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Department of Agriculture Provides Guidance for Community Gardens to Continue Amid COVID-19

Community, urban gardens have potential to curb food insecurity

Harrisburg, PA – The PA Department of Agriculture today issued guidance for volunteers and employees of community gardens to continue working, with precautions, in recognition of them being critical to the resiliency of local food systems in Pennsylvania.

“Community gardens are an important piece of our commonwealth’s food and agriculture system,” said Secretary Redding. “Many of these gardens in Pennsylvania fill a void and address food deserts; this guidance is critical to further curbing food insecurity in the wake of COVID-19.”

The [guidance issued today](#) is in effort to protect the volunteers and employees who keep community gardens in Pennsylvania operational and includes the following:

- Garden leadership should notify all members of new garden protocols;
- Post signage restricting access to only those who are healthy to protect the well-being of all volunteers and employees;
- If there is a shared tools library for gardeners, leadership should establish a protocol for sanitizing tools after each person’s use with EPA-registered disinfectants;
- Gardeners should wear a [cloth face mask](#) and frequently wash or sanitize hands;
- Gardeners should practice social distancing with at least six feet of separation at the garden site and avoid gatherings of people to avoid risk of exposure during off hours;
- High contact surfaces (locks, gates, tools, etc.) should be disinfected.

In addition to the outlined recommendations in the guidance, volunteers and employees at community gardens should adhere to all guidance and orders by the [PA Department of Health](#).

“Pennsylvania’s community gardens will play a key role in supporting communities throughout COVID-19 mitigation and recovery,” added Redding. “This pandemic has brought with it a real awareness of where our food comes from, the intricacy of the system. Providing a way for the most local food sources to continue is quite literally essential.”

For a complete list of guidance documents and information as it relates to agriculture during COVID-19 mitigation in Pennsylvania visit agriculture.pa.gov/COVID. For the most accurate, timely information related to Health in Pennsylvania, visit on.pa.gov/coronavirus.