



## **Clarkesville Greenway Organic Community Garden Description and Guidelines**

Welcome to Habersham County's first public organic community garden! This project is a collaborative of the Soque River Watershed Association (SRWA), the Clarkesville Greenways Inc., and the City of Clarkesville. The SRWA is the principal organizer of this project and if you still have questions after reading this pamphlet please contact us at 706-754-9382 or [soque@windstream.net](mailto:soque@windstream.net).

### **What are the goals and purpose of this community garden ?**

Community gardens are simply places where local residents gather to share tools, information and land for the purpose of enjoying gardening, the outdoors, and learning about sustainable production methods. Though this project was initiated due to the SRWA's strong interest in promoting organic and sustainable production practices, each individual may have their own goals and purposes as long as they don't conflict with some very simple rules outlined below. We hope that participants look forward to producing a bounty of fresh foods, herbs, and flowers for personal use, or for sale! We also think you'll enjoy learning new gardening techniques, meeting like minded individuals, and getting outside for exercise and rejuvenation.

### **Where is the community garden and how is it organized ?**

The garden site occupies about one quarter acre of land that sits in the middle of Phase I of the Clarkesville Greenway trail (a 19 acre natural park). The garden can be found by walking or driving to Old Clarkesville Mill located on Old Hwy 441 and walking the greenway trail to the loop. The garden is enclosed with a solar powered electric fence to repel deer so use caution (if touched it'll give you a shock!).

The Clarkesville Greenway, including the garden site is owned by the City of Clarkesville and management of the Greenway involves many community partners including the Clarkesville Greenways Inc. non-profit, and the SRWA. The garden was initiated as a project of the SRWA to teach people about sustainability, water conservation, soil building, and the importance of land based economies. As the garden has become popular we encourage participating gardeners to take on leadership and organization of this project, even suggesting new ideas and making them happen. The SRWA and our board would love to support the Gardeners and now consider you your own group for us to partner with on projects. Much of the materials for the garden, like lawn mowers, tools, hoses, pumps, etc. were donated from businesses and individuals to the SRWA.

### **Who can become a Garden member ?**

Participation in the garden is open to both individuals and groups. Churches, school groups and other organizations are highly encouraged to sign up for a shared plot. Though unlikely to be a problem we do ask that participants be residents of Habersham County, with exceptions allowed if there are an abundance of unused plots. Reserving a plot is simple. Just fill out the application form attached to this fact sheet mail it along with your dues (described below) to SRWA – PO Box 1901, Clarkesville, GA 30523. We'll mail (or preferably e-mail) you your plot assignment and other information to prepare you for the garden grand opening for planting April 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Are there dues and how will these be used?**

Fortunately the garden has received some startup financial support (from the Home Depot Foundation) for some basic tools and equipment. However, to cover some of the basic costs of the garden we have set some very reasonable membership dues. These funds (expected to be under \$500) will be used towards the purchase of a riding lawn mower, fuel, irrigation equipment, organic soil amendments, cover crop seed, and supplies to construct a tool shed.

The garden dues structure is as follows:

#### ***Individuals, Couples or Families***

10x20 plot - \$20

10x10 plot - \$15

#### ***Groups (4 or more)***

10x20 plot - \$25

10x10 plot - \$20

(\*actual size of plots with 1' foot paths on each side is 8x18 and 8x8. Foot paths are required unless you and your neighboring plot mates submit special permission.)

These dues will be collected at the time of initial reservation and reserves the plot for the spring / summer growing season which begins on April 1<sup>st</sup> and ends on August 31<sup>st</sup>. If plots are desired through the fall growing season, the reservation can be extended through November 30<sup>th</sup> for an additional \$5 for both 10x20 and 10x10 plots.

### **What kind of resources will the garden provide ?**

One of the principal goals of a community garden is to obtain and share resources that can often be costly or difficult to acquire individually. Below is a brief list of some of the resources that we plan to share as garden participants:

- A gravity fed irrigation system (this is described further under special features below).
- An array of gardening tools to include – shovels, hoes, rakes, wheelbarrows, trowels, pruning equipment, hoses, spray nozzles, etc.
- Some soil fertility amendments (such as compost) and organically approved pest and disease treatments (where affordable)
- Mulch (where affordable)
- A few organic gardening books.
- At least two mini workshops on the principals of organic gardening and farming, and a resource list for additional information.
- Protection from deer and other foragers using an electric fence.

- The garden will be tilled using a tractor at the beginning and end of the season and lime applied as necessary.

### **What are some of the special features and plans for this garden ?**

One of the principal goals of the garden is to model sustainable land use practices that reduce external inputs (fuel, water, nutrients, etc.) and improve natural ecosystems (by improving soil health and structure, fixing carbon, reducing water loss). Here are a few of the plans to demonstrate sustainable land use practices on the garden.

- **Irrigation water will be provided by a captured rainwater system powered by gravity feed.** All irrigation for the garden will be provided by a 200,000 gallon concrete pond located behind Old Clarkesville Mill that was formerly used as a primary treatment pond when the Mill was still in operation. The surface area of the pond is great enough that most water needs are met by the accumulation of rainfall in the pond each year. In dry years, the pond can also be filled using a small pump on Rocky Branch in case of drought. This reduces the demand on treated drinking water from the City of Clarkesville. Since the elevation of the pond is only 10-15 feet above the garden, pressure for the irrigation water can sometimes be low (clogs in the system, etc). But be patient, and feel free to volunteer to be involved in watching our water system, it's one of the coolest features of our garden and is totally sustainable.
- **Use of locally available compost for fertility.** To the extent possible we want to use locally available sources for all fertility and nutrient needs. This will involve a combination of purchasing compost from local suppliers and creating our own compost which is an important process in sustainable soil management.

### **Will the garden follow any certain rules ?**

Some basic rules will help insure that garden participants don't accidentally create problems that can affect other gardeners.

- **Organic Practices.** Perhaps the most exciting challenge of this garden is learning to garden following organic practices. While organic practices seem fairly straightforward we'll do our best to compile another short publication that outlines the specifics. Here's a super abbreviated summary: organic gardening does not allow the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, encourages the use of compost, cover crops and other carbon based soil amendments, and only allows organic seeds and organic seedlings to be planted. Rules for bringing plants (and soil) from off-site will be an especially important issue we'll discuss so that we can avoid problems like tomato blight and other diseases easily spread throughout a garden.
- **One Volunteer Workday** - All garden participants are required to participate in at least one garden volunteer work day for at least one hour of work. These projects will insure that the garden looks nice and neat for the enjoyment of all. Such projects may include routine maintenance such as weeding, installation of irrigation systems, building fences, signs, and construction of a tool shed, etc. Volunteer time can be done independently or as a group project provided it addresses an area of need for the garden as a whole.

- **Keep your Plot looking good** - Routine maintenance of each individual plot is a requirement to participate in the community garden because weeds (and your crops themselves) have a way of spreading to other plots. If you've got a diseased plant, it may be best to remove it so it doesn't spread. Simple maintenance will improve the garden experience for all of us. Plots that are left unkempt for more than two weeks and receive complaints from other gardeners will receive a warning. If the problem isn't resolved within a week or two you can lose your plot. If you have to be out of town or fall ill, just e-mail some of the other gardeners and we likely can lend a hand.
- **Only pick what you grow** - This seems almost so simple it's not worth mentioning, but temptation has been with us since Eden. Right?
- **If there's any risk at all, leave dogs at home** – Dogs are so awesome, but they can tear a bed up in 5 seconds and not have a clue. If your dog isn't perfect, better leave 'em at home. If we have any problems with this, we'll have to ban pets from the garden altogether. For those with awesome dogs, that would be a bummer.
- **Waiver of Liability** – The last rule is to hold harmless the City of Clarkesville, Clarkesville Greenways, the Soque River Watershed Association and garden managers for any damage, loss or claim in association with the garden. We'll have you sign this waiver prior to your start date.

**When will the garden open, how do I reserve a plot, and how much space is available?**

The garden is scheduled for first planting on April 1<sup>st</sup>. However early planting is allowed starting March 15<sup>th</sup> for spring crops. To reserve a plot just fill out the attached application and mail, or e-mail it to the Soque River Watershed Association at PO Box 1901, Clarkesville, GA 30523 or [soque@windstream.net](mailto:soque@windstream.net). Reservations will be given on a first come first serve basis. There are currently approximately 24 plots measuring 10x20. One section of the garden will be reserved for demonstrations.

GET READY  
to  
DIG INTO SUSTAINABILITY

# Clarkesville Greenways Organic Community Garden Application Form

Name (or names if part of group):

Address:

Phone:

E:mail:

Size of plot (circle one of the plot choices – only one plot per gardener)

**10x20**      **10x10**

Site preference. *Sites will be given out in the order they are received. However, you can request a plot adjacent to a friend and we will try and accommodate you.:*

Seasons preferred (you may circle both):

**Spring and Summer**  
**April 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>**

**Fall**  
**September 1<sup>st</sup> to December 15<sup>th</sup>**

Dues Amount enclosed (circle one) – *if you circled a fall plot above add \$5:*

Individuals, couples or families

**10x20 - \$20**

**10x10 - \$15**

Groups (4 or more)

**10x20 - \$25**

**10x10 - \$20**

Reason for wanting to join the Garden:

Any special requests or suggestions:

*Mail form and checks made out to SRWA – PO Box 1901 – Clarkesville, GA 30523*

## The "Green Way" Community Garden

### Garden Rules, Terms, and Conditions for Participation

I agree to and will abide by the following rules, terms, and conditions:

- 1) To pay a plot fee between \$15 - \$30 each year depending on plot size, season and number of people to garden to help cover garden expenses.
- 2) To follow organic and sustainable gardening practices. This excludes the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides and the use of seeds, starts or mulch that have not been organically produced.
- 3) To cultivate, plant, and weed my plot.
- 4) If I must abandon my plot for any reason, I will notify the garden leadership as soon as possible.
- 5) To keep all my plants within the limits of my garden plot.
- 6) To keep my plot, paths, and surrounding areas clean, neat, and free of weeds and trash. I recognize that items such as string, stone and wood can tear up our lawn mower if left in or near my plot.
- 7) If my plot becomes unkempt, I understand I will be given 2 week's notice to clean it up. If I'm unable to keep it clean it may be re-assigned or tilled in.
- 8) If I bring pets to the garden I will insure they do no damage to anyone's plot. Failure to follow this rule may result in pets not allowed in the garden.
- 9) Guests, including children, may enter the garden only if I accompany them. I will supervise my children at all times. I am responsible for the behavior of my guests.
- 10) To not share the combination to the toolshed with another person who is not a paid participant in the community garden.
- 11) To pick only my own crops unless given permission by another plot user. I will not take anything from the garden that is not rightfully mine.
- 12) To participate in at least one garden workday party per season or voluntarily perform work on a community project for the garden.
- 13) To respect other gardeners by leaving the toolshed, hoses, and other shared resources in an orderly manner.
- 14) Waiver of Liability - I agree to hold harmless the City of Clarkesville, the Soque River Watershed Association, and any garden managers for any damage, loss or claim in association with the garden.

*If by not following the any rules, terms, and conditions above causes disruptions and concerns for the garden, you may receive a written notice of those concerns. If no response or correction has been made within 2 weeks you may forfeit your plot and all associated privileges. Such decision will be made by the officers of the community garden.*

**I have read, understand and accept these rules, terms, and conditions stated above for the participation in the Clarkesville "Green Way" Garden.**

Gardener Name (print) :

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_