

### From City of Calgary Parks Department:

(As of April 21, 2020)

#### Community Gardens and covid-19:

- ✓ Currently, community gardens remain open for use for the 2020 growing season.
- ✓ The City is working on starting water systems at mid to end of May, weather pending.
- ✓ We'll also be supporting existing community gardens with the availability of additional soil and/or soil amendments such as compost.
  - Interested communities should reach out 311 and ask for their Parks Community Strategist.
- ✓ **Each community garden group is responsible to create an action plan for managing:**
  - physical and social distancing,
  - the movement of people in/out of the gardens, and
  - ensuring there is adherence to best practices for the cleaning of tools, surfaces, gates and/or garden boxes to protect public health.
  - Consider the advice of Alberta Health Services when developing your plan!

#### Yard work, gardening and covid-19

When gardening outside, here are a few basic rules for physical distancing to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- ✓ Chat with your neighbours from a distance.
- ✓ Sharing bulbs/cuttings or other plants? Create a "sharing zone" where you can put plants. Leave them there for 24 hours before having your neighbour pick them up.
- ✓ Wash your hands before and after gardening, and touching shared items like garden hoses, tools, compost bins, etc.
- ✓ Have a set of basic tools for each person who gardens to reduce contamination:
  - A hand trowel
  - gloves
  - a pail or bucket and,
  - a secateur or loppers.
- ✓ Disinfect/clean tools before and after use.
  - Clean handles protect us from COVID-19,
  - Clean blades protect plants from diseases.
- ✓ If you share a green space or yard (like a semi-detached house or townhouse), create zones in the garden.
  - Give everyone at least six feet of space between each other, and assign parts of the yard or garden to each person.
  - One person/family can mow the lawn while the other remains inside, one person/family can care for trees while another tends flower beds on separate days, etc.
- ✓ To help with distancing and encourage enjoying outdoors, you can set up new spaces where people can sit and be safely distanced.
- ✓ Stay connected through technology. Many local gardening experts and businesses are holding online training events, garden tours, and much more.

**From Toole Peet Insurance:**  
**(As of April 27, 2020)**

Over the last couple weeks we have been receiving inquiries about insurance in relation to offering community gardens during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our advice around approval of this activity has been based around if the governments approve the activity within your communities.

We have recently learned that the governments do not have a restriction around the community garden activity within Calgary. However, if you offer this activity within your community we recommend to follow the City of Calgary risk management guidelines on how to operate and manage these gardens to ensure the people are safe when planting, working and visiting your gardens. We recommend to reach out to your NPC coordinator to learn more about the risk management guidelines.

Specifically, to insurance: From a casualty perspective, any entity that interacts with the public could face litigation. If someone becomes sick due to a virus and alleges that your organization is negligent in preventing them from becoming ill, the plaintiff would have to prove causation then it would be up to the court to decide. In this case it would be difficult to prove causation, but not impossible. Your Commercial General Liability coverage form does not have a pandemic exclusion, therefore coverage will respond to allegations of negligence related to the pandemic, subject to the terms and conditions of the policy wording. **It is very important and critical for your association to have (including implementation and execution of) an action plan and best practice for physical and social distancing.** It will need to address **who's allowed** (and who's not) – i.e. any warning to caution users not using the facility if they experience any of Covid symptoms or currently in isolation or family members who are in isolation, difficulty breathing, pneumonia in both lungs, controlling traffic (at entrance and within the garden; as well as **sanitation for all the tools, gate door knobs**, etc.), etc. Natural questions that come up are whether there will be an employee or volunteer manning the community garden during operation hours, or is it self-serve 24/7 entry? If not, **what is the association doing to ensure that users are following these best practices** and **how are they going to monitor and execute the plan** if there is no one there or if there is 24/7 access?

If this is the only activity that your community offers, then be cautious that it may become very popular. Popularity is a positive thing in terms of community engagement, but it can be a tough thing to manage in terms of crowd control during an infectious pandemic that causes death. From the media we read, most (not all) deaths related to COVID-19 occur in an older age group. Gardening is for all age groups, but we highly recommend that any person that is older or any person that interacts with an older demographic not partake in the gardening this season.

Happy to answer any questions.

Hope this helpful,

Neil & Michael

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