

## Cassidy Cabrera

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**From:** PHS Community Gardens <communitygardens@pennhort.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2020 11:51 AM  
**To:** Cassidy Cabrera  
**Subject:** An Update from PHS regarding COVID-19



Dear Community Gardens,

Thank you for being part of the amazing PHS community that garden to improve the health and wellbeing of our neighborhoods and region. The precautionary measures being implemented are necessary to ensure the health and safety of all, they will also have long term ramifications for the many Americans who struggle to make ends meet. We need to support each other now more than ever as we confront this public health crisis.

The COVID-19 virus has exposed us to the fragility of our food system and the vulnerability of so many people, so let's use the social ties we nurture while tending our gardens, to help connect neighbors with resources to grab-and-go food, support small businesses, navigate questions about utilities, health and more.

We are extremely passionate about the work we do to provide extra resources and support in your mission to provide sustenance to your communities. In this time, more than ever do we see the importance of growing our own food. Thank you for your dedication, and the important role you play in creating more resilience in these uncertain times.

**See below for information about the following:**

- Health and Safety Recommendations for Community Gardening/Produce Sharing
- General Resources for Philadelphians

In solidarity,

PHS

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## Resources

Please share the resources below with your networks, and please email [dwaters@pennhort.org](mailto:dwaters@pennhort.org) if you know of a resource not listed and we will help share it across our community.

## Health and Safety Recommendations for Community Gardening

1. Continue growing food! Now more than ever we should be practicing local self-reliance and grow food for ourselves and the community.

2. Exercise an abundance of caution in the garden and follow these guidelines recommended by the CDC:

- Wear gloves and disinfect high-touch spots
- Maintain social distance of six feet or more from others.
- Be mindful of frequently touched spots like gates, locks, water spigots, tools.
- Plan a day to disinfect! Use diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol or other [EPA-approved products](#). Viruses can be relatively long-lasting in the environment, and have the potential to be transferred via food or food contact surface.
- Have hand sanitizer and soap readily available in the garden. Create a sanitizing station in the garden. If hand sanitizer isn't readily available, consider making your own.

3. Limit sharing. Consider bringing your own tools for the time being as well as posting signs in the garden for people to a) wear gloves and b) always sanitize equipment after use.

4. This is the only time you'll hear us saying this, but restrict large gatherings at the garden. There is no reason people should be holding a party or barbecue at this time even if the weather feels right.

5. Consider reducing risks for at-risk gardeners such as old gardeners, immune compromised etc.

6. Stagger participation. This is more difficult but if possible consider how to stagger the involvement of folks in the garden to ensure managing social distancing.

7. Set up crop watering schedule – maybe assign gardeners to water the entire garden to limit number of active people in the space. Consider no more than 4 or 5 people in a confined area.

8. If possible, avoid public transportation to get to your garden. We know travel can be an issue for some but consider alternatives like a bike, carpooling or something else.

9. If you have a garden meeting scheduled, do it by phone or web conferencing or simply postpone. Gardens can easily open a free account with services like [Zoom](#) which can host up to 100 participants but limited to 40 minutes. If your site doesn't have access to these technologies or needs help, let us know and we can gladly guide you or offer our support / conferencing services.

10. Leverage other tech services like **WhatsApp** to spread awareness in appropriate languages to your clients, gardeners, etc.

**Here are very helpful links with recommendations regarding the handling, selling, and distribution of produce:**

- This is a given, but thoroughly [wash all produce](#) you harvest from the garden!
- [Helpful framework for thinking about gardening during this time](#)
- Farmer's market recommendations from the [PA Department of Agriculture](#)
- [An official statement from the FDA/CDC on the relationship to food handling with the spread of coronavirus](#). While it applies mostly to conventional food distributors, some of the tips and links within it can apply to post-harvest garden procedures.

\*\*\*RECOMMENDED RESOURCE GUIDES:

- A really well-stocked guide of both gardening and general resources created by the Philadelphia Food Policy Advisory Council: [FPAC- Connecting to Build a More Just Food System](#)
- Another really great compilation of food specific resources from around the country: [COVID-19 Resources for Farmers and Ag Service Provider Organizations](#).

### General Resources for Philadelphians

- Two grab-and-go meals a day are available to all Philadelphia students regardless of their school for pick up M-F, 9am-noon at one of 30 school sites listed here: <https://www.phila.gov/2020-03-14-find-free-meals-and-safe-spaces-for-students-while-schools-are-closed/>
- 50 recreation centers will remain open from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. to provide meals to children 18 and under. Six older adult centers will also remain open. [Click here to see the full list of recreation centers that will remain open](#).
- School District has paper copies of the K-12 Learning Guides (LG) available at every grab-and-go meal site and online at [www.philasd.org](http://www.philasd.org)
- Commerce Department is asking businesses to complete this Covid-19 impact survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NHZR5JQ>
- Commerce set up a business service hotline to get answers to any questions: 215-683-2100 or email [business@phila.gov](mailto:business@phila.gov)
- Get COVID-19 updates sent to your phone. Text COVIDPHL to 888-777 to receive free text alerts from [@PHLPublicHealth](#).
- Philadelphia Department of Public Health announced activation of the Greater Philadelphia Coronavirus Helpline. The Helpline can be reached by calling 1-800-722-7112
- City's expands "Promoting Healthy Families & Workplaces Act" to allow covered workers to use paid sick leave for COVID-19 related business closures, quarantine, and to stay at home w/ children during school closures
- [Learn more about your rights to sick leave here](#). Employers with 10 or more employees are required to provide paid sick leave, and employers with nine or fewer employees must allow unpaid leave. Here are infographics in English ([for workers](#), [for employers](#)) and Spanish ([for workers](#), [for employers](#)). PDFs can be found [here](#).
- [PECO suspends shut-offs and late fees till May 1](#)
- City Council: [Moratorium on evictions, foreclosures, residential tax liens, and utility cut-offs](#) in the event of a major coronavirus outbreak suggested by Councilmember Helen Gym.
- Public Utilities Commission (PUC) [PUC Prohibits Utility Terminations, Consistent with Governor's Proclamation of Disaster Emergency Related to Covid19](#)
- [PWD is suspending water service shut offs and restoring water service through May 15th](#)
- [Comcast Internet Essentials available for 2 free months for new customers who qualify](#) - including those w/SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, etc. To sign up, applicants can simply visit [www.internetessentials.com](http://www.internetessentials.com). The accessible website also includes the option to video

chat with customer service agents in American Sign Language. There are also two dedicated phone numbers 1-855-846-8376 for English and 1-855-765-6995 for Spanish.

- Are you a restaurant owner and have surplus food to donate due to closures? You can arrange a curbside pickup with Food Connect easily through the app. Learn more and download the app at [www.foodconnectgroup.org](http://www.foodconnectgroup.org).

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