

Health and Safety in the Community Garden

As you head to your community garden plot, take the following personal health and safety considerations into account:

Avoid isolation. Share information with other gardeners. Know who has chronic medical conditions, who is allergic to insect stings, which elders might need shelter from extreme heat or cold, etc.

Know where the nearest phone is located. If the nearest phone is a pay phone, carry change for the pay phone with you to the garden. Know which gardeners carry a cell phone to the garden with them.

Know where the nearest public restroom is located.

Drink adequate amounts of water while at the garden, and develop the habit of drinking water before visiting the garden (instead of "when you start to feel thirsty.") This is especially important for youth and elders, whose thirst triggers may not alert the person in time to avoid dehydration.

Avoid gardening during the heat of the day, generally the early to late afternoon hours.

Avoid gardening during extreme high humidity and/or bad air quality alerts.

Use sunscreen and re-apply as needed if staying in the garden for a long period of time. Use sunscreen even on cloudy days. Use sunscreen regardless of your skin pigmentation.

Use insect repellent as need warrants. Consider adding Bti (*Bacillus thuringiensis israeliensis*) to any standing water that is in your garden; it will prevent mosquito populations from developing. Check for ticks on your clothing and person during and after gardening.

Avoid unnecessary blisters and scrapes by wearing gloves and proper footwear while doing heavy work in the garden.

Treat scrapes and skin abrasions. Keep the bacteria and contaminants out of your body; wash abrasions thoroughly with soap and water.

Avoid injury by using the proper tool for the job. Avoid weak or damaged tools; breakage

can cause injury. To avoid unnecessary stress or injury, use proper body mechanics when lifting, shoveling and doing other heavy physical labor.