

## 2008 Welcome Brochure

**The Ballard P-Patch: a community garden.** The most important thing to understand about becoming a member of the Ballard P-Patch is not only that you receive your very own garden plot in one of the nicest locations in the city; you also become a member of the Ballard P-Patch “community”. Please take time to meet and work with your garden neighbors. Because the most important word in “community garden” is not “garden”, we invite everyone into our P-Patch. The garden is open to the public during daylight hours. Please make sure to welcome our visitors and fellow gardeners whenever you see them in the garden.

### **The Ballard P-Patch history.**

The Ballard P-Patch was founded in 1976, so we’re among the oldest gardens in Seattle. The site is 19,000 square feet, and is divided into approximately 90 plots. The property that became the Ballard P-Patch is owned by Our Redeemer’s Lutheran Church. The plots are 10x10 or 10x20. A few larger plots were “grandfathered” in. All plots are designated for year-around gardening. The Ballard P-Patch also has several “tall boxes” built to accommodate gardeners with mobility challenges or other special needs.

### **The Ballard P-Patch supports the Ballard Food Bank.**

Ballard P-Patch Gardeners are especially proud of the time and effort dedicated to the “Growing for Giving” program. In 2007 we donated 1470 pounds of fresh, organic produce to the food bank. Colorful signs throughout the garden will soon identify the Growing for Giving plots.

## **Plot Use and Maintenance (aka: the fine print)**

**Maintaining your garden is your responsibility.** If you will be out of town and need help watering, weeding, or harvesting, please notify your plot neighbor or your site coordinators. Consider donating your produce to the “Growing for Giving” gardens while you’re away so it doesn’t go to waste.

**Maintain your pathways.** Allow at least six inches of space at each edge of your plot for walkways between plots. If you choose to garden to the edge of your plot, you must keep your access paths fully within your own plot. Don’t let your garden expand beyond its border and don’t allow plants to overhang onto the paths. You must keep the common paths around your garden level, weeded, and mulched. Sorry, time maintaining pathways around your plot doesn’t count as community hours.

**Keep your plot tended.** During the gardening season, your site coordinators

monitor your plot usage. When plots are unattended (overgrown, weedy, or unharvested), gardeners will be contacted by phone or email and asked to take care of the plot by a specified deadline. If the site coordinator or P-Patch staff contacts you about an unattended plot two times in one year and your plot becomes unattended a third time, your plot will be reassigned without further notice. Fees will not be refunded. If there's ever any reason that you're unable to maintain your plot, please notify your site coordinator as soon as possible.

**Please park in the church lot to the south of the garden.** Avoid parking on the grass strip on 25<sup>th</sup> unless you are unloading supplies or you have mobility challenges. Whenever possible please walk, bike, or take the bus.

**The tool shed, wheelbarrows, locks, tools, and other important topics:**

Organic fertilizer is supplied to all gardeners and stored in the shed. Cover crop seeds are provided in the fall. Think about donating your new and unused seeds for use in the "Growing for Giving" plots or for your fellow gardeners. Just drop them in the box in the shed.

Speaking of the "Growing for Giving", please think about planting a row for the hungry and donating your extra produce to this cause. Please rinse, bag, and weigh all donated produce, and be sure to write down your donation in the "Growing for Giving" logbook in the shed. Donations are picked up by 8:00 am each Wednesday.

Tools and hoses are provided for the garden. Please be a considerate tool user. Please clean all tools before returning them to the shed, and stow them neatly in their designated areas. Hang hoses neatly when finished watering. Please conserve water, and water in early morning or evening for best results.

There is no garbage pick-up at the garden, so please carry your trash home.

Do not store anything, especially tomato cages or beanpoles, behind or next to the shed or the perimeter fences. Please take these items home. Debris left around the shed or in your plot portrays a poor image of our garden to the neighborhood.

Please make a special effort to keep compost bins areas tidy.

Composting: We have a beautiful compost bin system and EVERYONE needs to pitch in and do their best with composting. Here are a few quick chopping tips:

Chop things when they are fresh and green. Dried plants are tougher to chop

and compost more slowly.

If you can't see the cutting block, you're chopping too much at once. Chopping with quick strokes on a small bundle will make the work go more quickly with less risk of slipping.

The chopping cleavers are stored in the bin attached to the main compost bins.

Be sure to wipe cleavers clean before stowing them.

Closely supervise your children and help them learn respect for gardening and boundaries.

The lock combinations for the main shed lock, the wheelbarrow chain locks and the compost storage bin are all the same. You can get the combination from the site coordinator.

Please be considerate of the neighbors. Keep voices low at all times in the garden, especially in the shed area. Avoid using motorized equipment. Do not chop compost in the early morning or late evening hours. Keep areas alongside neighboring properties tidy. One of the most important jobs of being a Ballard gardener is working to be a good neighbor.

### **Some plants and materials cause problems.**

Do not plant spreading plants, such as mint, unless you can keep them completely contained within your plot and out of pathways.

Large, woody plants often create problems because they can't be composted without special handling. These include corn, sunflowers, fennel, and berry bushes. Please check with your site coordinator before planting woody plants. If you can't thoroughly chop any portion of your garden waste, please take it home.

Because they can broadcast thousands of seeds throughout the garden, Fennel, Calendula and Borage may not be planted at Ballard P-Patch without approval in advance from the site coordinator. Also, please **do not** put seed heads from these plants into the compost.

Comfrey and ivy are not allowed at any of the P-Patch gardens.

Check with the site coordinator before installing structures or using concrete blocks. Please ensure your structures and plants do not shade your plot neighbor. Plants that can cause shade problems include sunflowers, asparagus, runner beans, and corn.

Because it decomposes more easily, consider using cotton twine or jute instead of nylon-based twine.

Well-behaved dogs are welcome and must be kept on a leash within your plot area, and not tied up on the patio. Please keep them from barking, in consideration of the neighbors, and remember to scoop, in consideration of everybody else!

## **Community Hours- Keeping the garden beautiful and welcoming.**

**You must contribute at least eight hours toward community gardening.** To maintain the beauty of the garden and to provide these plots to gardeners like you, the Ballard P-Patch requires many tasks, both in the garden and “behind the scenes”. In the garden, the tasks mostly involve composting, pathway and perimeter maintenance, tending food bank plots, and general tidying. Behind the scenes, some of the projects include Art in the Garden (our fabulous annual event and one not to be missed), fundraising, organizing work parties, organizing site improvement projects, working with the P-Patch office and the church council, and coordinating volunteers.

### **Some of the particulars of community hours:**

**Log your hours.** There’s a “Community Hours Log” notebook in the shed. The notebook has an hours tracking sheet for each gardener. Make sure to log any hours you work on community tasks. This is your responsibility and is easiest to maintain if you write it down right after you complete a task.

**Work to get your hours in early.** Much of the important work in the garden needs to be done in the spring. Too often, people wait until the fall, and then have difficulty meeting their hours requirement. If you contribute hours early in the season, you benefit the garden as well as yourself. Work parties are scheduled at various times to accommodate various schedules.

**Attend work parties.** The work parties are the best option for your community hours, because a lot of work gets done in a short time, we work on fun projects, and you can meet and “party” with your gardening neighbors. Food and beverages are provided. Think about baking for a work party as a way to log your community hours. There are many opportunities besides work parties to contribute your hours. Just ask your site coordinator!

**Check the “Task List” for ideas on community hours.** The “Task List” is an ongoing list, located in the “Community Hours Log” notebook in the shed. This identifies tasks that can be done whenever you have time to contribute. Also

look for the bright signs posted around the garden that pinpoint specific tasks that need to be done.

**Help with fundraising.** The Ballard P-Patch has fundraisers during the year. One is Art in the Garden, which features a bake sale and other fundraising activities. The other is pursuing funding through grant proposals. Please think about volunteering for these activities, as your ideas and suggestions, and especially your participation and energy, are welcome. We put the “fun” in our fundraisers and the proceeds benefit the garden and the community.

**We need organizers.** Consider taking the lead on a project, fundraiser, or work party. We’ll make sure you get all the help and support you need to be successful.

**Need help deciding what to do?** Sometimes it’s hard to know which tasks are highest priority or which tasks are best suited to your abilities. Check the task list posted in the shed or contact your site coordinator for suggestions.

**It’s your responsibility to contribute a minimum of eight hours toward community projects.** Your community hours are very important to the success of the garden. Current P-Patch program guidelines specify that those gardeners who haven’t logged a minimum of eight community hours by October 31<sup>st</sup> will not be able to renew.. Please take the responsibility to get your hours done without needing to be reminded by your site coordinators. Unless each gardener contributes his or her fair share, other gardeners end up having to do extra work. Remember that the Ballard P-Patch is a community garden for all to enjoy, not just for our gardeners, but for the surrounding community as well. Your contribution is very important (and greatly appreciated)!