



# Gardening for Community

The April 2020 Newsletter of the UFM Manhattan Community Gardens

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## President's Message

Is winter over? It's the first of March as I write this and it seems like spring has sprung! Mother Nature has a way of teasing us and then bringing us back to reality with a cold snap. So I am not holding my breath until spring arrives!

Remembering that 2018 was a dry year and 2019 was a wet year, gardeners were provided challenges in keeping weeds under control. As you know weeding is something everyone must keep on top of or undesirable plants can get a foothold very quickly! And as some of you may

know, the garden "weed patrol" may send you a reminder if you don't keep weeds at bay!

I want to welcome new Manhattan Community Garden (MCG) board members: Dale Hayden, Lucas Shivers, Frank Arthur, and J. David Mattox and thank them for their willingness to serve. They are great additions to our board! I would be remiss if I did not thank the outgoing members for their contributions and dedication to the MCG. The outgoing board members are Molly Webb, Aran Ryan, Derek Frasier, Fred Peterson, and David Claus. It certainly takes a great team to make the gardens operate smoothly!

Every year the gardens have some turnover due to people leaving town or maybe just deciding they don't have the time or the passion for gardening. It seems that turnover was a bit larger this year. We have not had as many new gardeners sign up for available plots during our signup dates. We advertise in various ways but we have found that many new gardeners were informed about the gardens through friends and associates. For this reason, we ask that you all help to spread the word about gardening opportunities that MCG has to offer. MCG has a number plots available for rent.

Last fall, the MCG board reviewed the Articles, Bylaws, and Garden Rules and updates were made by the board. You may find the updated Garden Rules on the UFM website under Manhattan Community Gardens. The link to the garden rules is located in the next section. Please take a moment to review the changes.

Thank you for choosing to garden with MCG this year. If you have questions or concerns, feel free to contact a MCG board member.

Darin Marti, MCG President  
[dmarti7528@gmail.com](mailto:dmarti7528@gmail.com)

## Be a Good Garden Neighbor

All gardeners agreed to abide by the MCG rules by signing the MCG Garden Application. For reference the rules are available at:

<https://tryufm.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/MCG-RULES-revised-Jan.-2020.pdf>

Following the rules is a start to being a good garden neighbor. Using common sense can ensure members get along throughout the year. Here are suggestions:

- Get to know your neighbor by name. They may help with advice, take care of your plot during an absence, and watch for trespassers.
- Stay out of other plots without permission. Don't drag hoses through neighboring gardens.
- Keep noise to a minimum. The garden is not the place for noisy radios or loud talk.
- If located next to a path take care of it. Control weeds and apply woodchips.
- Keep a tidy plot. Non-garden related structures or articles should be kept to a minimum. Place trash in the proper receptacle.
- Don't encroach on borders. Plan your plantings with sufficient space to not approach boundaries.

- Fences can make enemies. Control weeds that grow in the fence line. If you have a fence, MAINTAIN it!
- Don't roll up hoses. String them out in linear fashion near the hydrant. Don't leave a spray nozzle attached for someone else to remove.
- Consider tilling your plot(s) at the end of the garden season.

Contact – Darin Marti, MCG President  
[dmarti7528@gmail.com](mailto:dmarti7528@gmail.com)

## April Garden Social & Workday

**NOTE: Due to the continuing COVID-19 situation, it was necessary to cancel the scheduled work day and social on April 4<sup>th</sup>. The MCG Board will be monitoring the Coronavirus issue in the coming weeks and will keep you informed of anything that affects garden meetings and activities. Stay safe and practice all the safety measures necessary to keep you and your families protected.**

## Locks and Security



Unlike Collins, the Riley Lane site is not gated. Lock all sheds while using garden equipment. As plant growth gets tall and dense, it is impossible to monitor the shed from a distance. Don't depend on other gardeners to "watch over" the activity around the sheds. A new sign

has been installed at the Collins Lane gate that informs gardeners to “Lock the Gate” when you leave the site. Please help the Gardens protect its equipment and sites by keeping sheds and gates locked. Thank you for your cooperation.

## Disposal Costs

MCG pays for dumpsters and trash bins for each garden site. We have roll-off dumpsters, lidded dumpsters and trash totes. New signs have been installed in front of each dumpster that outlines what materials can be placed in each. Please follow the instructions on each sign.

Each dumpster has specific purposes which are as follows:

- Roll-off Dumpsters (the large ones) – to be used **ONLY** for plant materials that come off the garden plots or tree limbs that fall around the garden site.
- Lidded Dumpster (Collins) and Trash Tote (Riley) – need to be used **ONLY** for non-vegetative materials.



This disposal costs the MCG \$100 per pickup plus \$10 per ton of plant material in the roll-off dumpsters. Any non-vegetative garbage

thrown in the roll off has to be removed by the hauler and he charges an additional \$250 per pickup and \$50 per ton when he has to sort it. Consequently it is imperative that we follow these requirements.

**We also ask that you not bring trash from home to put in any of these containers. And no Hazardous material!**

Other ways to control disposal cost is to recycle the plant materials. In reality, everything that grows in your plot can be chopped by hand or with a lawn mower and tilled right back into the soil. This saves the MCG money and benefits the soil profile of your plot! Much of the time it is less work than hauling debris to the roll-off! MCG rules state that burning is not allowed in your plot. Burning could certainly create an unsafe situation. In addition, MCG does not have a county burn permit so it is against county law as well.

## Operating Expenses

MCG is very similar to any business in that we have income and expenses. Income is derived from plot rental and expenses are generated in various ways. Expense items include:

- Equipment purchase and repair
- Building repair
- Garden hoses and hand tools
- Road rock for Collins gardens
- Trash Disposal
- Compost, Wood chips, & Mulch
- Portable toilets

It is up to each gardener to help control these costs by taking care of the equipment and tools. Using only the amount of mulch and compost that is needed and not wasting it is also a good practice. MCG does have a few dollars in reserve but we can see possible major expenses coming in the next few years so conserving all we can, helps all of us by controlling the amount we charge for plot rental.

## Collins Lane Road Improvements



The MCG has improved the roads within the Collins Lane garden site this winter. During wet times the roads had become rutted especially in the south and west perimeter. The board approved funding for installation of 300 feet of geotextile fabric and eight truckloads of crushed limestone. The fabric acts as a barrier to keep the rock from being “pushed down” into the soil from tire pressure and unserviceable as a road base. Board members pre-graded the road bed, applied the fabric, spread and leveled the rock on this priority area. The project addressed the most significant road issue at the site. Other areas may need to be worked on in the future. The board does ask gardeners to refrain from driving on grassed areas during wet times.

Contact- John Piskac: [piskac@att.net](mailto:piskac@att.net)

## Committee Reports

### Records & Communications

MCG still has vacant plots available at both locations. Returning gardeners who would like to have an additional plot (limit is 3 total) may email [communitygarden@tryufm.org](mailto:communitygarden@tryufm.org) or call the UFM office to make arrangements. New

gardeners are limited to one plot in their first year.

Email is our primary mode of communication for announcements, newsletters, and work day/social reminders. Please check your junk mail! If you change emails, don't forget to notify us! Those without email will be notified by phone or postal mail. We make a great effort to not share emails among our members and we never share our email list outside of MCG.

Please notify [communitygarden@tryufm.org](mailto:communitygarden@tryufm.org) if you have questions, garden facility problems, schedule conflicts, or other concerns. Your message will be answered by the appropriate board member.

Contact: Kim Smith: [kimberly.smith@cox.net](mailto:kimberly.smith@cox.net)

## Compost, Mulch, and Wood Chips

The MCG provides several types of material to enhance garden plots and paths.

### MULCH

The MCG provides prairie hay for mulch. It is used to conserve moisture and control weeds. Good quality prairie hay is composed of perennial native grasses and forbs mowed prior to seed production. It should not contain weeds. Reasonable amounts of prairie hay mulch can be tilled into the soil and composted in place.



## COMPOST

Most compost comes from the Riley County Transfer Station. This material is derived from grass clippings, leaves, and other herbaceous vegetation. Another source of compost (available only at Collins Lane for the time being) comes from the Kansas State University livestock facility. Its origin is the manures of cattle, poultry, and hogs. The carbon source required in composting is from animal bedding and other available vegetative materials. Composting temperature can reach over 150 degrees Fahrenheit which ensures pathogens, insect larvae, and weed seeds are destroyed. The benefits of using compost are:

- Improved soil tilth,
- Increased soil water holding capacity,
- Enhanced soil microbial action,
- Increased plant nutrients including phosphorus and potassium with some nitrogen in the animal based compost.

Composts from both sources are not considered “organic” by the USDA standards.

## WOOD CHIPS

Wood chips are obtained from the City of Manhattan Forestry. They are to be used on the paths between garden plots. Since wood chips do not readily biodegrade they should not be used in the garden plot as mulch.

Contact: John Kobiskie: [johnkks@cox.net](mailto:johnkks@cox.net)

## Equipment

MCG provides power and hand tools for just about any use in our gardens. While the equipment committee provides annual service for our equipment, it is the gardener’s responsibility to use tools in the manner of which they were intended. For instance, using a pitchfork or hoe for prying out a stump will probably break a handle or fork tooth.

Mowing at lowest setting is dangerous in that objects can be sent flying and may strike the operator or bystanders. This misuse of mowers is dangerous, but it can damage the equipment beyond repair. Remember, equipment is purchased with your garden dues so proper care and use will keep expenses down. If you have questions about operation of a piece of equipment, please ask someone or contact one of the equipment managers listed at the end of this article.

Cleaning equipment is also important. Tillers and mowers clogged with bindweed, crabgrass, and other materials tend to transfer weed seeds to other plots and gives other gardeners more to do. There are designated areas where power equipment should be cleaned. At Riley Lane, the cleaning of the equipment needs to be done at the hydrant located in the grass near the portable toilet and the Peace Pole. At Collins lane, there are two designated areas where cleaning tables have been built near each of the equipment sheds. Please use these areas to clean the equipment.

Please take time to remove debris from the power equipment and remove that plant material from the area and place it in the plant debris dumpsters. Once the power equipment is cleaned and /or washed, please add fuel to the implement. Remember, it is never safe to add fuel to a hot piece of equipment due to risk of fire or explosions.

Normal wear and tear on garden equipment means that repairs will be eventually needed. Hang tags are provided for you to list any issues with the equipment and should be attached to the tool. These tags are the only way that the equipment managers know that repairs are needed.

Contacts:  
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Pat Duggan, Riley Lane  
[twopats6@juno.com](mailto:twopats6@juno.com)

<b>2020 Board of Directors</b>		
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# **Spring 2020 Newsletter**

