14
Wednesday, December 21
Wednesday, December 28

This letter also includes important updates regarding the License. Please review this letter and all documents carefully with the garden group. Your GreenThumb Outreach Coordinator will be happy to help answer any questions you may have.

Highlights of the 2023 GreenThumb License Agreement

The 2023 GreenThumb License Agreement is similar to the previous licenses, with several updates that are intended to support community gardens. The information below summarizes the updates:

⁹ greenthumb.nycgovparks.org/newspdf/Garden%20Bed%20Waiting%20list%20%20TEMPLATE.xlsx

¹⁰ greenthumb.nycgovparks.org/newspdf/2023%20GreenThumb%20License.pdf

¹¹ forms.office.com/g/CKG5FXufhu

¹² greenthumb.nycgovparks.org/newspdf/GreenThumb_Annual_Registration_Form_for_NYC_Parks_Jurisdiction_Gardens.pdf

“Whereas” Clauses (Page 1): The new License includes language that celebrates the unique partnership with garden groups for over four decades and our gratitude working with garden volunteers.

Term (Page 1. Section 1): The License is now issued to garden groups for ten (10) years, ending on December 31, 2032. The new term of the renewable license is being increased from four (4) years to *one full decade*.

Sell of Agricultural Produce (Page 8. Section 6(K)(i)): Garden groups are still permitted to sell agricultural produce that is produced on site at the garden only, and solely for the purpose of supporting the operation and maintenance of the garden. Also, it has been clarified that *ornamental plants, seeds, compost, and related goods* are also included in this category.

Fundraising Events at Gardens (Page 8. Section 6(K)(ii)): To support garden groups in funding the ongoing operation of gardens, Parks will now allow two (2) additional fundraisers inside the garden per calendar year for a total of *four (4) fundraising events*, solely for the purposes of supporting the operation and maintenance of the garden, with prior written approval of GreenThumb and Parks. It has been clarified that a fundraiser might be a one-off fundraising event, activity, or an ongoing ticketed series.

Removal of the “Waiver of Jury Trial” Section: The 2019-2022 License, like prior GreenThumb licenses, calls for garden groups and the City to waive the use of a jury trial in legal disputes relating to the use of City property as a garden. Parties to a contract in New York state may generally waive the use of jury in future disputes and this term typically appears in City agreements. The 2023 GreenThumb License Agreement has removed the section related to the Waiver of Jury Trial.

GreenThumb Gardeners’ Handbook Updates

We are making several updates and clarifications to the GreenThumb Gardener’s Handbook. As you know, the Handbook includes valuable information about policies and best practices related to operating a GreenThumb community garden. GreenThumb will continue making necessary updates when the City passes new legislation or other applicable policy changes occur. Any future changes will be added to the Handbook and announcements will be communicated on the GreenThumb website, social media, and via email and US Mail. The following updates will be added to the next version of the Handbook:

Changes throughout the Handbook: the order of chapters was rearranged, language about COVID-19 was removed, the new phone number for Parks Central Communication was updated, templates and forms were added to the Appendices, and new links were added to online forms (Materials Request Form, GreenThumb Annual Registration Form, Events Request Form, and Open Hours Sign Request Form).

GreenThumb Resources and Services: the gardening material list, illustrations, and photos were updated, and the Waste Management section has its own chapter.

License and Registration Requirements for Gardens under NYC Parks: updated information about the License and Registration was added to the Handbook.

Safe Soil Gardening Requirements: option for alternative growing methods and requirements were added.

Garden structures: information about the process and requirements to install electricity in the community garden was added.

Hydrant Access: updated language to refer to vacuum breaker rather than RPZ, and if you are borrowing a vacuum breaker from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), you need to complete a vacuum breaker acknowledgement form along with your permit application.

Animals in the Garden: policy and requirements about keeping rabbits in the garden were added, and information about the use of Stalite to treat rats was added.

Ponds and Water Features: having a protective fence or barrier is now a best practice, not a requirement.

Events: formal quarterly deadlines for submitting events in the GreenThumb Event Request Form were removed and we are now requesting groups to submit the request at least 30 days in advance.

Handling Money, Donations, and Sales: detailed information about incorporating as a not-for-profit corporation, fiscal sponsorship, and opening a bank account was added to this chapter. In addition, updates and clarifications about fundraisers were also added.

Food Distribution: a new chapter outlining all policies and regulations about food distribution in community gardens was added.

Smoking and Marijuana Policy: it was clarified that no cannabis or hemp in the *Cannabaceae* family is permitted to be grown in community gardens.

Resolving Conflict in the Community Garden: information about GreenThumb's new partnership with the Center for Creative Conflict Resolution was added.

Caring for a GreenThumb community garden is an important form of community service and we thank you for taking on this responsibility to make your neighborhood and our city a better place. GreenThumb is here to support garden groups however we can, and we are thankful for the opportunity to work with dedicated New Yorkers like you.

Sincerely,



Carlos Martinez
NYC Parks GreenThumb, Director