

# City of Arvada Community Agriculture Guide

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2013

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## Getting started—what is Community Agriculture?

Establishing a policy and adopting changes to the Arvada Land Development Code to allow Community Agriculture in the City of Arvada was a collaborative effort between the residents of Arvada and the City. In 2012, the Arvada City Council adopted the Sustain Arvada Plan - Municipal Action Plan and Community Plan – to create a more sustainable community. The Plan specifically encourages food production and distribution throughout the community by increasing community gardens as well as community supported agriculture. A summary is provided of the changes made to City’s Land Development Code’s zoning districts and development standards to allow community agriculture throughout the City where it was not allowed in the past.

### TYPES OF COMMUNITY AGRICULTURE

**Community Agriculture** includes community gardens, community supported agriculture (CSA) farms, and market gardens are allowed in residential and non-residential zoning districts. In addition, farmers markets and produce stands for the sale and the distribution of products grown in the City of Arvada are also allowed in certain zoning districts.

**Community Garden** is a parcel of land where plants are grown and harvested by a non-profit organization or by a group of individuals. A community garden grows produce and ornamental plants for use by the non-profit and individuals who operate and maintain the garden.

**Community Supported Agricultural (CSA)** farms are parcels of land ***no less than one half acre and not more than two acres*** where community members support the operation of a CSA - financially or work on the farm.. Community members or “shareholders” provide monetary support in advance to cover the anticipated expenses in return for a share of the produce. Shareholders share the risks and benefits of production with the farmer. Excess produce grown at a CSA may be sold directly to the community at a farmers market or on-site produce stand allowed by certain zoning districts.

**Crop Production Farm** is a commercial operation growing field crops, flowers and seeds, fruits, grains, melons, ornamental crops, nuts, trees, sod, and vegetables. ***A crop production farm includes CSA’s over two acres in size and market gardens over one-half acre in size.***

**Farmers Market** is a seasonal open air market where fresh fruits, produce, flowers, and value-added food products like jams, jellies, pickles, sauces, or baked goods, in addition to arts and craft items are sold directly to consumers. Farmers markets are intended to provide a venue for food producers and artisans to sell directly to consumers. The sale of second-hand or any commercially produced goods is prohibited.

**Market Garden** is ***no more the one-half acre in size*** where plants are grown and harvested for off-site distribution and sale. Anything larger than one-half acre is considered a crop production farm.

**Produce Stand** is a temporary structure where local food producers and artisans sell fresh fruits, produce, flowers, and value-added food products like jams, jellies, pickles, sauces, or baked goods, in addition to arts and craft items. Commercially produced or packaged goods are prohibited.

Where can I locate a Community Agricultural operation and what standards do I need to follow? Where to locate community agricultural is dependent on the type of use and the intensity of that use. Community gardens, market gardens less than one-half acre and a CSA less than two acres are allowed in all zoning districts. Crop production farms, including market gardens over one-half acre, CSA's greater than two acres and produce stands are **limited to specific zoning districts** and are listed in detail on the following table:

**5.1.2 Summary Table of Allowed and Conditional Principal Uses by Zoning District**

USE CLASSIFICATION	SPECIFIC USE TYPE	USES ALLOWED BY ZONING DISTRICT														A = ALLOWED BY-RIGHT										C = CONDITIONAL USE					ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS											
		STANDARD ZONING DISTRICTS														NEW COMMUNITIES ZONING SUB-DISTRICTS										CLEAR CREEK ZONING SUB-DISTRICTS						PUD ZONING DISTRICTS										
		A-1	C-1	RGE	R-E	RL	R-SL	R-NT	R-J	R-MD	R-M	P-1	B-1	B-2	B-3	B-4	I-1	I-2	AG	OS	RA	RB	RC	C/OF	I/OF	MU-A	MU-B	MU-C	SU	A		B	C	D	E	R	BP	BPR	I			
AGRICULTURE USE																																										
Agriculture	Crop production, farm, pasture grazing land, poultry hatcheries, fish hatcheries, dairy farms, ranching	A	C	A															A	A	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	A	A	A	A	A					A		
Agriculture, Community	Community Garden, Community Supported Agricultural Farm, Market Garden	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A				
	Produce stand	C	C											A				A													A	A	A	A	A							
Agriculture Services	Feed store	C												A	A	A	A														A	A	A	A	A			A	A			
Horticulture & Nurseries	Greenhouse/nursery with retail sales	C	C									A	A		A	C	C														A	A	A	A	A			A	A			Sec. 5.2.17
	Greenhouse/nursery without retail sales	A	C	C														A	A												A	A	A	A	A							

Zoning questions can be referred to the Arvada Community Development Department 720-898-7435.

In addition, restrictions on the hours of operation, lighting, parking and other land use consideration apply to the type of community agriculture. A summary of the standards and conditions are provided below.

**Standards and Conditions:**

In order to mitigate the impacts on the neighborhood, the City of Arvada has specific requirements to manage community agricultural operations. As noted above, size requirements may also apply depending on the type of agriculture classification. The City of Arvada Land Development Code governs these requirements and conditions.

**General restrictions applicable to all community agricultural operations:**

- **Limits on operating hours.** Activities associated with community agriculture can only occur during daylight hours (dawn to dusk).
- **Limits on outdoor lighting.** Outdoor lighting for growing areas and for temporary produce stands is not allowed.
- **Responsibility for maintenance and upkeep.** The City of Arvada has developed a set of best practices, titled *Community Garden Maintenance Guidelines*, for the use by gardeners to guide operations. See Appendix A.

- **Off-street parking.** Off-street parking may be required when limited on-street parking is available. Required parking areas and access drives must be of a durable surface material like concrete, asphalt, compacted crushed stone, or similar material.

### **General restrictions applicable to community gardens, community supported agriculture farms, and crop production farms:**

- **Permanent Structures.** Accessory buildings are allowed when a community garden is the principal land use. Accessory structures are limited to a total of 3 structures and cannot exceed 1,000 square feet of aggregate floor area. Additional development and design standards may apply depending on the zoning district. In addition, building permits may be required. The Planning Department can provide additional information on a case by case basis.

### **Special provisions for crop production farms, farmers markets, and produce stands**

#### **Crop Production Farms:**

- Distribution of produce to CSA owners of shares in the farm is generally allowed. If issues arise, the City of Arvada may impose restrictions to on-sight distribution. It is the responsibility of the farm to manage and limit any impacts to the surrounding community during distribution.

#### **Farmers Markets:**

- A Special Event permit from the City of Arvada is required and can be obtained from the Community Development Department, The application can be found at this link:  
[http://static.arvada.org/docs/1273865022Special\\_Events\\_Permit\\_Application.pdf](http://static.arvada.org/docs/1273865022Special_Events_Permit_Application.pdf).

#### **Produce Stands:**

- Produce stands may operate up to six (6) months per year. When a produce stand is not in use, it must be removed.

### **There is a parcel of City owned land that I am interested in operating a community agriculture operation on, who do I contact?**

Please contact the Sustainability Coordinator at 720-898-7500 to determine if that parcel is identified as a possible location for community agriculture.

# Agricultural Animals

## Keeping of Bees

Bees are a valuable addition to a backyard garden for several reasons. Besides producing honey, bees will help pollinate your fruits and vegetables. This is especially important in areas like Arvada where natural pollinators may not be as common. Private beekeeping is allowed on any land in Arvada, regardless of the zoning, as long as it follows the requirements found in the Arvada City Ordinance, 4344 as follows:

### MAXIMUM NUMBER OF COLONIES ALLOWED PER TRACT

SIZE OF TRACT	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF COLONIES ALLOWED
One-quarter acre or less.	Two (2) colonies.
More than one-quarter acre up to and including one-half acre.	Four (4) colonies.
More than one-half acre up to and including one acre.	Six (6) colonies.
More than one acre.	Eight (8) colonies.

Exception: Regardless of tract size, where all hive boxes are situated at least two-hundred feet in every direction from all property lines of the tract on which the apiary is located, there shall be no limit to the number of colonies which may be located thereon.

- (ii) For each two colonies authorized under colony densities set forth in section 38-403(a)(2)(i) above, there may be maintained upon the same tract one nucleus colony in a hive box containing no more than ten (10) frames with no supers and with inside hive box dimensions not exceeding those set forth in section 38-403(a)(1)(iii) above. The nucleus colony shall be disposed of or combined with an authorized colony within thirty (30) days after the date it was acquired.
- (3) *Setback.*
  - (i) No hive box, except an observation hive, shall be located within twenty-five (25) feet from any adjoining property as measured from the nearest point on the hive box to the adjoining property line, with the back of the hive box facing the nearest adjoining property.
  - (i) No hive box shall be located in any front setback.

## Chickens and Turkeys

The keeping of female chickens and turkeys is consistent with the City's goal of encouraging certain agricultural activities, such as meat and egg production, in urban and suburban areas. Female chickens and turkeys may be maintained within Arvada City limits on any property provided that the following aspects of the Municipal Code are met.

### **Sec. 14-92. Keeping of livestock unlawful except in specified zoning districts.**

- (a) *Keeping of livestock generally.* The keeping of livestock is prohibited except in strict conformance with the Arvada Land Development Code (LDC). It shall be unlawful for any person or household to keep, have custody of, or own any livestock, except in strict conformance with section 5.3.3.I of the LDC, and except as otherwise set forth in this section.
- (b) *Keeping of chickens and turkeys.*
  - (1) *Areas zoned A-1 or R-CE.* It shall be unlawful for any person or household on any property zoned A-1 or R-CE to keep, have custody of, or own chickens, turkeys, or both, except in strict conformance with section 5.3.3.I of the LDC.
  - (2) *Areas zoned other than A-1 or R-CE.*
    - (i) It shall be unlawful for any person or household on any property zoned other than A-1 or R-CE to keep, have custody of, or own more than five (5) female chickens, or more than five (5) female turkeys, or a total of more than five (5) female chickens and female turkeys in any combination.
    - (ii) It shall be unlawful for any person or household to keep, have custody of, or own any male chicken (rooster) or male turkey (tom) on property that is zoned other than A-1 or R-CE.
- (a) *Female chickens and turkeys.* It shall be unlawful for any person to keep or house any female chicken or turkey within thirty-five (35) feet of any dwelling, except that of the owner or custodian.

Any structure to hold small animals or poultry cannot be kept in the front yard, must be at least 15 feet away from the property lines and must be more than 35 feet from a residence or main structure on an adjacent property.

### **Other Types of Animals: Land Development Code 5.3.3.J**

1. The keeping of animals, whether or not housed within animal shelters, shall comply with all applicable provisions of Chapter 14, "Animals and Fowl," of the Arvada City Code, specifically including §14-123 thereof.
2. Horses may be kept in the A-1, R-CE, R-E, NC-RA, NC-RB, NCRC, and PUD-R zoning districts only, provided that the animals are kept in a fenced area and provided there shall be a minimum gross land area (not including land area occupied by the principal dwelling) of 12,500 square feet per horse, plus 6,000 square feet for each additional horse.
3. Cows, goats, and other similar livestock may be kept in the A-1 and R-CE zoning district.
4. In no case shall the total number of horses kept exceed four (4) animals per one (1) acre of land.
5. All barns, corrals, livestock pens, fenced corrals, or other structures for keeping horses or other livestock shall be located no closer than one hundred (100) feet from an existing dwelling unit, except one's own dwelling unit, and except with regard to female chickens and turkeys as provided in §14-92 of the Arvada City Code (see above).

Link to Land Development Code 5.3.3.J: <http://static.arvada.org/docs/Article 5 - Use Regulations-1-201209191308.pdf>

## Appendix A – City of Arvada Community Garden Maintenance Guidelines

The Community Garden Maintenance Guidelines for gardeners ensure that community gardening will thrive for years to come in Arvada. Community gardens, when well-tended, contribute to the overall appeal of a neighborhood and add richness to the community. These guidelines originally developed by Denver Urban Gardens have been successful in promoting best practices and promote positive responses to community gardening. These guidelines have worked well in all communities where they have been adopted. The City of Arvada encourages all of our gardeners to consider these guidelines into their own best practices and to encourage others gardeners to do the same.

The garden must have a year-round unified appearance to landowners, city officials, and the general non-gardening public. To this end, THE CITY OF ARVADA established the following requirements of all participants.

The benefits of a well-maintained garden are at minimum three-fold:

- 1) The use agreement for the garden remains in good standing with the landowner;***
- 2) Owners, neighbors and non-gardeners enjoy and recognize the garden as a community asset;***
- 3) Your garden will harbor fewer pests and weeds, and will be healthier from season to season.***

### Participant Requirements

**1. Garden Plot:** Each plot must be kept clear of weeds, spent plants, debris and trash. Each fall, turn compost and organic material into the soil and cover it with a layer of mulch to regulate soil temperature and retain moisture throughout the winter.

This makes a garden plot look cared for to the passer-by. It's important to recognize all gardens (gardeners?) have a significant role and responsibility regarding the sustainability of the garden. Any perennials in your plot must appear well kept. In addition, you are responsible to maintain the area immediately adjacent to your plot including paths, compost bins, trash collection areas, fences and the gardens other common spaces.

**2. Vertical Structures:** Structures to encourage vertical growing including arbors, trellis, tree branch frames, fence sections, and cages are only allowed during the growing season if they are functional, orderly, safe and attractive. Tomato cages, bean poles, stakes or small trellises must be made of thin wood or wire. All growing structures must be disassembled and removed during the off-season. Any permanent structures in the garden will be allowed to remain if they are in good condition and attractive from the street.

**3. "Off-Season" Storage:** the following items are not authorized to be left standing during the off-season, and must be disassembled and stored in the garden shed or removed from the site when not in use:

- Chairs and individual benches;
- Shoes, clothes (shed only?);
- wire cages, fencing;
- Plastic plant pots, tools;
- Piles of brick and stone;
- Water bottles, milk bottles;
- Sticks, steel “t” posts;
- Wheel barrows, wagons;
- Bags of compost or leaves;
- Buckets, plastic containers;
- Pipe, hoses and nozzles; and
- Non-permanent garden art

**4. Compost Bins:** Individual compost bins are discouraged; they typically distract from the visual continuity of the garden. The City does encourage using and maintaining community compost bins. All material used in compost bins must be chopped in one to two inch pieces before being added. Please do not add diseased plant material. Plastic bags of spent plants, grass clippings and leaves are not allowed to be stored in your garden at any time. To “passers-by” they appear as bags of trash. Unopened bags of topsoil, compost or manure should not to be stored in your garden. Chop and spread these materials in your plot immediately, allowing for decomposition and integration with your existing soil. Consider trench or pit composting techniques.

**5. The Garden is A “Community” Responsibility:** Everyone must take responsibility for maintaining the common areas of the garden such as:

- Compost bins and toolshed;
- Trees, flower beds and lawn;
- Pathways and courtyards;
- Trash containment areas; and
- Street fronts and sidewalks

## APPENDIX B

<b>ARVADA AGRICULTURE RESOURCE GUIDE</b>		
<b>ADVOCACY/SUPPORT</b>		
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Colorado State University Extension</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Blake Angelo, Urban Agriculture Coordinator Denver Metropolitan Area 303.875.8461 <a href="http://urbanag.colostate.edu">http://urbanag.colostate.edu</a></p>	Building Urban Farmers program, education
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Colorado State University Extension</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Joel Reich, Extension Agent, Horticulture Boulder County 303.678.6386 <a href="mailto:jreich@bouldercounty.org">jreich@bouldercounty.org</a> <a href="http://www.extension.colostate.edu/boulder/">www.extension.colostate.edu/boulder/</a></p>	Specializing in fruit trees
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Feed Denver Urban Farms &amp; Markets</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">PO Box 11651 Denver, CO 80211 303.513.7548 <a href="http://www.feeddenver.com">http://www.feeddenver.com</a></p>	Education, advocacy
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Grow Local Colorado</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="http://www.growlocalcolorado.org/">http://www.growlocalcolorado.org/</a></p>	Education, advocacy
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Live Well Colorado</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="http://movement.livewellcolorado.org/">http://movement.livewellcolorado.org/</a></p>	Education, advocacy

	<p><b>Slow Food Denver</b></p> <p>4340 E. Kentucky, Suite 3110</p> <p>Denver, CO 80246</p> <p>303.321.3322</p> <p><a href="http://www.slofwfooddenver.org">www.slofwfooddenver.org</a></p>	Education, advocacy
<b>COMMUNITY GARDENS</b>		
	<p><b>Arvada Gardeners</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.arvadagardeners.org">www.arvadagardeners.org</a></p> <p>303.425.8962-Keith Sorci, President</p>	<p><u>Arvada Community Garden</u></p> <p>9195 West 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue</p> <p><u>The Delva Community Garden</u></p> <p>6501 West 60<sup>th</sup> Ave.</p>
	<p><b>Denver Urban Gardens—</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.dug.org">www.dug.org</a></p> <p>303.292.9900</p> <p>1031 33<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 100</p> <p>Denver, CO 80205</p>	<p><u>Arvada Mennonite Community Garden</u></p> <p>5927 Miller Street</p> <p><u>Rose Roots Community Garden</u></p> <p>84<sup>th</sup> &amp; Alkire</p>
<b>COOKING CLASSES</b>		
	<p><b>Bella Bistro</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.bellabistro.com">www.bellabistro.com</a></p>	Food events, cooking classes
<b>FOOD DISTRIBUTERS</b>		
	<p><b>Arvada Community Food Bank</b></p> <p>8555 West 57<sup>th</sup> Ave.</p> <p>Arvada, CO 80002</p> <p>303.424.6685</p> <p><a href="http://www.arvadacfb.org/">http://www.arvadacfb.org/</a></p>	Hunger relief services
	<p><b>Arvada Farmers Market</b></p> <p><a href="mailto:arvadafarmersmarket@gmail.com">arvadafarmersmarket@gmail.com</a></p>	Local food and products

	<a href="http://arvadafarmersmarket.com/">http://arvadafarmersmarket.com/</a>	
	<p><b>Grower's Organics</b></p> <p>6400 Broadway, Unit 11</p> <p>Denver, CO 80221</p> <p>303.299.9500</p> <p><a href="http://www.growersorganic.com">www.growersorganic.com</a></p>	
	<p><b>Source Local Foods</b></p> <p>1702 Walnut Street</p> <p>Boulder, CO 80206</p> <p>303.544.1500</p> <p><a href="http://www.lfsenterprises.com/">http://www.lfsenterprises.com/</a></p>	Distribution between local food producers and wholesale buyers
<b>FOOD HARVESTORS</b>		
	<p><b>Yard Harvest</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.yardharvest.org">www.yardharvest.org</a></p> <p><a href="mailto:jason@yardharvest.org">jason@yardharvest.org</a></p>	Backyard harvesting of fruits and vegetables, distribution to nonprofits
<b>FOOD RECYCLERS</b>		Recycles cooking oil for biofuel
	<p><b>recyOil</b></p> <p>8820 W 116<sup>th</sup> Circle, Unit B</p> <p>Broomfield, CO 80021</p> <p>303.544.1500</p> <p><a href="http://www.recycoil.com">www.recycoil.com</a></p>	
<b>MARKET GARDEN</b>		
	<p><b>Flourish Farms</b></p> <p>6400 West 52nd Avenue</p> <p>Arvada, CO 80002</p>	Market farm and commercial aquaponics system
	<p><b>Heirloom Gardeners</b></p> <p><a href="http://eatwhereulive.com">http://eatwhereulive.com</a></p>	NSA, CSA, classes, soaps, classes
	<b>The Grow Haus</b>	Hydroponic farm, education,

	<p>4751 York Street</p> <p>Denver, CO 80216</p> <p>720.515.4751</p> <p><a href="http://www.thegrowhaus.com">www.thegrowhaus.com</a></p>	demonstration farm
	<p><b>Star Acre Farms</b></p> <p>84<sup>th</sup> and Alkire</p> <p><a href="http://www.staracrefarms.com/">http://www.staracrefarms.com/</a></p>	CSA and fresh local, organic produce, heirloom varieties and seeds
<b>SUPPLIERS</b>		
	<p><b>Colorado Aquaponics</b></p> <p>150 Glen Dee Drive</p> <p>Lakewood, CO 80215</p> <p>720.470.7007</p> <p><a href="http://www.coloradoaquaponics.com">www.coloradoaquaponics.com</a></p>	Education, workshops and supplies.