

# Warren St. Marks Community Garden

## BYLAWS, revised April 2008

Welcome! In the 1980s the Warren St. Marks Community Garden between Warren Street and St. Marks Place and 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenues was transformed from a vacant lot full of debris into a working community garden by volunteer work of people in this community. It will be made a part of the Brooklyn-Queens Land Trust after further intensive volunteer work. In order to continue to provide this neighborhood in New York City with an opportunity to collectively garden a small area of land, we rely on a commitment from each member to help maintain the space. We ask that you sign the garden registration form indicating that you understand and agree to follow the rules below.

### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Warren St. Marks Community Garden is to advance gardening opportunities for its members and to make our neighborhood attractive and fun to be in. We accomplish this by enjoying it from within and from without, and by working in it, walking in it, and by meeting and getting to know our neighbors.

**Membership is open to anyone 16 years and older who pays a nominal annual fee and follows the garden's bylaws.** We work with our local schools and other community groups to bring further gardening opportunities to more people. In recognition of our variety of members, we have both individual plots and community plots; members are not required to tend a plot, nor are they guaranteed a plot of their own. In an effort to be responsible to our environment, we compost, and we do not allow the use of non-organic pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers. **BRICKS AND TREATED WOOD/LUMBER ARE NOT ALLOWED. ONLY ORGANIC MATERIALS ARE.**

### ORGANIZATION & GOVERNANCE

The running of our garden is overseen by volunteer Coordinators, but decisions are made by the entire garden community and by consensus whenever possible. Grievances and complaints about individual members will follow a forthcoming procedure.

Coordinators include a Gardening Coordinator, a Treasurer, an Administrative Coordinator who also represents the garden to the Trust for Public Land, the Brooklyn-Queens Land Trust, and Green Thumb, and coordinators for plot distribution, membership, events, communications and fundraising. With the general membership, the Coordinators set the rules and regulations of the garden and approve any structural additions or alterations to any portion of the garden. Any member in good standing may be a Coordinator when there is an opening, and everyone is encouraged to take his or her turn running the garden. A household only has one vote. A Coordinator has a vote for every position s/he fills, i.e., if someone holds two positions s/he has two votes. Two or more people may share a position and thus their vote. At least one position must be filled by a resident of either Warren Street or St. Marks Place between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenues.

In an effort to keep everyone on the same page regarding garden policy, there is **an Annual General Meeting held in February for the entire garden membership.** The next AGM will be on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009. The decisions and actions of the previous year are reviewed. The bylaws may only be revised at this meeting. All members are heartily encouraged to attend. Elections for Coordinator positions are held at this meeting. There will also be at least one formal meeting of the Coordinators during the growing season to discuss the budget. Monthly Garden meetings will be held in the garden, one hour prior to the start of the monthly Garden Day year round. As was

decided at the 2007 AGM, a quorum of 8 current members and 3 Coordinators is required at the meeting to make rule changes or decisions about substantive spending. This year meetings will be held at 10:00 AM and finish by 11:00 AM. During winter months the group will determine a place and time for the monthly meeting.

Our garden is currently owned by the Trust for Public Land and we are also supported by GreenThumb of New York City. Ownership will move to the Brooklyn-Queens Land Trust, a form of self-governance currently under construction that is made up of 34 community gardens in Brooklyn and Queens. In order for this organization to take shape, our garden members must be involved in the planning process as well as the subsequent governing.

### MEMBERSHIP & FEES

A member is adult who is current in his or her dues and signed the membership registration form. Other than household members listed in the form, members may not give keys to people who have not signed the form.

Members who share a household are welcome to sign up for a single membership, with a single key issued. A member must be 16 years or older. For safety reasons, members are asked not to allow their underage family members in the garden alone. Please let the membership coordinator know when someone joins your household or if you move.

Dues of \$10.00 per year must be paid by the first weekday each year. Members who are able are urged to pay up to \$25 a year and to consider making additional financial and material donations. An installment plan for membership payment may be arranged. Anyone choosing to pay the annual fee over a period of time is requested to make their arrangements in advance so they have made full payment the first Garden Day in April. Anyone who joins the garden after Labor Day may skip a year and renew in the spring of the following year. When a member joins he or she will receive a key to the garden that should not be copied. The fee for a lost key is \$15; please note that it can take several days to replace a key. Members are asked to return the key if they do not renew.

A school or organization that wants to join the garden and use it for their group can join the garden under an **institutional membership**. A person from the institution must sign a form indicating they understand the garden's rules and agree to abide by them. This person will be the contact person for the institution. The annual contribution is the same. A current garden member will orient the group representative, outlining the rules and pointing out the garden's concerns. Groups with children should include at least one adult per every 10 children.

All new members must attend an orientation before they can be given a key or begin gardening a plot. The orientations will take place during each month's Garden Day. Information on how to become a member and a schedule of Garden Days is posted on the garden gates.

### GARDENING

The garden has communal flower, vegetable and herb plots. Individual plots are also available for planting. Only the vegetables and herbs are available for picking; please do not pick flowers from the communal beds. **Please do not take produce or flowers from individual plots. Non-organic pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers shall not be used in the garden.** We have composting areas and gardeners are requested to use them. Remember, the smaller you chop things up, the quicker they break down.

During the growing season (April through November), the garden hosts a monthly Garden Day. In 2008, the Garden Days are held on the second Sunday of the month. In November, the Garden Day

and Marathon Bakesale will be held on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. A potluck barbeque has sometimes followed each Garden Day. The garden Coordinators and other experienced gardeners will be available throughout these days to show members what needs to be done in the garden, including watering, picking up garbage, tending the compost, clearing weeds and debris from the paths, hosting open hours, etc. **All garden members are strongly encouraged to attend as many monthly Garden days as possible.** These serve not only as a way for us to keep up with work in the garden, but also as an opportunity for members to get to know one another, learn from each other and strengthen our sense of community. A chore board is posted in the tool shed. Members are also encouraged to participate in the non-gardening work, which include mailings, meetings, committees, fundraising, capital planning and coordination with the Brooklyn-Queens Land Trust.

#### INDIVIDUAL PLOTS

Individual plots are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Allocating those plots is the job of the Plot Coordinator. Members wishing to acquire a plot, or increase or otherwise alter their current gardening space, or tend additional space, should consult this person.

**Only members in good standing may have plots; members who do not pay their dues, attend fewer than five of the eight Garden Days, or do not maintain their plots risk losing them.** If you have a garden plot you are expected to actively maintain it and you must till your plot by the Garden Day in May. Plot-tenders must weed the walkway in front of their plots. Members are not allowed to work in another member's planting area without prior approval of that member. Members questioning the ownership of un-harvested crops should contact the plot coordinator. Members who are unable to harvest their crops are asked to make arrangements with other garden members or contact the plot coordinator so that harvestable crops are not wasted. Produce and flowers not picked from individual plots by Marathon Sunday in November are up for grabs by all garden members.

**Any assigned plots that have not been tended to by the Saturday before the June Garden Day will revert back to the garden community.** (Unattended plots will no longer be available to that plot holder for his/her personal growing. In addition, the gardener who has not attended to his/her plot by the Saturday before the first Garden Day in June will not have the first right to that plot for the following year.) At that time, if there are members on a waiting list for plots, the unattended plot(s) will be reassigned to them on a first come, first served basis. If there are not any members waiting for plots, they will become part of the shared communal plots.

In addition, throughout the gardening season, if plots seem to be unattended or abandoned, one of the garden coordinators will get in touch with that plot holder to find out his/her status. If the plot holder is unable to tend to his/her plot, the plot will become a community plot and will no longer be available for that gardener's personal use. Garden Days will serve as markers in this assessment.

The garden is the equivalent of three lots and requires a tremendous amount of work to maintain. Therefore, all gardeners are asked to assist the garden by participating in seasonal open-hours. The garden is obligated by BQLT to maintain ten open-hours a week. Open Hours for 2008 will be Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday from 6:30-8:30 PM and Sunday 3-7 PM, weather and volunteers permitting. **Participation in helping run the garden, including administrative assistance and attendance at the monthly Garden Days, will be noted and taken into consideration when considering plot distribution the following season.**

**Plot holders must attend 5 out of the 8 monthly Garden Days or they will lose their plots and not be allowed to have a plot the following year.** If for some reason a plot holder knows he/she cannot make 5 out of 8 Garden Days, nor have his/her Garden Day covered

by a non-plot holding garden member, he/she may speak with a Gardening Coordinator **PRIOR** to the Garden Day to try to come up with a mutually agreeable strategy to make up for missed Garden Days. If four Garden Days are missed without prior discussion with a Gardening Coordinator, the plot holder will lose their plot and not be allowed to have a plot the following year. Significant contributions to garden events like movies and bakesales will also count as a Garden Day contribution. Plot holding households in good standing who have or adopt a baby can take one year of maternity leave during which they must maintain their plot, but they are not required to participate in Garden Days.

## EVENTS

Our garden has several scheduled events each year.

We have in the past hosted Spoke the Hub's Local Produce Festival, movies, a mid-summer party, an end of season harvest potluck, a bake-sale on Marathon Sunday (first Sunday in November), and activities for kids. In some years, members have also gathered regularly for potluck barbecues on Sunday nights. Any event that is not regularly scheduled must be approved by the General Coordinator(s) and Events Coordinator.

Only paying members who have attended an orientation, have a key, and have been a garden member for at least three months can host garden parties/events. All garden parties and events are open to all garden members. There are no private parties. Proposed events must be cleared with the general coordinators and events coordinator and announced via the listserv to garden members. The garden may not be used for exclusively private parties. The garden charges a fee for commercial use.

Operating funds are set aside each season for garden materials, tools and scheduled events. Members wishing to request garden funds more than \$5 must submit the Request for Funds form to the treasurer, along with approval from two coordinators one of which must be a administrative coordinator. All reimbursement forms must be filed with the treasurer within 90 days of the purchase. **Failure to follow these procedures may result in the member not being reimbursed.**

## DOGS

All dogs must be registered by their owner who is a garden member in good standing. Dogs must be accompanied by their owner at all times. The garden's dog rules and registration form are available from the membership coordinator(s) and must be read and filled out before a dog is allowed in the garden.


## GENERAL

Structural additions or alterations to any portion of the garden are subject to the approval of the Coordinating group before proceeding with plans. All notices, information and ornamentation not pertaining directly to gardening activities are subject to Coordinator approval before posting or installing in or around the garden.

The garden should be an open and inviting place for those who pass by, especially during our **official open hours, to be set, announced and posted each season.** At other times members are encouraged to leave the entrance gate open while in the garden, but note that you are responsible for anyone you allow to enter. Members under 18 years old are requested to lock the gate behind them when they enter, for safety issues. The gate must be locked when a member is not present.

Please be considerate of those living in the buildings adjacent to the garden and of all of our neighbors on Warren and St Marks. No persons will be denied access to the garden or be otherwise subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, handicap, marital status, sexual

orientation or affectional preference. Members concerned with the observance of the garden rules as they apply to themselves or to other members should contact the Coordinators to resolve questions or disputes.

4/3/09  Valerie English 4/3/09 3:29 PM  
**Deleted:** 3/6/09