



Denver Urban Gardens Smoking Policy

Policy: Denver Urban Gardens' (DUG) community gardens that are on institutional land and land owned by DUG are smoke-free environments. DUG strongly discourages smoking in community gardens on other privately owned land.

Scope: This policy applies to all community gardens in the Denver Urban Gardens (DUG) network.

Background: Community gardening enhances the health of gardeners by providing physical activity and fresh food. Promoting wellness is a major benefit of community gardening and a central part of DUG's mission. DUG believes that smoking in community gardens is contrary to the values of health and inclusiveness that we seek to promote. Accordingly, smoking (of any substance) is never allowed in gardens in the DUG network that are located on institutional land (for example, land owned by government entities, schools, or churches) or on land owned by DUG. In gardens on land held by other private landowners, DUG strongly discourages smoking for the reasons explained in this policy statement.

The primary goal of this smoking policy is to ensure a healthy and welcoming environment for community gardeners, but avoiding tobacco use is also important to protect the health of our garden plants. Gardening while smoking or after handling smoking materials can transmit a harmful disease called tobacco mosaic virus to many vegetable and flower plants.

Tobacco mosaic virus

Tobacco mosaic virus can infect many garden plants, but the disease most commonly strikes plants in the nightshade (Solanaceae) family, including tomatoes, tomatillos, peppers, and eggplant.

Plants infected with tobacco mosaic virus have patches of light green and yellow discoloration on their leaves. The virus usually does not kill infected plants, but it stunts their growth and reduces the quality and quantity of edible fruit.

Handling cigarettes and other smoking materials can contaminate the hands with tobacco mosaic virus. Tobacco smoke itself does not transmit the virus, but if you work in the garden while smoking or after handling tobacco products, the virus can spread from your hands to the plant. An infected plant can then spread the

virus to other plants on contaminated hands and tools. Young seedlings are especially vulnerable to tobacco mosaic virus.

Smoking marijuana in DUG gardens

The personal use of marijuana is now legal in Colorado for persons over the age of 21. However, the law prohibits the use of marijuana “openly and publicly or in a manner that endangers others” (Colorado Constitution, article XVIII, section 16 (3) (d)). DUG's policy is that the use of marijuana in a community garden would violate this law.

Community gardens are public places cared for by neighborhood gardeners, but they are also enjoyed by and open to neighborhood visitors, including children. Regardless of whether the use of marijuana is allowed by law, Denver Urban Gardens believes smoking marijuana in a community garden would be undesirable and potentially harmful to others. Therefore, the use of marijuana in any DUG garden is prohibited.

For more information, please see the Denver Urban Gardens policy on marijuana.

Best Practices

DUG strongly recommends the following best practices on smoking in community gardens:

1. Don't smoke in the garden.
2. If you smoke tobacco before coming to the garden, be sure to wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
3. The tobacco mosaic virus can live for a very long time on dead plant debris, so it is important to remove infected plants from the garden. Keep them out of the compost pile, because the heat generated in the composting process may not kill the virus. After handling infected plants, wash hands and tools thoroughly before working with healthy plants.