



County of San Diego, Planning & Development Services
COMMUNITY GARDENS FAQ'S
ZONING DIVISION

The Board of Supervisors approved an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance March 28, 2012 to allow **Community Gardens** in all zones where Row and Field Crops are a permitted use.

Q. What is a Community Garden?

A. A Community Garden is defined as an area of land used to grow and harvest food crops by individuals or collectively by members of a group, and may be arranged into multiple plots.

Q. What are the regulations?

A. Zoning Ordinance Section 6912:

6912 COMMUNITY GARDENS

Community Gardens are allowed in all zones where Row and Field Crops are permitted, subject to the following regulations:

- a. Hours of Operation. Hours of operation shall be limited to the hours between sunrise and sunset.
- b. Permitted structures. Accessory structures, such as storage sheds for tools and other supplies, greenhouses and/or an Agricultural Stand, may be allowed in a community garden pursuant to Section 6156 (*Accessory Use Regulations*).
- c. Parking. A minimum of 2 parking spaces shall be provided on the lot when there is no on-street parking allowed adjacent to the community garden property.
- d. Water Use. Wasting water is prohibited pursuant to County Code Section 86.725. Water efficient irrigation techniques such as drip irrigation and timers to control watering times are encouraged. All hoses shall be equipped with a trigger nozzle. Mulching of planted areas is encouraged to retain plant moisture.
- e. Composting. Composting may be performed onsite within a composting container subject to all of the following:
 1. Composted materials shall be only those materials generated onsite or contributed by active members of the community garden.
 2. Composting containers shall be located a minimum of three feet from property lines.
 3. Odors and/or fly-breeding shall not be greater than customarily found at a well-maintained residence.
- f. Organic Gardening. Organic gardening is strongly encouraged.
- g. Trash/Recycling Receptacles. Trash and recycling receptacles shall be provided onsite for the proper disposal of refuse. The receptacles shall be screened from adjacent properties by six-foot

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high solid fencing. Refuse shall be removed from the site regularly so that the receptacle area and the lot are kept free from litter.

- h. Sale of Produce and Plants. Sale of produce or plants raised on the site is allowed only from a permitted Agricultural Stand, subject to all provisions of 6156.q. Otherwise, on-site sales of produce, plants or any other items are prohibited.
- i. Prohibited plants. Planting illegal or invasive plants, as defined in County Code Section 86.701 et seq., shall be prohibited.

All other applicable codes and ordinances shall apply to Community Gardens, including but not limited to Groundwater Ordinance, Grading Ordinance and Noise Ordinance. Applicable permits from other departments or agencies may be required.

Q. *What permits will I need from Planning & Development Services?*

- A. You may not require any permits from PDS; however this will depend on many different factors that are specific to the property. We encourage you to contact the Zoning Division at 858-565-5981 (8:00-11:45 am, Monday - Friday) for information regarding your specific property.

You may be asked:

- What is the current use of the property? (vacant, existing agriculture, residential)
- Is the area for the proposed Community Garden undisturbed? (does it have native vegetation, natural stream or creek, etc.)
- Is any grading required to prepare the site for the proposed Community Garden? An agricultural clearing permit or grading permit may be required.
- Are there any existing structures on the property? What are they used for?
- Are any new structures proposed? (Barns, tool sheds, etc.) Building permits are required for all structures larger than 120 square feet in size.

NOTE: *Although permits may not be required from Planning & Development Services, permits may be required from other County Departments.*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Department of Public Works:

[Watershed protection](#)

[Grading Permits](#)

Department of Environmental Health:

[Community Garden Guidelines](#)

[Water Wells](#)

Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures:

[Agricultural Water Quality](#)

[Environmental Regulation](#)

[Organic Farming](#)

[Plant Health and Pest Protection](#)

Health and Human Services Agency:

[Gardening Resources](#)

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