



St. Mary Organic Farm

Caring for the Land; Building Community

2012 Community Garden Guidelines

Welcome to St. Mary Organic Farm

St. Mary Organic Farm is a two acre farm using sustainable growing practices since 1998. St. Mary Organic Farm, located on the IHM campus, is part of the IHM Sisters' commitment to sustainability and the Earth Charter. All garden plots are organic.

Soil Amendments

Gardeners are encouraged to add organic material to their plots to maintain a healthy soil and enhance production. Products of plant or animal origin (i.e. compost, leaf mold, livestock manure, blood and bone meal, cover crops, fish emulsion, kelp meal, liquid seaweed, and commercial organic fertilizers) are acceptable. Natural mineral fertilizers, such as greensand, granite dust and ground limestone, are acceptable.

Commercial inorganic fertilizers are prohibited

Only natural fertilizers and pest control measures that are accepted by major organic certification agencies, such as the Organic Crop Improvement Association, may be used.

Herbicides are prohibited

Mulching, hand weeding and hoeing are recommended to reduce weed growth.

Synthetic insecticides are prohibited

Handpicking of non-beneficial insects, crop rotation, companion planting, lady bugs, row covers and biological controls like *Bacillus thuringiensis* (BT), a bacterium that controls cabbage worms, are welcomed. As a last resort, natural botanicals, i.e. rotenone and pyrethrum (they break down quickly and do not leave harmful residues in the soil), may be applied.

Unacceptable plants

Please do not grow invasive species, trees, bushes or any woody perennials. This includes the mint family and comfrey. We do have comfrey in the perennial flower garden for your use.

Disease control

Please remove any diseased plants from the garden. Place in a garbage bag and dispose at your home.

Water use

Water is included in your fee. We have a drip tape system that will automatically provide water to your plot. There will be a mandatory meeting to understand the mechanics of the drip irrigation system. There will be a \$25 deposit to use the drip system. The deposit will be returned at the end of the season if there are no repairs needed in your garden plot. Lift the drip tape when weeding with tools to avoid slicing the tape. Watch for water leaks, plug it and report it.

Harvest

Harvest in a timely manner to avoid rotting produce. If you are unable to harvest and need a place to give it away, contact me. Surplus food will go to the local food bank. Please do not harvest from other plots without permission. Keep paths between beds and around garden clear. Keep trellises in locations that will not shade other plots. Limit bed enclosures (mini fences) to 18".

Vandalism

Vandalism has not been a problem. However, please contact campus security with any problems at 777-3482.

End of the season clean-up

Remove all tomato cages, fencing, stakes, string, plastics, and all other non-organic material from your garden and take them home with you. Do not place any material in the shed or anywhere around the garden without permission. Remove any rocks and rock borders. Pull out all plants that have tough stalks or vines, such as sunflowers, corn, pumpkin, squash, etc, and cut them into 8-inch pieces or less. These can be spread around your site, to be tilled under. Cut all non-infected plant materials into small pieces and compost around your plot. Please do not leave them in piles or throw them outside the garden perimeter. Remove all tomatoes and diseased materials from your plot and discard at home. Remove any large amounts of straw. The straw gets tangled up in the tiller. Leave no piles as the tiller cannot handle it.

Tools and Equipment

Some tools are available for your use in the shed as needed. Please clean and take care of the community tools after use. You are encouraged to bring your own.

Additional Information

Please make arrangements to have someone tend your plot if you are away for over 7 days. Notify Sharon McNeil if you are unable to garden your plot. Plots that are left uncared for a significant period of time are subject to being tilled or reassigned. Feel free to bring in chairs, coolers or umbrellas to make your garden experience more comfortable. Please closely supervise young children and pets at the garden.

Registration and Fees

There are two plot sizes available – full (approx. 25'x30') and half size (approx. 25x15). The fee is \$115 for full plot and \$70.00 for half plots.

The fee is due at the time of registration April 1, and can be made in 2 equal installments with second payment due by June 1. If you need to make special financial arrangements, please contact Sharon McNeil. Checks should be made payable to **IHM Sisters**. Please write "Garden" in the subject line.

[Registration forms](#) are available on the IHM website (www.ihmsisters.org, click on Sustainable Community, St. Mary Organic Farm) or by contacting Sharon McNeil, Ecology Director (smcneil@ihmsisters.org or 734-240-9720).

If you have any further questions or would like to donate to the IHM garden projects, a family in need or to the flower garden, please contact Sharon McNeil.

**Thank you for joining St. Mary Organic Farm!
Enjoy sustainable growing and healthy eating
while preserving the land for future generations.**