

Garden Registration Explained



**Rules and
Regulations
about food
safety in Solano**



Intro to Food Safety

Foodborne disease and illness are common but preventable through best practices. Solano County has food safety provisions in place for small gardens wishing to grow produce for on-site consumption.

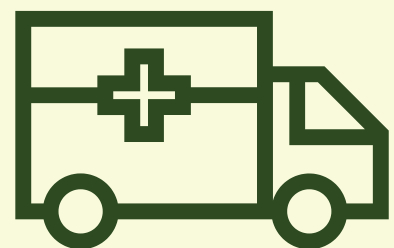
“Foodborne illnesses are a burden on public health and contribute significantly to the cost of health care. Each year foodborne illnesses sicken 48 million Americans (approximately 17% of people in the United States) and lead to 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths”

*‘Foodborne Illness Acquired in the United States’
(<https://doi.org/10.3201/eid1701.p11101>)*

Before the garden can start to use its food in the cafeteria, the following document from the Department of Resource Management must be self-certified and submitted to the Department’s Environmental Health Division. A copy of this document is presented as a checklist below, with key points underlined. Examine this checklist before, during and after the development of the school garden to avoid unnecessary delays.

All 17 qualifications must be met, none of these requirements are optional. These requirements are primarily directed at growing, and not harvesting.

In 2025 you can find this document by following the directory to Consumer Protection Program > Food Program > Permanent Food Facilities, or following this link (tinyurl.com/3fbhh2zh) to the main page



Solano Checklist

From the Health Division's checklist document:

“This agreement is intended to assure access to safe and healthy locally grown fruits and vegetables; and to assure awareness of the source of the food provided. ... Ensuring the safety of the food supply is critical to a healthy community.”

California Health and Safety Code §114021 reads:

“... foods used or sold in a food facility must be produced in accordance with applicable statutes and cannot be stored or prepared in a private residence. ...

“No resale or preparation for retail sale is allowed.

“This self-certification provides documentation of the signatories' understanding of critical factors that play a role in preventing the microbial or chemical contamination of produce, and their agreement to adhere to these requirements.”



Checklist Explained

What does this mean?

- Food cannot be stored or prepared in a private home.
- Food cannot be resold or prepared for retail sale.
- This certification acknowledges the garden manager fully understands the "*critical factors that play a role in preventing the microbial or chemical contamination of produce*" and that the garden will adhere to all these rules.

Sanitary Practices

10. Gardening and harvest equipment must be maintained in a clean condition and stored in a sanitary location. Dedicated equipment shall be solely used in the garden and not used for other purposes on the property.

11. Vegetation at the edges of vegetable patches should be minimized to prevent harborage places for rodents and nuisance insects.

12. The grounds surrounding the garden should be maintained in a manner such that pests are not attracted to the area. Plantings that conform with accepted agricultural practices such as flowers for pollination, or cover crops for erosion control are allowable if maintained for this purpose.

13. Workers/children should be restricted from entering and working in the garden after they have been working with animals, unless sanitary measures are put in place to prevent cross-contamination.

Worker Sanitation

14. Workers harvesting produce from culinary gardens must properly wash their hands before handling produce and be free of open cuts or wounds on their extremities.

15. Restroom facilities with warm water and soap must be readily accessible to anyone working in a culinary garden.

16. Workers should avoid cross-contamination of produce by ensuring equipment, gloves and other sources of contamination do not come into contact with produce after being potentially contaminated by compost or other materials.

Inspection/Notification

17. All garden facilities, equipment, operations and records shall be subject to inspection by the Solano County Department of Resource Management, Environmental Health Services Division at any time without prior notice.

I agree to adhere to the requirements listed above and agree to implement best agricultural practices in my culinary garden.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____ Phone: _____

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Environmental Health Division
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Fairfield, CA 94533
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SOLANO COUNTY
CULINARY/SCHOOL GARDEN QUESTIONNAIRE

Suburban No. (97) 784-6763
Fax: (97) 784-4888

Position/Title: _____

Garden Location: _____

Garden Name:	
Garden Operator/Title:	Phone Number:
Garden Location:	
[Attach a plot plan showing major structures, compost areas, restrooms, hand wash facilities, chemical and equipment storage sheds, exotic systems within 100 feet and the garden itself, etc.]	
Do you have a Food Safety Plan? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Water Source:	
Fertilizer Used:	
Compost Used (include source):	
Pesticides Used (include pesticide, quantity, and application frequency):	
Herbicides Used (include pesticide, quantity, and application frequency):	
Are hand washing and restroom facilities with hot water available onsite: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Distance from garden:	
Are animals excluded from the growing area: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Are any animals raised at this location: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If yes, identify animal type:	
If yes, how are the animals separated from the growing area?	
Do the same workers have access to the animals and produce growing areas: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If yes, how are you preventing cross contamination?	
Where is produce sold or used?	
Is produce washed prior to sale or use: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If yes, by whom?	
Is produce processed: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If so, how and by whom?	
Comments:	

Ensuring the safety of the food supply is critical to a healthy community. California Health and Safety Code Section 114021 provides that foods used or sold in a food facility must be produced in accordance with applicable statutes and cannot be stored or prepared in a private residence. This agreement is intended to assure access to safe and healthy locally grown fruits and vegetables; and to assure awareness of the source of the food provided. No resale or preparation for retail sale is allowed. This self-certification provides documentation of the signatories understanding of critical factors that play a role in preventing the microbial or chemical contamination of produce, and their agreement to adhere to these requirements.

Water Quality

- Water used for irrigation must be obtained from a public water system or wells tested and shown to be free from pathogens (< 2.2 Coliform MPN/ml or "absent").
- Graywater or recycled water is not an approved water source for culinary gardens.
- Water run-off from other irrigation practices unrelated to the culinary garden or rainfall water run-off must be prevented from coming into contact with the culinary garden.

Exotic Systems

- Gardens shall not be planted over or within 10 feet of a exotic system or leach field.

Animals

- Efforts shall be maintained to exclude animals, including domestic animals, from the growing area.
- Animal waste may not be used in culinary gardens.

Pesticides

- Pesticides, if used, shall be applied on or around culinary gardens in accordance with the Healthy Schools Act where applicable and in all cases shall follow all directions for use as found on the registered pesticide label.

Compost

- Compost applied to gardens must be fully composted.
- Compost applied to gardens may not be made from material that includes manure, food scraps containing animal products (meats, dairy, bones, fats/oils) or dead animals unless the compost has been obtained from an approved commercial source.

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Checklist – Basics

Include the name of the garden, the name and telephone number of a contact person, and the address where the garden is located.

Attach a plot plan showing

- major structures,
- rain barrels,
- compost areas,
- restrooms,
- hand wash facilities,
- chemical and equipment storage sheds,
- septic systems within 100 feet and
- the garden itself.

Utilize a program like PowerPoint to develop a simple map, or produce one by hand. Scale is generally not important in this case.



Checklist – Water

Section 1:

Water Quality

- Water used for irrigation must be obtained from a public water system or wells tested and shown to be free from pathogens
 - (< 2.2 Coliform MPN/ml or “absent”).
- Graywater or recycled water is not an approved water source for culinary gardens.
- Water runoff from other irrigation practices unrelated to the culinary garden or rainfall water runoff must be prevented from coming into contact with the culinary garden.
- Gardens shall not be planted over or within 10 feet of a septic system or leach field.

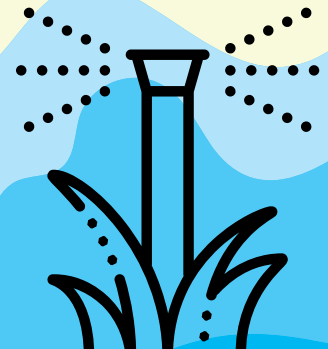
Plain language translation:

Water Quality

- Water used for irrigation must come from the tap or rainwater
 - If the water is from an agricultural well that water must to be tested to ensure it is free from pathogens (wells must have a reading of less than 2.2 Coliform MPN/ml).
- Graywater or 'recycled' water cannot be used if the garden will be producing food.
- Water runoff from sprinklers and streets must be prevented from coming into contact with the culinary garden.
- Gardens cannot be planted over or within 10 feet of a septic system or leach field.

Are rain barrels allowed?

Rain barrels are allowed and should be indicated on your diagram of the garden.



Checklist – Pests

Section 2:

Animals

- Efforts shall be maintained to exclude animals, including domestic animals, from the growing area.
- Animal waste may not be used in culinary gardens.

Plain language translation:

Animals

- Absolutely no manure may be used in a culinary garden.
- Take measures to prevent animals from entering the growing area, including dogs, cats, chickens, squirrels, etc.



Checklist – Pesticides

Section 3:

Pesticides

- Pesticides, if used, shall be applied on or around culinary gardens in accordance with the Healthy Schools Act where applicable and in all cases shall follow all directions for use as found on the registered pesticide label.

Plain language translation:

Pesticides

- Consult the Healthy Schools Act before applying any pesticide. When applying a pesticides, only use ones labeled for use in vegetable gardens, and follow the directions provided.



WE RECOMMEND AGAINST “ROUNDUP” AND OTHER GLYPHOSATE-BASED HERBICIDE

Several studies have strongly indicated glyphosate can adversely affect honeybee populations, causing death or severe harm to them and potentially other pollinators. Additionally, the use of glyphosate on a school campus *without written authority and notification from the school* may be considered illegal.

We do not recommend the use of glyphosate-based herbicide in your garden due to its adverse effects on local pollinators.

Sources are listed in the Resource Guide



Checklist – Compost

Section 4:

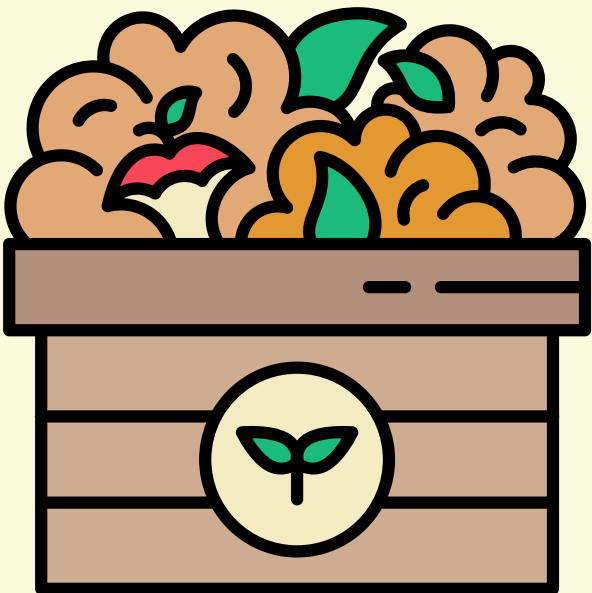
Compost

- Compost applied to gardens must be fully composted.
- Compost applied to gardens may not be made from material that includes manure, food scraps containing animal products (meats, dairy, bones, fats/oils) or dead animals unless the compost has been obtained from an approved commercial source.

Plain language translation:

Compost

- Compost applied to gardens must be fully composted.
- Compost created on-site cannot contain manure, dairy, meat, or bone scraps.
- Compost purchased from a commercial compost dealer may contain these products, provided the material has fully decomposed.



Checklist – Sanitation

Section 5:

Harvest Sanitation

- Gardening and harvest equipment must be maintained in a clean condition and stored in a sanitary location. Dedicated equipment shall be solely used in the garden and not used for other purposes on the property.
- Vegetation at the edges of vegetable patches should be minimized to prevent harborage places for rodents and nuisance insects.
- The grounds surrounding the garden should be maintained in a manner such that pests are not attracted to the area. Plantings that conform with accepted agricultural practices such as flowers for pollination, or cover crops for erosion control are allowable if maintained for this purpose.
- Workers/children should be restricted from entering and working in the garden after they have been working with animals, unless sanitary measures are put in place to prevent cross-contamination.

Plain language translation:

Harvest Sanitation

- Harvest equipment must be kept clean and stored in a sanitary location.
- Dedicated equipment will be used in the garden and will not be used for other purposes.
- Minimize unnecessary foliage to prevent rodents and nuisance insects.
- Plantings such as flowers for pollination, or cover crops for erosion control are allowable if maintained.
- Workers/children should be restricted from entering and working in the garden after they have been working with animals (unless sanitary measures are put in place to prevent cross-contamination).



Checklist – Sanitation

Section 6:

Worker Sanitation

- Workers harvesting produce from culinary gardens must properly wash their hands before handling produce and be free of open cuts or wounds on their extremities.
- Restroom facilities with warm water and soap must be readily accessible to anyone working in a culinary garden.
- Workers should avoid cross-contamination of produce by ensuring equipment, gloves and other sources of contamination do not come into contact with produce after being potentially contaminated by compost or other materials and working in the garden after they have been working with animals, unless sanitary measures are put in place to prevent cross-contamination.

Plain language translation:

Worker Sanitation

- Workers must properly wash their hands before handling produce and have no open cuts or wounds on their hands and/or arms.
- Restroom facilities with warm water and soap must be readily accessible to anyone working in a culinary garden.
- Workers should avoid cross-contamination of produce by ensuring equipment, gloves and other sources of contamination do not come into contact with compost or other materials.



Checklist – Inspection

Section 7:

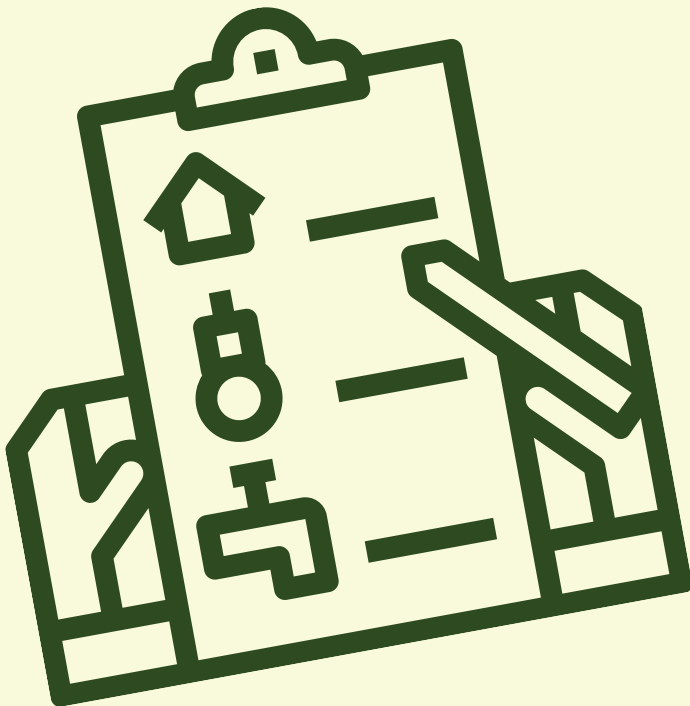
Inspection

- All garden facilities, equipment, operations and records shall be subject to inspection by the Solano County Department of Resource Management, Environmental Health Services Division at any time without prior notice.

Plain language translation:

Inspection

- All garden facilities, equipment, operations and records can be inspected by the Solano County Department of Resource Management, Environmental Health Services Division at any time without prior notice.



What to expect

Prepare to/for:

- Complete the check list for Garden Registration
- Send this completed list and simple site map to the Fax number or email addresses listed on the form.
- Your garden should be good to go, you may receive a confirmation email from the county.
- If you receive an email with questions or comments, make sure to address those before continuing to distribute produce.
- Inspections are uncommon and usually not preformed, you will not need an inspection (usually) to begin distributing your community produce.

