

## Safety and Hygiene Practices for Community Gardening during COVID-19

The content below has been collected from greening partners and other community gardening programs across the country who are working quickly to comply with public health official's guidance and requirements.

### Personal Hygiene

Protect yourself and others from COVID-19. Remember to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of your elbow. Regular hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds should be done: before and after eating; after sneezing, coughing, or nose blowing; after touching face, hair, cellphone and/or clothing; after using the restroom or portable toilet; before handling food; after touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated; and after using shared equipment and supplies. It is not recommended to use homemade hand sanitizer, vodka, vinegar, tea tree oil and other natural products as they are not effective and may give false sense of security. DOHMH now recommends that all New Yorkers wear a face covering when outside of their home to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

### Sanitizing Tools

Your best protection is to use your own gloves and tools. But if you need to use common tools, get a spray bottle and fill with a 1-part bleach, 10-parts water mix to sanitize garden gates, locks, shared tools, water spigots, hoses, compost bins, garden carts, latches and knobs on sheds, work spaces and other frequently touched spots for the benefit of fellow gardeners. Use diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol or other [EPA-approved products](#) or [DEC list of products](#) registered in New York State identified as effective against COVID-19. Lightly spray tools after use. Keep in mind that porous and pitted surfaces such as wood, will not be totally sanitized by this process. To sanitize the handles of the tools soaking them is most effective, not spritzing or wiping.

### Portable Toilet (port-a-potty)

Make sure to provide access to the rental company in order to have portable toilets clean and well maintained. Post signs and remind gardeners to wash their hands or to use hand sanitizer after use. Garden groups should make sure to provide hand sanitizer inside portable toilets. Please remember to clean and disinfect port-a-potty inside and out on a regular basis.

### Social Distancing

Observe physical distancing by staying 6 feet apart between all people at all times. It is critical to identify and protect gardeners at high risk, including people over 60, people with compromised immune systems, and people with underlying, ongoing, health conditions. If you are a gardener at high risk, please contact your fellow gardeners to help plant and cultivate the plots for you during this crisis. If any gardener is feeling sick, this gardener should not be visiting the garden.