

North Bay Heritage Gardeners

COVID-19 Guidance for Volunteers

The North Bay Heritage Gardeners (NBHG) are dedicated to developing a year-round, community-based, educational, horticultural, and environmental program whose focus is to enhance and beautify the North Bay Waterfront and other approved locations. At NBHG, we understand and appreciate the dedicated and eager volunteers who are the foundation of our success.

The health and safety of our volunteers and staff is our first priority, and we are doing our part to stop the spread of COVID-19. As the pandemic evolves, precautions must be taken once the Government of Ontario restrictions are lifted.

A reminder that public property recreational gardening is not permitted as this time. Please wait for confirmation from the executive committee before gardening. NBHG may re-open once approval has been received from: the Ontario government, the City of North Bay, Heritage North Bay board of directors and the NBHG executives.

This document includes guidance and recommendations from the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, as it applies to NBHG. This document does not amend or replace any medical and legal advice. Gardeners will be allowed access to the gardens should they follow these guidelines. If you have questions about any of the information in this document or you are not comfortable with the guidelines, please contact the executive director and do not start gardening until your question is resolved.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding during this unprecedented time.

Access Procedures and Protocol

1. A completed 2020 registration form must be completed and submitted before gardening. Only NBHG volunteers and staff are permitted to enter a garden. Volunteers may only garden in their designated garden bed during their regular gardening day and time unless notification is provided in advance.
2. Please complete the online [self-assessment](#) prior to entering the garden. You may not be permitted to enter the garden if:



- a. You have symptoms of COVID-19. Symptoms vary, but may include fever, new cough, difficulty breathing, chills, fatigue, headache, sore throat, runny nose, digestive issues, difficulty swallowing, hoarse voice, or loss of sense of taste or smell. **Anyone who is feeling unwell with these symptoms should stay home and call the Health Unit at 1-800-563-2808 to be assessed.**
 - b. You are a close contact (for example, someone in your household or workplace) with someone who has or may have COVID-19, someone who is sick, and/or someone who recently travelled outside of Canada (including any contact you may have had with the person up to 48 hours before the person became sick).
3. Access to gardens is allowed for planting and maintenance only. Keep trips to the garden at a minimum. Other social events, programming, training, workshops etc., are not permitted (pending government approval).
 4. A maximum of five people allowed in a garden bed at any time.
 5. Children should only be brought to the garden on an as-needed basis and should be instructed to practice social distancing and hand hygiene recommendations.
 6. Pets are not allowed in the garden unless they are service animals.
 7. Only team leaders and staff are permitted inside the shed. Touched surfaces, such as equipment and handles, must be wiped down using the disinfecting wipes provided. Shed access is limited to one person at a time.
 8. If you are uncomfortable gardening this year, you have the option to opt out of work your plot this year. Your health is our primary concern. Please advise your team leader and the executive director so that the work for this season can be re-assigned.
 9. Volunteers are encouraged to stick to their regular gardening day and time. The team leader should report any change in regular gardening day and time to the executive director.



Physical Distancing

1. At least 2 metres must be maintained between people, except members of the same household.
2. Maintain a limit of five people in the garden at one time to ensure physical distancing can be maintained.
3. 20 physical distancing signs will be available in the shed for team leaders to place in their gardens. Signs (may) need to be removed at the end of each garden session and returned to the shed.
4. Refrain from congregating.
5. People who are sick or have signed of the illness must self-isolate, notify their team leader and the executive director and call a doctor or healthcare provider. Stay home if you are sick.

Hand Hygiene

1. Those entering the garden are asked to wash their hands well with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use at least 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer, when entering and leaving the garden. Please do so again before and after handling shared garden tools or equipment. If hands are visibly dirty, but soap and water is not available, hands should be wiped clean before applying hand sanitizer.
2. The public handwashing stations and bathrooms are currently closed at the Waterfront. Hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes are available in the shed for the team leaders to access. Since handwashing stations are not available, if hands are visibly soiled, hands should be wiped clean before applying alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
3. Cough and sneeze into your elbow or a disposable tissue (discard immediately in a garbage can) then wash or sanitize your hands.
4. Do not share gardening gloves.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is to practice physical distancing (2 metres). Wearing personal protective equipment is a last resort and is only effective if appropriate for the situation and worn properly.

Gloves: gloves can help limit contact with equipment and surfaces. Personal gardening gloves should not be shared and should be washed at home after each use. While cleaning surfaces, wearing disposable gloves will also be required. Gloves are not a substitute for handwashing, and touching one's face should still be avoided, even if wearing gloves.

Face masks: Wearing a facial covering (cloth non-medical mask) is recommended where physical distancing may not be possible. A face covering is not proven to protect the person wearing it but may protect the people around you. It can act as a barrier that stops tiny droplets from spreading. A facial covering does not replace physical distancing or hand washing. If you wear a facial covering, you should still wash your hands often with soap and water or use hand sanitizer. Do not touch your face while wearing a facial covering. It can become a source of infection if not properly worn, laundered or discarded. Do not reuse single-use facial coverings and discard properly after taking off. Reusable facial coverings should be washed before reusing.

Other PPE: Safety equipment normally worn for personal protection while gardening should be cleaned after each use and should never be shared. Hard hats, goggles and face shields are only required (as appropriate) for the task being completed.

Masks and gloves are available in the shed for anyone wanting to use them. Volunteers are encouraged to wear a mask in situations where social distancing cannot be maintained. Best practice would be to put on disposable gloves then reach for a mask.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

1. Please ensure garden tools and equipment are cleaned and disinfected upon opening and closing the garden (using wipes provided by team leaders). You are encouraged to bring your own gardening tools from home to avoid sharing.



Contact Information

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The NBHG office is currently closed until further notice. Inquires can be directed to the executive director.

Office address: Unit 112, 245 Oak St. E., North Bay, ON P1B 8P8

Mailing address: 100 Ferguson St., North Bay, ON P1B 1W8

Telephone: (705) 472-4006

Website: www.northbayheritagegardeners.com

Additional Resources (hyperlinked)

- Sustain Ontario: [COVID-19 Proposed Regulations for Community Gardens](#)
- [Government of Ontario news release about community gardens](#)
- [Online self assessment](#)
- [How to self isolate](#)
- [Physical distancing](#)
- [How to wash your hands](#)
- [Cleaning and disinfection for public settings](#)
- [Ontario's 2019 novel coronavirus webpage](#)
- [Ontario emergency information](#)
- [North Bay Parry Sounds District Health Unit: Community Gardens](#)
- [Workplace Safety & Prevention Services Guidance on Health and Safety for Lawn Care Workers](#)

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