



# South Branch Community Garden 2025 Membership Application

## Preface

The South Branch Community Garden is part of the South Branch Preserve in Mount Olive, NJ. It is owned and managed by the nonprofit land trust, The Land Conservancy of New Jersey. The South Branch Community Garden is an all-volunteer, working community garden. As such, it requires members to assist in the daily, weekly and seasonal care of the garden.

The South Branch Community Garden experience involves individually maintained garden plots and cooperative efforts in caring for the entire garden site. Because a community garden is a shared space, gardeners need to be considerate of their gardening neighbors. The following rules and regulations have been designed to facilitate garden safety, a community garden environment that is gratifying to work in, and a natural space pleasant for gardeners, neighbors and the public to look upon.

The importance of communication is essential in the community garden. Your Garden Manager and volunteer Garden Committee will be available to help answer questions and resolve issues. Be sure to communicate any "time off" you need to take from the garden, such as vacation or other extended absences, to the Garden Manager, Garden Committee, and your garden plot neighbors to ensure watering, weeding, and harvesting of crops can continue in your absence.

Chatting with neighbors, sharing growing techniques and recipes, and participating in garden events are encouraged activities to help create a welcoming space for all. As you begin to harvest your crops, consider sharing with your neighbors, friends, and family.

The South Branch Community Garden Manager and Garden Committee monitor plot usage. When plots need obvious attention for more than 2 weeks due to inactivity (including lack of weeding, pruning or other general maintenance), gardeners will be contacted by email, text, and/or phone and asked to take care of the plot within a reasonable amount of time. If the Garden Manager or Garden Committee contacts you 3 times in a row per season and your plot has not been tended to, your plot will be forfeited and reclaimed by The Land Conservancy of New Jersey without refund. Every year there is a waiting list of eager gardeners who hope to secure a plot at our garden. If you are unable to maintain a plot, please let the Garden Manager and Garden Committee know and allow someone else the opportunity to do so.

Before sending in your application, please understand that a substantial time commitment is needed to develop and maintain your own plot. On average, one well-maintained plot requires its gardener to put in 2-3 hours of work on it (and the surrounding walkways) per week. Please consider this time investment before applying for membership.

## 2025 Rules and Regulations

*Members must agree to comply with ALL federal, state, and local laws and regulations.*

*Members must agree to comply with ALL South Branch Community Garden 2025 Rules and Regulations.*

Gardeners will maintain their garden plot between April 1 and November 30. If by May 15 there is no sign of activity, your plot will be forfeited to the next person on the waiting list.

1. Gardeners must share their preferred method of contact (such as email, text, or phone call) and agree to monitor communications from the Garden Manager and Garden Committee. News pertaining to the Community Garden is shared regularly, so it's important that you're able to receive updates.
2. Participation in at least one volunteer date is mandatory to renew your plot(s) the following season. Garden clean-ups will be held in April and October with other volunteer opportunities taking place throughout the gardening season. The ethos of a community garden is to create a community space. There is no paid staff maintaining the common areas at the garden, therefore it is the shared responsibility of all members to create and maintain a welcoming space both inside and outside of the individual plots.
3. Each gardener is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of their plot(s), which includes the pathways surrounding each plot(s). Maintenance includes regular weeding, watering, harvesting, and other garden-related work.
  - a. Each plot and the area immediately surrounding it, including pathways between plots, must be kept free of weeds, invasive plants, rotting vegetation, garden hardware, and all other debris. Pathways must be kept passable. Well-maintained plots and pathways also help control pests.
  - b. No plants considered contraband under state or federal law are allowed to be planted.
  - c. Use of non-organic pesticides or fertilizers is not allowed. If you have a question about what is/is not allowed, please ask the Garden Manager or Garden Committee.
  - d. Gardeners should add soil to their plots and wood chips to the pathways around their plots as needed. Soil is available from the compost area or you may bring your own. Wood chips are regularly delivered for gardeners' use.
  - e. Organic garden waste materials not used within the plot may be placed in the designated compost area. Please do not add waste from home to this area.
  - f. All trash and debris must be removed from the garden by the gardener.
  - g. The use of grass clippings is not allowed within the Community Garden.
  - h. Crops, plants, vines, and vegetation must be contained within the boundaries of each plot to prevent growth onto adjacent pathways or into another member's plot.
  - i. Tall crops are to be planted where they will not shade or fall into neighboring plots. No trees are allowed.
  - j. No permanent garden structures are allowed. Any items used within your plot must be easily removable. If you have a question about what is/is not allowed, please ask the Garden Manager or Garden Committee.

- k. If you are not renewing your plot for the 2026 season, you must remove everything from your plot at the end of the 2025 season.
    - l. For vacations or extended time away, please contact the Garden Manager or a Garden Committee Member to weed, water, and/or harvest your plot as needed.
4. The garden gate must remain closed at all times and locked upon leaving the garden. This is for the safety of our community and to keep out critters.
5. A few wheelbarrows and tools are available in the garden shed for gardeners to share. No personal garden tools may be stored in or behind the garden shed. Please rinse off the community tools before returning them to the garden shed to prevent the spread of weeds and garden disease. Any personal items stored in or behind the garden shed are subject to removal.
6. The Community Garden's water is non-potable and is only to be used on the plots. Water spigots must be securely turned off after every use, with hoses wrapped and secured.
  - a. Use only as much water as you need. Do not leave running water unattended. Notify the Garden Manager or a Garden Committee Member if a leak is noticed.
7. Gardeners may only harvest vegetables and flowers from their own plot unless given permission to harvest from another plot by that plot's owner.
  - a. To reduce waste and help control pests, the Garden Manager and the Garden Committee will reach out to gardeners whose crops are ready to harvest but have noticeably not been picked. If there is no response from the gardener within 48 hours of contact, Garden Committee volunteers will harvest the crops to be donated to the Mt. Olive Food Pantry. If you know you will be unable to harvest crops from your plot for any reason, please reach out to the Garden Manager or Garden Committee for assistance.
8. All guests brought into the Community Garden are the responsibility of the gardener.
9. No alcohol, chewing tobacco, or smoking of any kind is allowed on the premises.
10. No firearms are allowed on the premises.
11. No pets are allowed in the Community Garden.
12. No vehicles are permitted on any paths within South Branch Preserve. Cars must be parked in the designated parking lot. If you need assistance bringing materials from the parking lot to the garden, please contact the Garden Manager, a member of the Garden Committee, or a member of The Land Conservancy Stewardship staff (who are typically onsite Mondays through Thursdays in the summer months) to coordinate help.
13. Vandalism and other damage within the garden should be reported to the Mount Olive Police Department (973) 691-0850 or The Land Conservancy of New Jersey (973) 541-1010.
14. If a gardener must abandon a plot for any reason, notify the Garden Manager promptly.
15. Returning gardeners must notify the Land Conservancy by November 30 and pay by December 31 if you wish to renew your plot.
16. The Land Conservancy of New Jersey reserves the right to render a final decision concerning any dispute related to the Community Garden, Rules and Regulations, and volunteer activities.



## Community Garden at South Branch Preserve 2025 Membership Agreement

Thank you for your interest in becoming a member of the Community Garden at South Branch Preserve! We look forward to gardening with you next season. You can mail or email the completed and signed membership agreement, along with payment, to The Land Conservancy of New Jersey, Attn: Garden Manager, 19 Boonton Avenue, Boonton, NJ 07005.

Payment is due with this application and is nonrefundable. Checks should be made payable to: The Land Conservancy of New Jersey. If you have any questions, please contact Amber Ray at (973) 957-7195 or [aray@tlc-nj.org](mailto:aray@tlc-nj.org).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Contact Method: Phone Call Text Message E-mail

Payment Options:

Pay online at <https://tlconj.givecloud.co/fundraising/forms/5WEY6LD2>

Enclosed please find my check made payable to **The Land Conservancy of New Jersey**

Please charge \$\_\_\_\_\_ to my credit card:  Visa  Master Card  Amex

Credit Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Verification number: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a current member of The Land Conservancy of New Jersey? Yes No

*By signing this Membership Agreement and being accepted as a Member of the Community Garden at South Branch Preserve, I (the "Gardener") agree to abide by all the rules, policies, and practices set forth herein and those posted at the Community Garden at South Branch Preserve. I understand and agree that these rules, policies, and practices may be subject to change at any time at the sole discretion of The Land Conservancy of New Jersey. I further understand that failure to abide by these rules, policies, and practices may be grounds for forfeiture of my garden plot(s).*

Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2025 Garden Plots

145 plots are available at the Community Garden at South Branch Preserve. Plots are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Each plot is 10' x 10'. Fees noted below are for single plots and include an annual membership fee and a one-time irrigation fee for each new gardener. A gardener may apply for more than one plot if plots are available.

	Quantity	Fee	Total
Annual Garden Membership		\$35 (resident of Mt. Olive Township) \$35 (member of The Land Conservancy) \$45 (non-resident) \$45 (non-member of The Land Conservancy)	\$
Irrigation Fee		\$30 (per plot) (one-time fee)	\$
Donation or Land Conservancy Membership		\$50 membership Other \$ _____	\$
<b>Total Payment Due:</b>			<b>\$</b>

The garden plot holder must be the primary gardener. Should the gardener give up a plot for any reason, the plot will be made available to individuals on the waiting list. Gardeners may not reassign a plot. If a gardener must give up a plot for personal reasons, they must notify the Garden Manager. All fees are non-refundable.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (please print)

Current gardener plot number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Site Preference: (plot number, in order of preference, see garden map for reference):

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

*All gardeners are encouraged to participate in events and volunteer at the garden. Opportunities include:*

- Garden Committee
- Grounds Maintenance (Plantings around fence, garden paths and walking path from parking lot, sitting area)
- Social Events

## ***Community Garden at South Branch Preserve 2025 Waiver***

I hereby agree to hold harmless The Land Conservancy of New Jersey and its directors, officers, members, successors, assignees, employees, agents, and invitees from any and all damage, loss of whatever kind, liability, injury, claim, demand, suit, cost and expense directly or indirectly resulting from, arising out of or in connection with the participation in or use of the Community Garden at South Branch Preserve.

All guests brought into the Community Garden at South Branch Preserve will be the responsibility of the gardener. The gardener agrees to accompany and supervise any guest, visitor and/or children brought into the Community Garden at South Branch Preserve at all times and also agrees to be responsible for the conduct of any of these parties. The Land Conservancy of New Jersey will not be held responsible for any injuries sustained by any visitor, guest and/or child.

Name: (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Visit The Land Conservancy website for additional information: [www.tlc-nj.org](http://www.tlc-nj.org)**