

# Garden Steward Notebook [Template]

**Note:** In many communally managed gardens, the group sets up a rotation of people to do routine maintenance and harvesting (called “garden stewards” here). These groups may use a notebook with instructions, forms to keep records (such as tasks completed, pests found, or produce harvested), and resources to assist garden stewards (such as guides to good and bad insects). This document contains suggested instructions and forms, which can be adapted for each garden. It may be accompanied by the “Resources for Routine Maintenance” packet for reference.

## Contents:

- 1 Garden Steward Instructions:** General Instructions for day-to-day garden visits
- 2 Garden Contacts:** Information for stewards on who to call if they have a question
- 3 Crops, Planting Dates, & Harvest Dates:** A form to record what was planted and when, estimated harvest dates, actual harvest dates, and any other notes about crop performance
- 4 Monthly Instructions:** A form that garden leaders can fill out with season-specific tasks & tips on crop maintenance, harvesting, and pests/diseases/weeds to watch for
- 5 Map of Beds & Plantings:** A form where the group can draw a map of the beds and note what is planted in each (for reference by stewards)
- 7 Harvest Log:** A form to record the type and amount of produce harvested
- 6 Garden Journal:** A form where Stewards can record crop maintenance, what they harvested, any pest/disease/weed problems, control measures taken, and other notes



*Thanks to Janet Scharling of the Shallowford Presbyterian Church garden for sharing their garden maintenance instructions; the “Garden Steward Instructions” in this template are adapted from their garden notebook.*

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# Garden Steward Instructions

Your Week(s): \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for serving as a Garden Steward!*

## General Guidelines:

- **Please check on the garden and harvest 2 – 3 times during your week.**
- **Please review the Monthly Instructions** in the **Garden Steward Notebook** for season-specific tasks and tips, in addition to the general instructions below.
- You may **contact a Garden Leader if you have questions or to report a problem** (e.g., when to harvest, pests, etc.). A contact list of garden leaders follows these Instructions.

## Tasks for Garden Stewards:

### • **Check soil moisture and water if needed:**

- **Dig down to check soil moisture:**
  - For **seeds and seedlings** (up to 5" tall), maintain soil moisture **3-4" down**.
  - For **plants** over 5" tall, maintain soil moisture **6-8" down**.
- **If water is needed, water the soil evenly at the base of your plants** using a watering can or wand with a shower-head to disperse the water, or a drip irrigation system. **Do not spray the leaves**, as this promotes disease.
- **If it has not rained, apply about 1/2" of water 2-3 times per week.** This is 0.31 gallons/ft<sup>2</sup> -- 10 gallons for an 8' x 4' (32 ft<sup>2</sup>) bed, or 15 gallons for a 12' x 4' (48 ft<sup>2</sup>) bed.

### How much to water?

- Vegetable crops need ~1" of water per week (or up to 2" in very hot weather) from rainfall and irrigation.
- Apply this in 2-3 waterings per week, each about 1/2" of water. It is better to water deeply and less frequently.
- 1/2" water = 0.31 gallons/ft<sup>2</sup>, so you need:
  - ✓ 10 gallons for an 8' x 4' (32 ft<sup>2</sup>) bed
  - ✓ 15 gallons for a 12' x 4' (48 ft<sup>2</sup>) bed.

### • **Plant Care:**

- **Please check the Monthly Instructions** for general maintenance such as mulching, thinning (closely seeded crops), trellising (viny crops), and hilling (root crops).
- **Tomatoes should be pruned regularly.** See '**Pruning Tomatoes**' in this notebook.
- **Replace mulch (cover crop shoots or straw) around crops** if it has been displaced.

- **Check for insect pests & diseases:**

- **Please examine the crops – including leaf undersides! -- for insect pests or diseases.** See **'Insect Pests'** (in this notebook) for photos of common pests and suggested management. It is especially important to scout leaf undersides of summer squash leaves in June and July for squash bug egg clusters, and remove these before they hatch.
- Please report severe insect pest problems or signs of disease to garden leaders.

- **Weeding:**

- See **'Common Weeds'** (in this notebook) for photos of common weeds. If you see these in or around the garden beds, please try to pull them out by the roots.
- Weeds that have not gone to seed can be composted.
- Weeds with seeds should be placed in the garbage.

- **Harvesting:**

- See the **'Harvesting Vegetables' guide** (in this notebook) for tips on when and how to harvest different vegetables. *This publication is provided courtesy of the Clemson Cooperative Extension Service's Home & Garden Information Center (clemson.edu/hgic).*
- **Harvest 2-3 times per week** during the peak summer growing season.
- **Wash your hands** before harvesting.
- There is a **harvesting kit** with plastic bins, a knife, scissors, paper towels, a scale, and a harvest log. As you collect produce:
  - **Gently wipe dirt and dead blossoms off** the produce.
  - **Place produce of different weights in separate bins** to prevent bruising.

- **Weighing, Recording the Harvest, & Storing Produce:**

- **Take the produce, scale, and harvest log back to the kitchen to wipe off, weigh, and store the produce.**
- Wipe off the produce more if needed, but do not wash it (produce stores best when cleaned, but not washed until preparation).
- **Record the weight of each crop** in pounds and ounces on the Harvest Logs.
- **Store the vegetables:**
  - Place **tomatoes** in a basket on the counter; these **should not be refrigerated**.
  - For other crops, place a clean paper towel in the bottom of a bin or plastic bag needed for storage, and store in the lower part of the refrigerator.

# Garden Contacts

## Garden Leaders

These folks are familiar with the crops we have planted and gardening practices. Please contact them if you have a question or to report a problem (for example, a severe pest or disease problem).

Name	Email	Phone

## Produce Delivery Coordinators

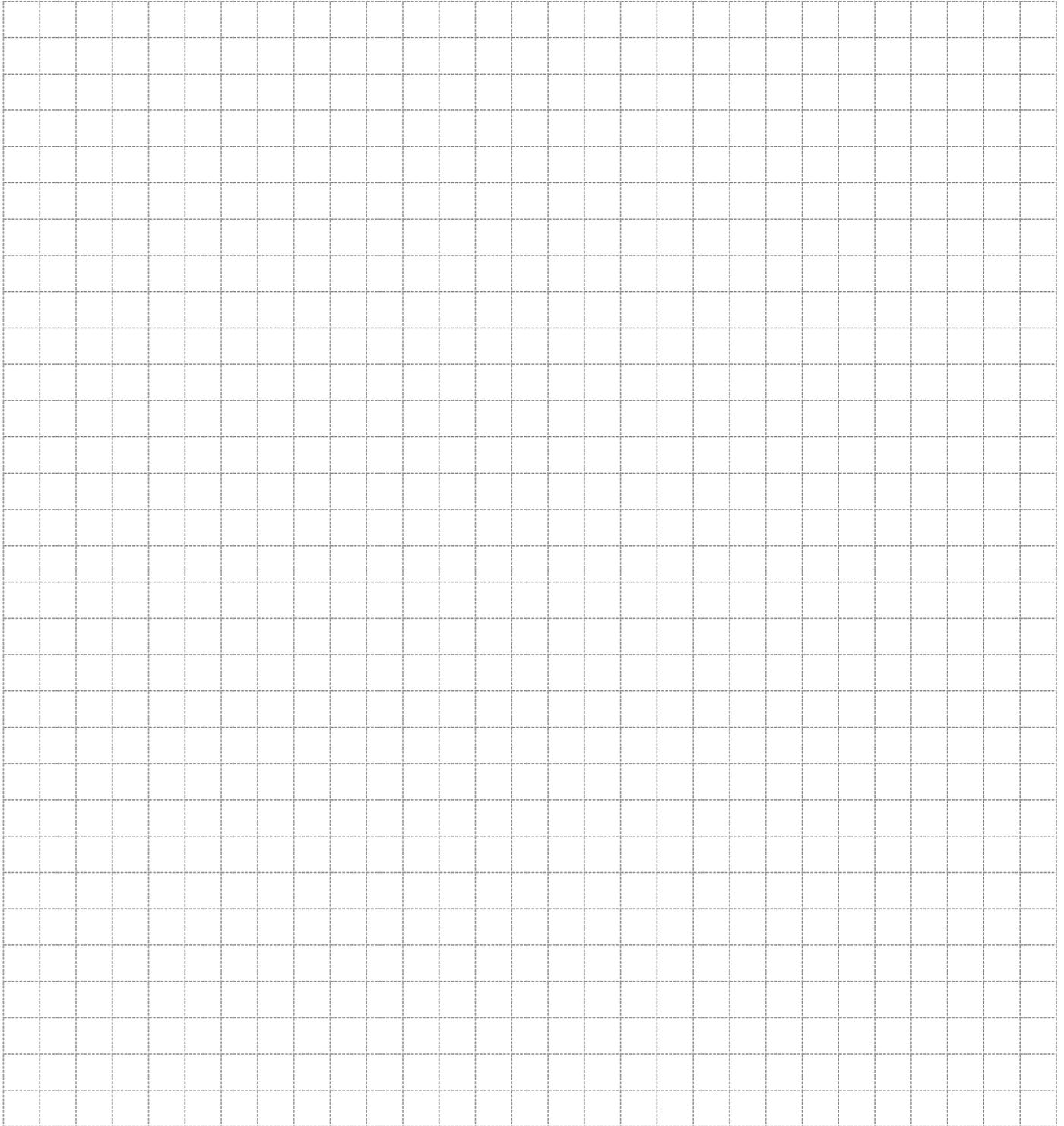
These folks are in charge of sharing our harvest. Please keep them up-to-date on produce you have harvested.

Name	Email	Phone



# Map of Beds & Plantings (Page \_\_ of \_\_)

Scale: 1 square = \_\_\_\_\_ ft



# Monthly Instructions for Garden Stewards

Month/Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Please review the Garden Stewards Instructions in the front of the notebook for tasks to perform each time you come to maintain and harvest. These Monthly Instructions provide season-specific details on crop maintenance, harvesting, pests and diseases to watch for, etc.

**General Crop Maintenance** (e.g., mulching, thinning closely-seed crops such as carrots, trellising for viny crops, pruning tomatoes, hilling root crops, etc.):

**Crops to Harvest:**

**Insect Pests, Diseases, & Weeds to watch for & recommended management:**

**Soil Amendments or Fertilizers to Add** (most soil prep will be done at monthly workdays):

**Other Tasks/Notes for Garden Stewards:**



## Garden Journal (Page \_ of \_)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Weather ( <i>temperature &amp; rainfall</i> ):	
Gardening Tasks completed:	
Crops Harvested:	
Insect pests, diseases, & weeds:	
Action(s) Taken:	
Other Observations or Notes:	

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Weather ( <i>temperature &amp; rainfall</i> ):	
Gardening Tasks completed:	
Crops Harvested:	
Insect pests, diseases, & weeds:	
Action(s) Taken:	
Other Observations or Notes:	