

1/26/2018

Adopt-A-Plot Annual Meeting  
January 27, 2018 &  
Makeup Meeting on February 11, 2018  
Narrative for the Slide Presentation by Trudy White

## **Slide 1 - Garden Logo**

## **Slide 2 - AGENDA**

- Changes to 2018 Agreement
- Gardener Playbook - NEW
- Metrics
- Looking Ahead

Before purchasing seeds, we want to tell you what is changing at the garden - that is why it was important for all gardeners (new and old) to hear this presentation. The Adopt A Plot agreement has been changed and we are introducing what we have named the Gardener Playbook. We also want to review our past results and then look ahead into 2018.

### **Slide 3 - WHY DO YOU GARDEN?**

- Community, social, new friendships
- Help people in need
- Grow vegetables and fruits
- Learn organic gardening practices
- Outdoor, physical

Hopefully, the list on this slide is why you became a community gardener. If not, let's have a conversation on the side as it is our desire to achieve our mission and maximize our output with these tenets in mind.

### **Slide 4 - NOTABLE CHANGES**

- Maintain a fully planted plot
- Practice year-round gardening
- Agree to photographs
- Non-Compliance process: verbal, written warnings, plot revocation
- Use appropriate communication channels in case of conflict

These are our most notable changes.

We will discuss the first two bullets and the last bullet on later slides.

Photographs of you in the garden are no longer a yes/no option on the Adopt A Plot agreement as we cannot control the use of cameras in such a public space.

Non-compliance with the plot agreement has always been a part of the plot agreement but we explained it further in the Gardener Playbook: verbal conversations, 2 written warnings, plot revocation

## **Slide 5 - Gardener Playbook**

- Fully plant year round
- Primarily 4 planting cycles:  
late winter, spring, summer, and fall
- Warming temperatures have lengthened our growing season
- New planting guide – updated dates for planting
- List of vegetables Metrocrest’s clients request

The Gardener Playbook compliments the Adopt A Plot agreement and guidelines by giving further detail for gardeners to understand the commitment at hand. There is garden specific information at the end of the Playbook as well as an organization chart.

Winter gardening means plant in fall (Sept/October)

We want fully planted productive plots to meet the ever increasing needs of the Metrocrest Services food pantry. That means late winter (February), spring, summer and fall (October). If you have questions about fully planted, look at the square foot gardening methodology and talk to your Garden Manager.

You should have received a new Planting Guide when you registered this morning. This guide has the vegetables/fruits that Metrocrest clients request. Please only grow these vegetables.

## Slide 6 - Gardener Playbook

Winter gardening - your choice

- 1) Plant winter hardy vegetables, **and/or**
  - 2) Plant a suitable cover crop, **and/or**
  - 3) Top dressing of compost, leaves or composted goat straw to protect the soil **or**
  - 4) Clean out your plot and allow someone to foster it over the winter
- Must happen no later than October 15<sup>th</sup>
  - There is no option to leave a plot bare or with dead summer plants over the winter – possibly the plot will not be renewed the following year.

Winter hardy vegetables: spinach, kale, swiss chard, collards, mustard greens, shallots, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage - remember, the need for produce at the food pantry is all year long

Not a Magic date - Oct 15 - plant must harden off, Oct 15 is pushing it, even an early frost could severely damage the plants, need to plant in Sept for some crops

You need a frost cloth to do effective winter gardening - keep it in a 5 gallon bucket w/lid, make sure the cloth is dry when you store it. Keep it in your car during the coldest months and in your home attic when not in use.

Suitable cover crop: mustard, Austrian peas, rye, hairy vetch - we provide a cover crop at no cost to gardeners

**NO BARE PLOTS - this is not an acceptable gardening practice**

Foster your plot - clear the plot of old plants and weeds inside/ outside the plot, do not leave it in poor condition for the Adopter

## **Slide 7 - Gardener Playbook**

### Winter Gardening

- The hard part - remove non-viable plants in the fall (by October 15)
  - Non-viable plants are summer plants (tomatoes, peppers, okra, eggplant, etc.) that will not be as productive as planting a fall crop
  - Consider: 1/4 lb. of peppers versus 2 – 4 lbs. of broccoli
- Late winter planting begins in February for a Spring crop

Minimize flowers in plots - put them in garden borders and end caps, at Old Town garden the area outside the main entrance is planned for this use.

Remove non-viable plants by Oct 15, name them: tomatoes, peppers, okra, eggplant

Non-viable - I have gardeners tell me they can grow fall tomatoes, peppers, eggplant and okra into December. If you do that, I find that the resulting crop is considerably less than a fall crop that could have been harvested. A 1/4 pound of peppers or tomatoes versus 4 pounds of broccoli isn't a good trade-off. I know it is hard to pull plants in October but the result of a fall crop can be much more productive. The farmer also has to make this same decision to pull plants as he maximizes production.

Refer to Planting Guide for February seed plantings

## **Slide 8 - Winter Gardening Reference**

Watch on KERA TV, channel 13 or on the Internet - your garden manager will send you these links in an email

## Slide 9 - Gardener Playbook

### What Not to Plant

- Ornamentals – only in borders and end caps
- No corn, watermelon, pumpkins, Brussels sprouts, or kohlrabi, etc.
- If a gardener chooses to grow other items (i.e. their 20%), the plant's growth cannot take up more than 20% of their plot (i.e. shade out other crops)

Corn and brussel sprouts never do well in our gardens, watermelon takes so long to grow and the rats usually have them for lunch. Pumpkins and kohlrabi are not requested by Metrocrest clients. If ever in doubt, ask your Garden Manager.

We have removed these seeds from the Seed Box. Please do not purchase them for your plot.

Bitter melon is an example of a spreading plant - it must be controlled and not shade out other crops

## Slide 10 - Gardener Playbook

### Saturday Harvest

- If not able to attend, arrange a substitute
- If not present and GL not notified otherwise, mature produce may be harvested, if others are available to do so.
- Do Not Harvest List – revocable if not contributing or produce regularly spoils
- Gardeners need a buddy to harvest and water when needed

There is too much produce that is wasted because it is over mature; ex: yellow cucumber/eggplant, large okra

This org is built around Saturdays, if you can't be here on most Saturdays, then this is not the place to be. And Saturday is not good enough for okra, cucumbers - get a picking team, buddy, neighbor

Produce should be clean when donated. The food pantry has no washing facilities.

Person weighing the harvest should make sure all produce is donate-able.



If you decide to be on the Do NOT Harvest List - we need to know how you are making sure mature produce is harvested and donated. If you fail to donate mature produce, the GM can remove you from the Do NOT Harvest List.

## **Slide 11 - Gardener Playbook**

### How We Grow

- Learn organic gardening practices
- No chemical insecticides, herbicides or pesticides
  - No Round-up, Miracle Gro or raw manure

We are an organic garden. In the past, a gardener was observed bringing in Round-up to solve their weed problems - this is not acceptable and can be grounds for plot revocation. We cannot say we are organic when this is happening and are at risk using this around edible plants.

Another gardener was observed bringing in Miracle Gro. This action could also be grounds for plot revocation. We provide an organic fertilizer and other amendments. Please use these or other organic solutions at your own expense. Using chemicals can be grounds for a plot revocation.

## Slide 12 - Gardener Playbook

### Communication / Grievances

- Use of email allows for consistent messages to all
  - Check and READ your email - PLEASE!
- Grievance - attempt to resolve in person, not by email

Gardener to Gardener

Gardener to Garden Leader

Gardener to Garden Manager

Gardener to Community Garden Rep on Board

Gardener to President of Board

Email is the only way we can communicate with you besides meetings such as this and one-on-one conversations. It is imperative that you check your email weekly and read it. It is very frustrating to those in leadership roles to spend additional time updating or refreshing information for gardeners who fail to read email. Put yourself in their shoes. They are volunteers too; please help us help you!

Grievances should be resolved in person and not by email. Our agreement has always emphasized resolving issues with those involved. This list is the approach to use. Next slide is our org chart for your reference.

## Slide 13 - Organization Chart

This is how our organization is designed. The Board meets 6 - 7 times per year; Bert Tindall is our current President. The Garden Committee meets periodically, at least every other month but here lately it has been monthly or more often as we discussed changes and documented processes.

There are many others that support our efforts and are listed here.

I should mention here that the Garden Managers/Leaders also have a Playbook of their own that details their responsibilities, processes and other information important to their positions. I also have created a Playbook for my position as the Garden Representative on the Board. These are living documents that are updated as needed; the purpose is to provide guidance for current incumbents as well as those who come later. We are all volunteers working for a common purpose and as leaders we must have a more global view of garden matters and look for the greater good in garden practices.

I would also like to say that Garden Managers have big boots to fill. If everyone abided by the Plot Agreement and Playbook, their job would be infinitely easier. The four biggest compliance issues they encounter are weeding, missed work assignments, over mature produce and under-planted plots. Put yourself in their boots; they are volunteers like you and me. We cannot function without them. Tell them thank you the next time you greet them. They are the unsung heroes of our efforts.

## **Slide 14 - Share the Harvest Metrics**

It is our mission to produce vegetables and fruits.

Our metrics are our only source of measuring our progress and success.

This chart starts with 2009 which is the highest year we have ever had. You can see for yourself the variation in the numbers.

Trends are what we look for: 5 year decline at HH.

Most recently, we have been discussing the decline at the Helping Hands garden 2011 - 2016; AND you can see that 2017 was up 40% making a very successful year for Helping Hands gardeners as it also was for those at the Old Town garden which began planting in February 2017.

So, the clients at Metrocrest benefited from our meaningful work in a big way. And, we can do more in 2018.

## **Slide 15 - Metrocrest Services**

- We are their produce department

- 1,200 sq. ft. pantry
- 250 families currently being served
- Tours offered twice a month - Thursday and Saturday
- Next tours are: February 3 and 15

This pantry is like a very small grocery store with shelving and aisles as well as cold storage which is new in the last few years.

If you have ever thought that there is not a big need for food, you should consider taking a tour of their facilities and volunteering at Metrocrest. I have seen for my own eyes some of the clients with children who are obviously in need. I see them in the parking lot as children, who are tattered and worn from their circumstance, wait for their parent to return with food. Many may live paycheck to paycheck. We live in an affluent community but there are 250 families that are currently depending on Metrocrest as they navigate a more desperate part of their journey in life. I know I would appreciate the help if our roles were reversed.

## Slide 16 - Looking Ahead

- Goal Setting
- Garden goals
- Personal goals, track it, journaling, learn more
- Greenhouse update

In business and in personal, I always had goals to achieve. It keeps us on track and moving forward. To that end, it is important for the gardens to have goals each year. It can include metrics as well as other topics such as maintenance needs, projects, etc. Each of the Garden Managers will be suggesting a harvest metric goal for 2018; your efforts will be crucial to its success. We know you will be invested in helping meet this goal.

In so far as personal goals, mine was always at least 100 lbs a year. Last year I had over 300 lbs of tomatoes (4' X 27' plot) in addition to the onions harvested earlier.

I also suggest tracking in a journal or phone notes. Keep track of when/what you plant, pounds harvested, issues encountered, etc. This helps with tracking your success as well as crop rotation and best varieties to grow.

Now Chris will give us an update on the greenhouse project.

### **Slide 17 - Volunteer Database**

- Why record volunteer hours?
- Used when applying for grants and when purchasing insurance
- How to track your volunteer hours?
- Demonstration by Marissa Olivas, City of Coppell

**Slide 18 - Questions? - on this part of the presentation?**

**THE GARDENS ARE 20 YEARS OLD IN 2018 !!!!**

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Instagram/coppell\_community\_garden

**Slide 19 - Thank You For Coming!**

**The name tags you are wearing indicated which garden you are from. Try to meet a gardener from another garden or someone you don't know in your current garden.**