

Eagle Heights Gardens ~ University Houses Gardens

2026 Garden Application and Information

This application is for both the Eagle Heights and University Houses gardens. The fees, gardening season, deadlines, and workday obligations are the same for both gardens. All garden plots must be gardened organically, with the exception of select plots at University Houses reserved for gardeners grandfathered in per an old agreement. **New applicants may not request a non-organic plot.** Large plots at Eagle Heights are approximately 20 x 25 feet (6 x 8 m), and large plots at University Houses Gardens are approximately 25 x 30 feet (8 x 9 m). Small plots at both gardens vary in size but are about half the size of large plots.

RENEWAL APPLICATION DEADLINE, RETURNING GARDENERS: February 15th

- On-time renewal applications will be speedily processed. Plot assignments will be posted on the garden bulletin boards and the garden website during March.
- Each plot must have a separate application with a different primary gardener at least 17 years of age.
- New applications are processed by date received. Late renewal applications are treated as new applications.
- Applications are processed as long as plots are available, and a waiting list is formed when all plots are assigned.
- New gardeners may indicate plots or rows they prefer, but assignment cannot be guaranteed.
- Email is used for garden announcements; gardeners are required to have an email address.

WORKDAY OBLIGATION

One gardener per plot is required to help with one workday during the gardening season. Workdays last for ~3 hours and include a variety of tasks. Workdays will be held throughout the garden season (mostly on weekends, but also occasional weekday evenings). Prior to each workday, an email is sent out for sign-up.

FEES

Application fee per plot as follows (status of primary gardener):	Large plot	Small plot
Eagle Heights, University Houses, and Harvey Street Residents*/UW Students**	\$38	\$26
UW Faculty and Staff/ UW Alumni/ Community Members (everyone else)	\$74	\$57
No Workday Option (per plot in addition to the above fee)	\$45	\$45

- If you rent two small plots, your total fee will be the large plot fee.
- Plots rented after July 1st will only be charged half of the plot fee due to the lateness of the season.
- Plots rented after September 1st will be free.

*Residency will be confirmed with University Apartments

**Student status requirements for the Gardens are the same as those that UW Apartments has for residency eligibility: *"In order to live in University Apartments, graduate students must carry a minimum of two credits per semester for an academic year. If a student is a dissertator, three credits per semester for an academic year are required. Undergraduate students (with families) must carry a minimum of six credits per semester for an academic year"*. Applicants may appeal to the Garden Committee regarding their student status.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A GARDEN PLOT:

Mail your completed application and payment to:

Eagle Heights Gardens c/o Community Center, 611 Eagle Heights, Madison, WI 53705

Or, put your application in the depository (next to the ATM) in the foyer of the Community Center.

No cash or starter checks. CHECKS, CASHIERS CHECKS, OR MONEY ORDERS ONLY.

Make checks payable to **Division of University Housing.**

JOIN THE GARDEN COMMITTEE!

The Garden Committee is the management body of the gardens and is made up of volunteers - like you! Committee members are asked to attend meetings, respond to committee discussions (often by e-mail) and manage specific projects. The Garden Committee meets monthly in the Eagle Heights Community Center (611 Eagle Heights). New members are always welcome. Please come to a garden meeting if you would like to get involved.

How to reach the Garden Committee:

E-mail: ehgardens@rso.wisc.edu; Visit this Web site: www.eagleheightsgardens.org

Write to us at: Gardens, 611 Eagle Heights, Madison WI 53705

COMMUNITY GARDEN RULES

We want everyone to have a good experience in the gardens. All gardeners should show respect for their garden neighbors at all times. The following are our most important rules:

1. **Theft:** Do not take anything from any plot other than your own even if you think it is abandoned. No warning is given, and this offense is immediately referred to the garden chairs.
2. **Trespassing:** Do not enter any plot other than your own unless invited.
3. **Boundaries:** Do not plant outside of the boundaries of your plot.
Leave 6 inches unplanted and unfenced on all sides of your plot for neighbors to access water and their plantings. If you are unsure about your boundaries, contact the registrar.
4. **Tools:** Do not keep the community tools or carts in your plot or take them home. The tools and carts are for all gardeners.
5. **Weeds:** You must control weeds in your garden plot and remove them before they go to seed and spread to neighboring plots. Do not put weeds in the dumpster: shake as much dirt off of the roots as you can and take them to the weed pile.
6. **Water:** Take care in using the water system. Do not leave water running unattended and always turn it off before leaving the gardens. Water lines are close to the surface, so never dig outside plot boundaries.
7. **Hoses: Hoses left in paths or attached to spigots at Eagle Heights will be confiscated without notice.**

Get to know your neighbors. If you see strangers in your neighbors' plots, email the registrar. If you and a neighbor have a dispute, discuss it respectfully, and email the registrar if you are not able to solve the problem on your own.

Failure to comply with these rules will result in:

1. **Warnings** with dates of needed changes.
2. **Review** of issues by the garden committee with potential loss of privileges.
3. **Confiscation** of plot and banning from our community gardens.

If you have questions about these rules, email the registrar at ehgardens@rso.wisc.edu.

Sign your application to acknowledge that you understand these rules and the specifics that follow. A comprehensive list of garden policies follows on the next page.

Pathways and Boundaries

- Do not leave tools, hoses, or other items in the pathways, where they obstruct mowing. Do not extend your garden plot past the boundary markers. All plants in pathways will be mowed.
- Corner markers and number posts delineate the boundaries of individual plots and must be left in place. You may not move these markers. Contact the registrar if you are unsure of your plot boundary.
- The gardeners of each plot (including plots with fences) must maintain a six-inch unplanted path around the edge of the plot so that other gardeners can access water and plantings. The front border of your plot can go up to the path but no further.

- **Fences: Perimeter fences around plots are allowed only on these conditions:** Any fences that are built must be easily movable and weed free. Fences should not touch the ground for easier weeding. Perimeter fences must be wire and must not shade neighboring plots.

Neighborliness

- Garden carts and community tools (tools with pink/red/yellow handles) should not be removed from the gardens. Return these items to the shed area. Tall plantings should not be placed where they will shade neighboring plots. Tall support structures must be sturdy and unlikely to fall on neighbors' plantings.
- Each plot must be used for planting of flowers, vegetables, fruit, cover crops or herbs. Permitted cover crops are: red clover, spring barley, oats, winter rye, hairy vetch, sorghum, or buckwheat. Exceptions may be requested but are not guaranteed. The Garden Committee reserves the right to prohibit plants or require removal of plants.
- **Plots are not to be used for storage – only garden tools, plus a reasonable amount of garden furniture and decorations are allowed in plots.** No permanent structures are allowed; plant supports should be minimal.
- Dogs must be on a leash while passing through the gardens. Please consider that children often eat directly out of the gardens, and do not allow your dogs into other plots.
- Any sharp objects stored in plots (knives, scissors, etc) **MUST** be kept in a closed container out of reach of the paths.

Gardening practices

- Any pesticides or fertilizers used must be approved for organic production. The garden website gives information on how to maintain an organic garden. If in doubt about any material, e-mail the garden registrar.
- Chemical fertilizers and pesticides are allowed with care only in designated areas of University Houses. No pesticides/herbicides should be stored in plots.

Other items

- **No fires are allowed within the gardens.**
- Wood chips provided to the gardens may be used in garden plots. For reasons of possible plant disease and pest spread and potential chemical treatment, landscaping wood chips from outside the Preserve are not allowed. Gardeners should be aware that wood chips decay slowly and leaves may be a better mulch material for most uses.
- Glass is not allowed in the gardens for safety reasons since broken glass is difficult to remove.
- Please be careful not to bring old lead-painted items into the gardens.
- Privately-owned power equipment such as tillers and mowers are not allowed in the gardens for safety reasons. Only UW staff can use Garden power equipment. (Small hand-held drills or other tools are allowed).
- Planting comfrey, annual artemisia, or mint is discouraged. These plants spread and are difficult to eradicate. Castor plants are prohibited.
- **Do not plant trees in your garden plot.** Trees that sprout will be removed.
- **Produce from these gardens cannot be sold.** Gardeners are welcome to share vegetables with family and friends. Excess produce may be donated to food pantries.

Weeds

- **WEEDS MUST BE KEPT UNDER CONTROL.** Weedy plots will be identified by a community jury. If your garden is identified as weedy you will be notified via email and given two weeks to clear it of weeds. If you do not reply within ten days, you fail to remove the weeds within two weeks, or your garden is identified twice during the same year, your plot may be confiscated. If you wish to appeal to the garden committee, a written plan to avoid problems in the future will be required.
- **All weeds should be composted within your plot or taken to the weed pile.**

Birdhouses

- Birdhouses are not permitted in plots unless they are wren houses. If you would like to have a wren house in your plot, please contact the registrar. The Friends of the UW Lakeshore Nature Preserve provide copper plates with the correct entrance hole size for wrens to prevent house sparrows from enlarging the holes and invading the area.

Signs

- Political and/or unsolicited signs are not permitted in the gardens.

Refund Policy

- Refunds will not be granted after the third Friday in May of each year.

Financial assistance policy

- Some partial sponsorships for plot fees will be available each season, depending on donations to the assistance fund. While funds are available, assistance will be granted in the order that requests are received, depending on eligibility. Please fill out the form at the end of the application to request assistance. Gardeners that would like to contribute to the fund can donate any amount they choose. *Financial assistance is not available for no-workday fees.

Orientations

- All new gardeners must attend an orientation.

If you leave before the end of the season: Please let the registrar know immediately if you are giving up your plot. There is often a waiting list, and your plot can be assigned to another gardener. If you are leaving the gardens and want to transfer your plot to another individual, you must contact the registrar, and request the transfer. Only the registrar can assign plots. The request to transfer may be granted if there is not a waiting list. Plots transferred without consulting the registrar may be confiscated. Subletting plots is not permitted. All rental agreements and fee collections must be with the Gardens by way of the registrar.

No Workday Fee

Gardeners who are unable to work a shift at a workday can pay a “no workday option” fee of \$45. This fee must be paid by December 1 of each year. Gardeners who have not done a workday or paid the fee will not be allowed to renew their plot or apply for a different plot the following season until the no-workday fee has been paid.

Garden Resources and Services

- **Lakeshore Nature Preserve:** The gardens are part of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve. As part of the Preserve, we observe their hours and are closed from 10 pm to 4 am. Bicycles may be used in the gardens, but not in the Preserve. Please respect natural areas outside the garden boundaries – gardeners may not cut or take sticks from the Preserve.
- **Driving and Parking Private vehicles is not allowed in the garden area.** Parking is available in designated spots on Eagle Heights Dr. and at the south end of the basketball court at University Houses.
- **Gardening Information:** Many resources are available on the Eagle Heights Gardens web site (see <http://www.eagleheightsgardens.org/>).
- **Water:** Spigots are turned on in the gardens in late April/early May, and turned off near the end of October, depending on weather and the threat of frost. Please report any water problems as soon as possible to the registrar.
- **Hoses:** If your garden is at Eagle Heights, check the distance before you purchase a hose, as some gardens require longer hoses (75 ft) for complete coverage. At University Houses, we provide hoses.
- **Garden paths:** The common garden paths are maintained by the garden workers. Gardeners should not dig into, plant into, or obstruct the paths.
- **Garden carts:** Do not tip the carts sideways, as this can damage them. Carts must be shared, and must not be kept in plots or taken out of the garden. Empty and return the cart to the garden shed when you are finished gardening for the day.
- **Compost and lake weeds:** Compost and lake plants removed from Lake Mendota are sometimes available. These are not fertilizers, but mixing these materials with the soil in your plot will improve the soil texture.
- **Garbage:** Place all garbage in the garbage cans or dumpster at the garden entrance. **Do not place plants in garbage cans or dumpster, and do not place garbage in the weed piles.**
- **Mulch:** Leaves are collected from Eagle Heights and Shorewood Hills in October and November and delivered to the gardens. Leaves are not fertilizers, but spreading a thick layer will slow the growth of weeds throughout the season.
- Maps of the gardens including plot numbers are available on the Eagle Heights Community Gardens website: <http://www.eagleheightsgardens.org>

Plot Assignment Policy

- Due to our affiliation with the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Division of University Housing, priority in plot assignment is given to residents of University Apartments and current students of UW-Madison. All plots are rented for a year at a time and no guarantees are made of continued use. Returning gardeners in good standing are given priority over new gardeners, and can request each year to return to their previous plot.

2026 Eagle Heights & University Houses Community Gardens Application

Last Name/Family Name: _____ First Name: _____

Mailing address: _____

E-mail address: (required) _____ Phone Number: _____

Secondary Gardeners (optional, will be included on general email list if address provided):

Last Name/Family Name: _____ First Name: _____

E-mail address: _____

The following shows the order of priority used in plot assignment. Returning gardeners in good standing have priority over new gardeners and may request to renew their previous plot. Please check or circle the status of the primary gardener applying.

	Eagle Heights, University Houses or Harvey St. Resident	UW Student*	UW Faculty/Staff	UW Alumni	Community Member
Large plot	\$38	\$38	\$74	\$74	\$74
Small plot	\$26	\$26	\$57	\$57	\$57

If applying as a student, please include a course schedule with your application.

I am requesting a plot at (Please check ALL applicable boxes):

- Eagle Heights Gardens University Houses Gardens
 - Either location is fine
 - I am new to Eagle Heights/University Houses Gardens. ALL NEW GARDENERS MUST ATTEND AN ORIENTATION.
 - Preferred rows or areas in gardens _____
 - I would like a small plot. (Weeds and other challenges of gardening can be overwhelming! New gardeners and experienced gardeners who just want a little space are encouraged to apply for a small plot.)
 - I gardened in EH/UH in 2025 and wish to request the same plot: Plot # _____
 - I gardened in EH/UH in 2025 and do not wish to renew the same plot: # _____
- I wish to request a new row or area: _____

If you are unable to participate in a workday, you are required to pay a “no workday” fee in addition to the regular plot fee. You can pay now or wait to pay at the end of the season if you cannot work as planned.

- Plan to attend a workday
- No workday option (Pay an extra \$45)

CHECKS, CASHIER CHECKS, or MONEY ORDERS ONLY, payable to “Division of University Housing.” (No cash or starter checks.)

- I would like to donate to the financial assistance fund. Donation amount included with fees: _____

Total payment included with application: _____

Required:

- I understand that I must use only organic gardening practices. (please check box to acknowledge).
*Pre-2025 renewing UH gardeners in the C, D, E and F rows may attach additional form in lieu of checking box.

I have read and understand the application packet and agree to follow the “Gardening Rules.” I will make sure that every gardener in my plot knows the rules and observes them.

Signature of Primary Gardener _____ Date _____

MAIL IN THIS PAGE AND YOUR PAYMENT - KEEP THE REST OF THE PACKET FOR REFERENCE.

Mail address: Eagle Heights Gardens c/o Community Center, 611 Eagle Heights, Madison, WI 53705 or use drop box in the foyer of the Eagle Heights Community Center.

Financial assistance request form

***To apply for financial assistance for garden plot fees, complete and include this form with your application.**

This chart was created using Dane County HUD income brackets, following metrics used by the Dane County Gardens Network. Circle BOTH the number of people in your household AND the income bracket for your whole household:

Household size:	1 person	2 people	3 people	4 people	5 people	6 people	7 people	8 people	Assistance Eligibility
Bracket 1 yearly gross income	<\$26,450	<\$30,200	<\$34,000	<\$37,750	<\$40,800	<\$43,800	<\$46,850	<\$49,850	Eligible for half fee assistance
Bracket 2 yearly gross income	\$26,450 - \$44,100	\$30,200 - \$50,400	\$34,000 - \$56,700	\$37,750 - \$62,950	\$40,800 - \$68,000	\$43,800 - \$73,050	\$46,850 - \$78,100	\$49,850 - \$83,100	Eligible for half fee assistance
Bracket 3 yearly gross income	\$44,100 - \$52,920	\$50,400 - \$60,480	\$56,700 - \$68,040	\$62,950 - \$75,540	\$68,000 - \$81,600	\$73,050 - \$87,660	\$78,100 - \$93,720	\$83,100 - \$99,720	Eligible for quarter fee assistance
Bracket 4 yearly gross income	\$52,920 - \$68,500	\$60,480 - \$78,250	\$68,040 - \$88,050	\$75,540 - \$97,800	\$81,600 - \$105,650	\$87,660 - \$113,450	\$93,720 - \$121,300	\$99,720 - \$129,100	Eligible for quarter fee assistance
Bracket 5 yearly gross income	>\$68,500	>\$78,250	>\$88,050	>\$97,800	>\$105,650	>\$113,450	>\$121,300	>\$129,100	Not eligible for assistance

- Priority will be given to students and UW Apartments residents for assistance.
- Gardeners may apply for assistance more than one year in a row, but priority will be given to new assistance applicants. If funds remain, second-time applicants may receive assistance.
- The program is first come, first served. Assistance will be allocated as long as funds are available. You will be contacted about your eligibility for the program and availability of assistance.
- Contact the Registrar with any questions about this form.