

# Instructions for the use and management of the City of Helsinki's allotments

A photograph of a garden scene. In the foreground, there are large green leaves and clusters of bright red flowers. In the background, a person is bent over, working in a garden. The scene is bright and sunny.

Helsinki

# Instructions for the use and management of the City of Helsinki's allotments

Welcome to grow your food organically on one of the City of Helsinki's allotment gardens. Cultivating allotments promotes public health and makes the City more diverse and interesting. Please note that the allotment gardens are recreational areas open to all, and therefore these areas, apart from the allotments themselves, have free access.

## Using an allotment

- An allotment must be cultivated and kept in good condition. Cultivation must begin annually by the end of May. Uncultivated allotments are redistributed at the beginning of June.
- If a cultivator stops cultivation on their allotment, they must remove all of their belongings from the allotment and return it to the association that is managing the site. Otherwise, the association may charge the cultivator for the cost of emptying the allotment.
- Lighting a fire and burning rubbish or other waste is prohibited.
- Driving a car up to an allotment is not allowed.

## Permitted plants and their care

- In addition to edible plants and flowers, berry bushes no higher than 1.5 m are also allowed. These bushes must be planted at least

1.2 metres from the allotment boundary. Other woody plants, such as trees, do not belong on the allotments.

- Plants must be arranged so that they can be tended to from within the boundaries of the allotment and do not cause disturbance to other cultivators.
- Weeds must be removed before they flower.
- Only organic plant protection products and pesticides are allowed.
- The cultivators are obligated to keep the allotment site's drainage ditches clear of any obstacles and prevent plants from spreading from the allotments to the ditches.
- Do not grow any harmful invasive species on your allotment (see separate appendix). They will cause damage to biodiversity.
- The cultivators must eradicate harmful invasive species from the entire allotment garden.

## Structures and installations

- You may build a small compost frame (maximum dimensions 90 cm x 90 cm) and a storage box for garden tools.
- Row covers or temporary polytunnels (maximum height 50 cm) may be used for starting seeds.
- Constructing permanent structures, such as barbeque grills, greenhouses, playhouses, pergolas, gates or tiled areas, is not allowed.
- Rabbit fences may be built (maximum height 120 cm). Plastic-coated metal mesh with a sufficiently large mesh size should be used where possible, but brushwood fences are also allowed.
- Raised beds may have wooden frames (maximum size 100 cm x 120 cm).
- Only portable barbeque grills are allowed on the allotments.
- The association has the right to remove a structure that does not comply with these instructions from the allotment at the cultivator's expense.
- Any shared benches/tables will be placed in the communal areas.

## Hygiene

- The association may purchase a composting or chemical toilet with its own funds, but must always have the City's written permission regarding the toilet's location and appearance. The association will be responsible for cleaning and maintaining the toilets.

## Composting

- The association should establish a shared composting system.

- If a system like this is not possible, however, the garden waste must be composted on each allotment separately. This will produce quality mulch for soil improvement, reducing the amount of commercial soil or fertilisers needed.
- The compost frames must be made of wood or a commercially produced material that matches the surrounding colours (e.g. grey, brown or green).
- Composting household waste is prohibited.
- Harmful invasive species must not be composted at the allotment gardens. Instead they must be destroyed according to the IS prevention instructions.
- All non-organic waste must be removed from the site by using a shared rental skip during the autumn clean, for example.

## Maintenance of pathways, ditches and shared plantings

- The City will maintain and care for any footpaths and cycling lanes in the allotment site. Use the following online application to check which routes are managed by the City: <https://kartta.hel.fi/?setlanguage=en> > Streets and parks > Public area register > Themes > Green area maintenance classes
- The association is responsible for all other routes and lanes in the allotment site.
- Every cultivator must take care of the sections of smaller pathways running next to their individual allotment. The paths running between the allotments are 60 cm in width, and



their care is shared equally by the allotments on either side.

- The association must ensure that the cultivators take care of their own pathway sections, keeping them in good condition.
- The cultivators must also keep the ditch edges next to their individual allotments clear of vegetation.
- The ditches surrounding the allotments must not be filled with plant waste, and nor may bridges or other structures be built there.
- The cultivators are responsible for caring for any hedges planted by the City that act as allotment boundaries.
- The City will clear the larger ditches with machines at specific intervals. In order for this clearing to take place without prior notice, the

edges of the ditches must remain open and empty of any clutter.

- The City will mow the larger lawn areas intended for shared use, cut the hedges and take care of the trees at the allotment sites.

### **Monitoring**

- The associations must monitor that these instructions are adhered to and, if necessary, issue a cultivator with a warning and an order to rectify any oversights or mistakes.
- If a cultivator neglects to respond to this, they may lose their allotment or be otherwise sanctioned by their association, in accordance with any further instructions the association may have. A cultivator may not transfer the rental rights of their allotment permanently to another person.

## **The City of Helsinki's Urban Environment Division wishes you a bountiful and rewarding**

[www.hel.fi/kaupunkiymparisto](http://www.hel.fi/kaupunkiymparisto)

