



# Boulevard Garden Guidelines

APRIL 2021



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[saskatoon.ca/boulevardgardens](https://saskatoon.ca/boulevardgardens)

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## QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about Boulevard Gardening, please contact the City's Sustainability Department at [306-986-3733](tel:306-986-3733) or [sustainability@saskatoon.ca](mailto:sustainability@saskatoon.ca).



## INTRODUCTION

Boulevard Gardens are public, City-owned spaces beside [local streets](#) that are planted and maintained by residents. Boulevard Gardens can grow food and community, add beauty to neighbourhoods, provide habitat, and help manage storm water. These Guidelines provide information to residents on growing Boulevard Gardens, including where gardens are permitted, what approvals are required, what types of gardens are allowed, and the expectations for maintenance.



# TIPS TO GROW HEALTHY GARDENS AND COMMUNITY

Boulevard Gardens are part of a shared public space, so please be courteous of your community. We encourage you to get to know your neighbours in this process. You could even team up with them to grow a garden together.

## Tips for gardeners

- ✓ Visit [Saskatoon.ca/HealthyYards](https://saskatoon.ca/HealthyYards) for tips to create a beautiful and healthy garden including low-water and no-till gardening, pesticide-free practices, and more.
- ✓ Check out [Saskatoon's Good Neighbour Guide](#) for tips to help keep our neighbourhoods safe, clean, and beautiful.
- ✓ Remember that your garden site is a public space that can be accessed by neighbors, passers-by, and animals. Plants and produce may be picked, damaged, or contaminated by animals. Keep calm and carry on.

## Tips for garden neighbours

- ✓ Be respectful of your neighbour's Boulevard Garden. Don't take produce or plants that aren't yours, don't leave garbage behind, and don't let your pet damage their garden.

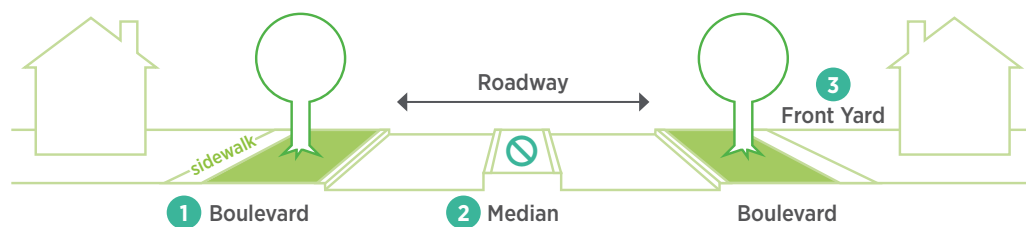


## STEP 1:

# Find out the requirements for your garden site and register your garden

Different City-owned spaces have different requirements. Refer to the diagram and information below to find out the specific requirements for your garden site.

Before you get started, register your garden at [Saskatoon.ca/BoulevardGardens](https://saskatoon.ca/BoulevardGardens). Registering your garden allows the City to contact you if needed and helps us track the number of Boulevard Gardens enriching our City.



## 1. Boulevards

A boulevard is the area between the sidewalk and street curb that is typically planted with grass and street trees. Boulevards are City of Saskatoon property, not private property.

- You do not need to wait for permission from the City before you get started.
- If you are a renter or want to garden in front of someone else's property, the property owner must also complete the Registration Form.
- You are responsible for mowing or maintaining the remainder of your boulevard in addition to the garden site. If you have a corner lot that the City typically mows, completing the Registration Form will help City staff know to avoid your garden.
- Remember that the City and utility providers will need occasional access to your site to maintain trees, roads, and utilities. They are not responsible for damage to your garden site.



## 2. Medians

A median is a paved, planted, or landscaped strip in the centre of a road. It separates lanes of traffic going in opposite directions. Gardens on medians are not currently permitted.



## 3. City-owned land directly adjacent to your property (front and side yards)

Sometimes the very front of your yard is actually City-owned land. However, these spaces are exempt from the Boulevard Garden Guidelines. You can treat these areas like you would the rest of your yard. We encourage you to follow the best practices found in these Guidelines and review [page 11](#) for more information about the Bylaws that apply.



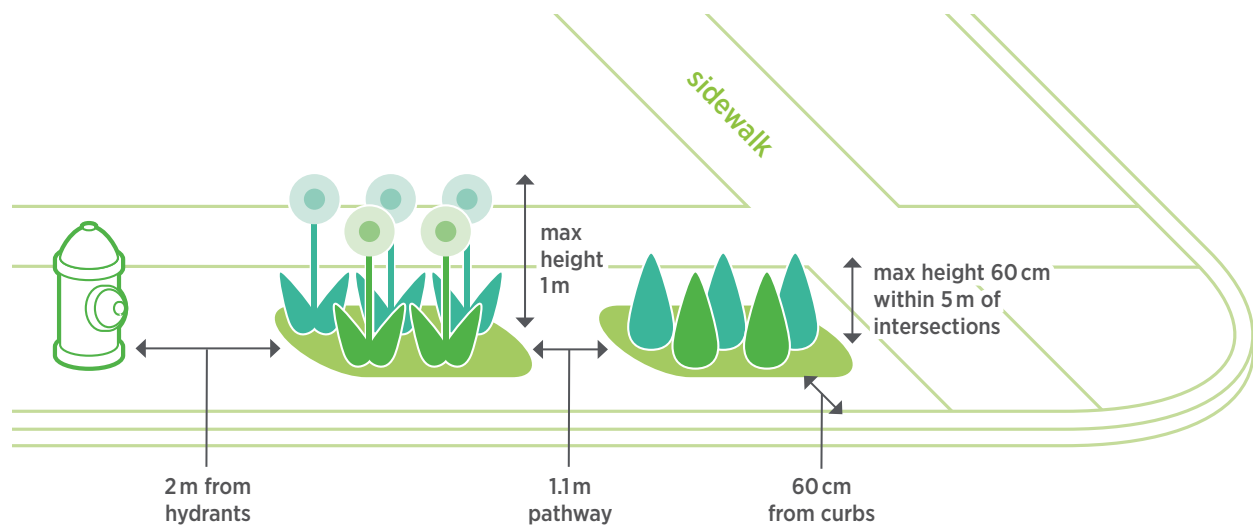


## STEP 2:

### Design and plan your garden

Boulevard Gardens are a shared space and need to be accessible, safe, and visible to everyone, including pedestrians, vehicle passengers, those with limited mobility, and work crews who need to access utilities. Do not block access or sight lines to City property (e.g., hydrants, bus stops, shelters, signs, light poles), work crews, or City equipment.

- **Pathways:** Maintain a 1.1 m (3.6') wide path through your garden (e.g., from street to sidewalk, or along side yards with no sidewalk) to make sure that pedestrians, wheelchairs, and waste carts can get by.
- **Setbacks:** Other than low-growing plants or pathway materials, keep your garden at least:
  - ▶ 30 cm (1') from driveways and back lanes.
  - ▶ 60 cm (2') from curbs. This allows passengers to open vehicle doors.
  - ▶ 1 m (3.3') from City structures such as light poles and signs.
  - ▶ 2 m (6.6') from fire hydrants. Plants up to 45 cm (18") high may be planted between 1 and 2 m from hydrants (3.3' to 6.6').
  - ▶ 5 m (16.4') from intersections. Plants up to 60 cm (2') tall may be planted within 5 m of intersections.
- **Height Restrictions:** Everywhere else, keep your garden no higher than 1 m (3.3') including the combined height of plants and structures.





## STEP 3:

### Protect street trees

Remember that trees are highly valued in our community. Follow these steps to make sure that trees near your garden are protected.

- If your garden is within 3 m (9.8') of trees, carefully hand dig your garden, and don't disturb or damage tree roots. Do not rototill within 3 m (9.8') of trees.
- Do not pile soil or add other materials within 60 cm (2') of trees. Lightly top dress with compost or mulch only.
- Do not attach signs, trellises, or other structures to trees.
- If you wish, request a City-planted tree through [this form](#). To maintain planting and maintenance standards, only trees or shrubs planted by City staff are allowed.
- Review the City's [tree protection requirements](#) for more information.





## STEP 4:

### Plant and maintain your garden

Follow the steps below to make sure your garden stays beautiful, healthy, and safe throughout the growing season.

- Prepare the soil:
  - ▶ **Always Call Before You Dig (1-866-828-4888) to make sure you do not disturb or damage underground utilities or structures. This is a serious safety risk that you will be held liable for.**
  - ▶ Use no-till gardening methods except to establish a new garden. Hand dig up to 30 cm (1') into the soil.
  - ▶ Add up to 15 cm (6") of topsoil, compost and organic mulches. You can access free "dig your own" compost and mulch from the [City Compost Depot](#).
- Plant and maintain your garden:
  - ▶ Plant vegetables, annual or perennial flowers, grasses, or groundcovers up to 1 m (3.3') tall.
  - ▶ Do not plant species listed in the [Saskatchewan Weed Control Act](#).
  - ▶ Keep your Boulevard Garden, sidewalks, and shared spaces clean, tidy, weed and garbage-free, and well maintained. Do not let garden materials, hoses, tools, or plants spill onto the sidewalk or road or leave them unattended.



## STEP 5:

### Add temporary materials and accessories

Boulevard Garden materials must be safe and well-maintained, non-toxic, and easily removed when needed (e.g., before street maintenance). All materials must also comply with the criteria in Step 2.



#### Temporary materials, furniture, and accessories

- Temporary materials include small pots and planters, garden containers, chairs, bird baths, and ornaments.
- Temporary material must be no higher than 1 m (3.3') high. Materials must not obstruct sight lines to hydrants from the street.
- Materials must be light enough that you or a work crew can easily move them when needed (e.g., before road, utility, or tree maintenance).
- Remove temporary materials from your garden site by October 15 of each year. Materials left on site over winter may be damaged or destroyed by snow removal, snow storage, or other road operations.
- Work crews must be able to easily locate and access utility covers. Potted plants on utility covers are allowed if they can be easily seen and moved by one person. Otherwise, keep these clear of garden materials, plants, and soil.



#### Moveable raised beds and containers

- Moveable raised beds and containers are permitted but must be removed from your garden site by October 15 of each year.
- Raised beds are not allowed within 0.6 metres (2') of street trees. See [Step 2](#) for additional criteria.
- The maximum dimensions must not be more than 1 metre (3.3') high (including vegetation), 1 metre (3.3') wide, and 1.5 metres (4.9') long.





## Edging, borders, and pathways

- Acceptable edging, borders, and path materials include steppingstones, paving stone, rock or other natural materials, and low fencing less than 45 cm (18") high.
- Hard surfaces must not be more than 25% of your garden's footprint to allow drainage.
- Do not place edging or borders on or around trees.



## Unauthorized Materials

Any garden material, accessory, or structure found to be unsafe, toxic, or otherwise hazardous must be removed from the garden site. These may include poorly maintained structures that pose a safety hazard, or structures that do not adhere to the below criteria. Unauthorized materials include:

- **Gravel, landscape rock, and other small stones:** These materials are easily kicked up by vehicles or equipment, which can injure pedestrians, damage property, or spread onto the street. They can also create safety hazards during tree maintenance such as stump removal.
- **Rubber mulches, reused tires, artificial turf:** These materials can be toxic to soil and plants and contribute to the urban heat island effect. They are not allowed.
- **Pesticides:** Pesticides include insecticides (for insects), herbicides (for plants) fungicides (for fungi) or rodenticides (for rodents). Pesticides can pose a risk to people, plants, and soil. Residents are not permitted to apply pesticides on City-owned spaces.
- **Permanent Structures:** These include buildings, year-round raised beds, fences, and compost bins. These types of structures interfere with visibility and access and could damage snow removal equipment.
- **Unauthorized signage:** These include signage, signals, markings, or structures affixed to trees. These features may cause harm to trees or interfere with existing street signage. They may be removed without notice. See the City's [signage webpage](#) for more information.





## STEP 6:

### Clean up your garden before winter or moving away

Make sure you clean up your Boulevard Garden before winter or if you decide to no longer garden.

- Remove all temporary materials and accessories from the garden site by October 15 of each year to avoid snow removal season. Do not leave structures on site over the winter. These may damage or be damaged by City equipment.
- If you move away or stop gardening, remove all garden materials and structures, and return the site to its original state. You can access free grass seed from the City by calling [306-975-7774](tel:306-975-7774).



## STEP 7:

### Review your responsibilities and risks

#### Food grown on public land is consumed at your own risk

The City of Saskatoon cannot guarantee the suitability of your garden site for growing food. Soil contaminants may be present at unsafe levels, particularly in neighbourhoods with a history of high industrial and commercial use, or along major roadways.

If you are concerned about soil contamination:

- Consider growing food plants in containers instead of in the ground.
- Consider having the soil tested for contaminants.
- Contact the Sustainability Department at [306-986-3733](tel:306-986-3733) or [sustainability@saskatoon.ca](mailto:sustainability@saskatoon.ca) for more information about soil contaminants.

#### City and Utility Provider Access

The City of Saskatoon and utility providers sometimes need access to public land, for example, to maintain underground utilities, build or repair sidewalks, store or remove snow, install street signage, access hydrants, or prune street trees. This could mean that plants or other garden features may be removed or damaged. The City and utility providers are not liable for damage to or removal of garden materials or structures on public land.

#### Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement

These Guidelines constitute written permission from the General Manager to place, dispose, or direct material on a street, boulevard or sidewalk per section 58.2 of Bylaw No. 7200, *The Traffic Bylaw*, subject to compliance with these Guidelines.

All Boulevard Gardening activities are subject to the [Zoning Bylaw](#), [Traffic Bylaw](#), [Drainage Bylaw](#), [Property Maintenance and Nuisance Abatement Bylaw](#), [Trees on City Property Policy](#), and the [Saskatchewan Weed Control Act](#). If there are differences between these Guidelines and City Bylaws or Policy, the Bylaws or Policy will take precedence over the Guidelines. It is the resident's responsibility to keep their Boulevard Garden well-maintained and operating within these Guidelines and the above noted Bylaws.

The City of Saskatoon does not monitor the state of Boulevard Gardens and will respond to issues on a complaint basis. City of Saskatoon employees and bylaw inspectors may conduct inspections and take steps to administer, enforce, or remedy violations of City of Saskatoon bylaws or policies. The City reserves the right to remove any plants or garden features at any time.

## If you have a concern

If you have a concern with a neighbour's Boulevard Garden, consider the following approach:

1. Discuss potential solutions with the gardener first.
2. Contact the City of Saskatoon's Sustainability Department at [306-986-3733](tel:306-986-3733) or [sustainability@saskatoon.ca](mailto:sustainability@saskatoon.ca) to let them know about your concern. If the Boulevard Garden is not compliant with the Guidelines, the Sustainability Department will help the gardener identify options to comply with the Guidelines.
3. If the above options fail, or if there is an imminent safety risk, complaints about bylaw infractions can be directed to [Bylaw Compliance](#) and residents will be notified when a complaint is received about their Boulevard Garden.

## Liability

The City of Saskatoon does not take responsibility for injury or damage caused by the vegetation or other garden features you place on its property. You could be held liable if your Boulevard Garden causes harm to people, pets, wildlife, vehicles, street trees, or other property.







