



Vacant Lot Cultivation Pilot Project 2018: Rules & Guidelines

The term of the Pilot runs from April 1, 2018 to October 31, 2018. The purpose of the pilot is for the City to learn if gardening is a good, temporary use for public utility lots and public land.

Apply online at edmonton.ca/UrbanAgricultureLicence.

1. What to Expect During the Pilot

- You will work together with City staff as we test this new program. You will provide feedback to City staff by participating in approximately 10 hours-worth of workshops, surveys, and site-inspections. You will be invited to a number of workshops in 2018, including an orientation session, a garden-clean up workshop, and a pilot celebration and debrief.
- You are responsible for obtaining liability insurance.
- You must sign the Vacant Lot Cultivation Licence as an individual or legal entity.
- You are responsible for providing soil, water, and all gardening materials at your own cost, and for removing all materials at the end of the season. All costs and associated expenditures relating to the Pilot or participation are the responsibility of the participant.
- The City has a free planters that you may borrow on a first-come-first-served basis. **Apply here.**
- The City will install a sign on the lot you licence explaining that you are a participant in the Pilot.
- Gardening activities are a temporary use, until these public utility lots are required for other uses. There is no guarantee the same site will be available in future years, or that the pilot will continue. These properties are public land and could be sold or developed. *Plan for gardening activities and structures that can be removed at the end of the season.* You will have use of your lot between April 1, 2018 and October 31, 2018.
- The City will communicate with you to notify you of opportunities for renewal of your licence for 2019, and future years, as they emerge.

2. What to Grow

- To reduce potential health risks *food gardens* must be in raised beds. When growing fresh produce, use raised garden beds with filter cloth, safe construction materials, and imported healthy soil or other growing medium that avoids planting directly into native or existing soil.
- *Non-food gardens* may be dug into the ground.
- Gardening includes but is not limited to: fruits and vegetables, mushrooms, flowers, grasses, seeds, nuts, herbs, seedlings and plant cuttings, and pollinator patches/bee-friendly plants.
- Do not plant invasive species, noxious weeds, or cannabis.
- The keeping of livestock (hens and bees) is not allowed.
- Food intended for consumption should be rinsed with potable water only.

3. Things to Know about Public Utility Lots

- A public utility lot is a piece of land that houses utilities such as water, sewage disposal, electric power, heating, waste management, drainage, public transportation and telecommunications. They may need to be accessed by utility companies such as EPCOR or ATCO.
- Plan your garden to be temporary for the 2018 season. The City discourages you from putting significant investments into the lots, and encourages you to consider the possibility of lost investment in the event a purchaser of the lot is found, or a utility company needs to access the site. Do not install permanent landscaping.
- Call before you dig: At least two full working days before you plan to dig, contact Alberta One-Call and DigShaw to request that the buried utility lines (water, gas, electric, telecommunications) on the



property be located and marked. Disturbing the ground on private or public land (whether you are landscaping your own yard, building a fence, or planting a garden) can cause damage to a buried utility. Some utilities are buried mere centimeters below the surface. The result of a contact with a buried line can range from loss of an essential service for you or your neighbours to serious injury or fatalities. The financial costs of repairing any damage you cause to a buried utility will be borne by you, the excavator.

4. Insurance Requirements

- You will need to obtain Liability Insurance, in accordance with the Insurance Act (Alberta), in an amount not less than \$1,000,000.00 inclusive per occurrence, against bodily injury, personal injury, and property damage including loss of use thereof. Such insurance needs to include blanket contractual liability.

5. Site Maintenance and Conditions

- Sites are offered in “as is” condition. You may either import clean soil, or test and remediate existing soil as needed, at your own cost. The City cannot guarantee the quality or condition of the soil.
- No cultivation or excavation of any sort is permitted deeper than **30 cm** from ground level.
- You will be responsible for maintaining the entire Licenced Area, to the site edge. This includes mowing the grass, keeping weeds under control, and removing litter from the site. Any areas between temporary fixtures, such as planter beds, composters, or other fixtures that have been placed on the site for garden operation must be maintained.
- Garden in a way that is respectful of your surroundings. Do not place any materials or structures so that they butt up against private property.
- For drainage purposes, maintain a minimum **1m** buffer between any materials on site and the neighbouring private property. Be aware that public utility lots may play a drainage function for surrounding areas. Be aware of the overall drainage pattern of the site. Do not undertake any activities or place anything on-site that will obstruct drainage onto the lot from adjacent private land, or contribute to drainage onto adjacent private land. See the [Rain Garden in a Box Handbook](#).
- Maintain a publicly accessible walkway through the site that is at least **1m** wide. The 1m drainage buffer can double as the walkway.
- **There is to be no use or application of herbicides or pesticides** or other chemicals to the Licensed Area. You are not permitted to use any herbicides, fungicides, bactericides, or other chemicals to control weeds, pests, or plant diseases unless applied by a certified applicator and you have permission from the City of Edmonton. You are encouraged to use an Integrated Pest Management (“IPM”) approach.
- **Regulated weeds** must be controlled, meaning their growth or spread must be prevented, according to the Alberta Weed Control Act. Please consult [Alberta's Regulated Weeds](#) list before planning your garden that may include these species. Regulated weeds must be managed as per the regulatory designation below:
 - Prohibited noxious weeds must be destroyed, meaning all growing parts need to be killed or the plant's reproductive mechanisms need to be rendered non-viable.
 - Noxious weeds must be controlled, meaning their growth or spread needs to be prevented.

6. Watering

- If non-potable water (collected rainwater) is used, it should be used on the soil only, apply water at the base of the plants. Be aware of the importance of knowing the source of your water (some rooftops could contain contaminants, so water harvested off rooftops may not be clean).



7. Waste Management

- You are responsible for cleaning up all waste, garbage, refuse, rubbish, and/or organic debris generated by and related to your activities.
- Please make an effort to compost organic waste generated by their activities, and to do so in such a way that odors and pests do not cause a nuisance or health hazard.

8. Use of Compost and Fertilizer:

- The City of Edmonton encourages the use of compost as a way to build soil fertility. With raised beds, it is especially crucial to use compost as soil fertility will not be sustained from year to year. If fertilizer is used the type of fertilizer used must be communicated to the City and the following guidelines must be followed:
 - Any form of 'Weed N Feed' fertilizer use is strictly prohibited.
 - Only slow release fertilizer can be applied; example Sulphur Coated Urea (SCU).
- **Compost Piles**
 - Compost piles shall be located at least 1.2m from any property line, except when a suitable barrier, such as a retaining wall or compost bin is in place, in which case the compost may be located on the property line.
 - Compost bins shall have a lid.
 - Compost piles shall be screened from view of abutting public roadways. Compost may only consist of plant or plant based material, and shall not use any mechanized processes.

9. Temporary Structures

- You may garden using temporary structures such as planter beds, cold-frames, sheds, rain barrels, cisterns, hoop houses and fences. Any structures installed on site should be temporary, such that all structures can be removed within twenty-four (24) hours if need be.
- Structures should not be taller than 3.2m or over 10m². Structures taller or larger than this will require you to apply for a development permit and/or building permit. Please consult with City of Edmonton Development Services staff by calling 311 or visiting the 2nd floor of the Edmonton Tower, 10111-104 Avenue NW, Edmonton. All structures must comply with Edmonton Zoning Bylaw 12800 and Alberta Building Code requirements.
- Outdoor storage shall be limited to the materials or equipment associated with gardening.
- If you plan to install a temporary fence, two things to consider are height and location. In most zones, the maximum permitted height of a fence is 1.85 m (6.1 ft). If the height and location requirements listed in the Zoning Bylaw are followed, you do not require a development permit. For more information: https://www.edmonton.ca/documents/PDF/Fence_Brochure.pdf

10. No On-Site Sales

- The 2018 Pilot will focus on gardening for non-profit, personal and household consumption, or community benefit. You are not allowed to sell produce on-site. If you wish to sell your plants, fruits, vegetables, and other products off-site, you will require a **business licence** and development permit, and be required to meet Alberta Health Services requirements unless selling your products at an Alberta Agriculture Approved Farmers' Market.



11. Clean-Up

- You are responsible for cleaning up the entire site by October 22, 2018. Please harvest and/or clean out garden beds, level any soil piles and/or any depressions on site resulting from the pilot project, and remove all gardening materials and temporary structures (e.g. raised beds, hoop houses, compost heaps) The City will inspect and sign off on your lot between October 23-30, 2018. Your licence is valid until October 31, 2018. Further instructions about garden clean-up will be shared with participants at a Garden Clean-Up Workshop in the fall of 2018.
- If you fail to leave the site in a tidy condition, you will not be permitted to participate in the pilot in future years. The City may bill you for clean-up costs.

12. Neighbour Notification

- You will be responsible for informing adjacent neighbours in writing that you have permission from the City to garden as part of the Pilot, using the template letter provided by the City. This is a notification to neighbours, not a request for permission.
- The City will provide you with a sign to place on the lot, explaining your participation in the Pilot.

13. Evaluation and Feedback

- You will be asked to participate in surveys, workshops, and inspections carried out by City of Edmonton staff to share feedback on success and challenges you experienced with the pilot.
- Neighbours and the general public will also be surveyed about.
- All public complaints can be directed through 311; this reporting approach is consistent with the City of Edmonton bylaw complaint process.

13. Revocable Permission

- Upon acceptance to participate in the Pilot, you will be issued a Licence that will last the duration of the Pilot. You, as the Licensee, or the City, may terminate this License at any time by providing thirty (30) days written notice to the other.
- You acknowledge and agree that the permission granted through the Pilot is temporary and does not guarantee any future permission.
- Should the City of Edmonton receive Bylaw Complaints about your activities or should you fail to respect the Pilot Rules & Guidelines, and the Vacant Lot Cultivation Licence, permission may be revoked and you will be responsible to the City of Edmonton for removing all materials from the site. Should the City find the site unsuitable for any reasons, permission may be revoked and you will be responsible to the City of Edmonton for removing all materials from the site.
- You are responsible for complying with all applicable municipal bylaws, laws, orders and regulations of federal, provincial and municipal authorities, including, but not limited to, the Zoning Bylaw 12800, the Community Standards Bylaw and, the Weed Control Act (Alberta), City of Edmonton health, safety, fire, land use and building codes and bylaws, and other requirements authorized by law.

For More Information:

vacantlotpilot@edmonton.ca

780-442-0258

edmonton.ca/UrbanAgricultureLicence



Additional Resources

Materials

- Pop-Up Planter Pilot - The City of Edmonton will provide planters on loan for the 2018 pilot. Fill out the [application form](#)
- The City of Edmonton provides [free mulch](#) to citizens, contact 311.
- Borrow tools from the Edmonton Tool Library: <http://www.edmontontoollibrary.ca/>
- Seedy Sunday on March 18, 2018 is a great place to buy seeds: <http://www.edmontonseedysunday.org/>

Knowledge

- For more information and resources about composting, check out edmonton.ca/compost or the [City of Edmonton's Master Composter Recycler program](#).
- Learn about the environmental history of the site using the Environmental Site Assessment Repository (ESAR): <http://www.esar.alberta.ca/esarmain.aspx>
- Resources on reducing health risks related to urban farming, from Vancouver: <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/guide-to-reduce-health-risks-urban-farming.pdf>
- [Weed Management](#): invasiveweeds@edmonton.ca, edmonton.ca/weeds or 311 in Edmonton.
- [Invasive plants in Alberta Urban Areas](#), Alberta Agriculture and Forestry
- You are encouraged to employ low impact development approaches in order to conserve water and/or harvest rainwater. For more information, please review and employ the City of Edmonton's [Low Impact Development Best Management Practices Design Guide](#).
- Learn about designing a rain garden, and other drainage considerations with the [Rain Garden in a Box Guide](#).
- Learn how the City supports community gardens on parkland: edmonton.ca/communitygardens
- Sustainable Food Edmonton offers resources for community gardens and urban agriculture, <http://www.sustainablefoodedmonton.org/>
- Integrated Pest Management: for more information please visit www.edmonton.ca/pests, email treebugs@edmonton.ca or call 311
- [Brownfield Redevelopment Grants](#)
- The [Green Living Guide](#).

Engaging the Community

- Contact your Neighbourhood Resource Coordinator or Community Development Social Worker to help facilitate community building efforts! To find out who the contact is for your neighbourhood, contact 311.
- Find out if your neighbourhood is involved in [Abundant Community Edmonton](#). Abundant Community Edmonton is a neighbourhood engagement and community organizing approach that provides tools for neighbours to get to know each other on a block level.
- The [Neighbourhood Engagement Strategy Toolkit](#) provides you with tips and tools for bringing the people in your neighbourhood together. Apply to the [Neighbourhood Engagement Fund](#) to take your event to the next level.
- A neighbourhood [block party](#) is an opportunity for people to meet and get to know each other. The focus is on having fun but some communities find it a great way to work together on a neighbourhood project.