



Best Practices for Community Gardens During COVID-19

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Best Practices for Community Gardens in the Time of COVID-19

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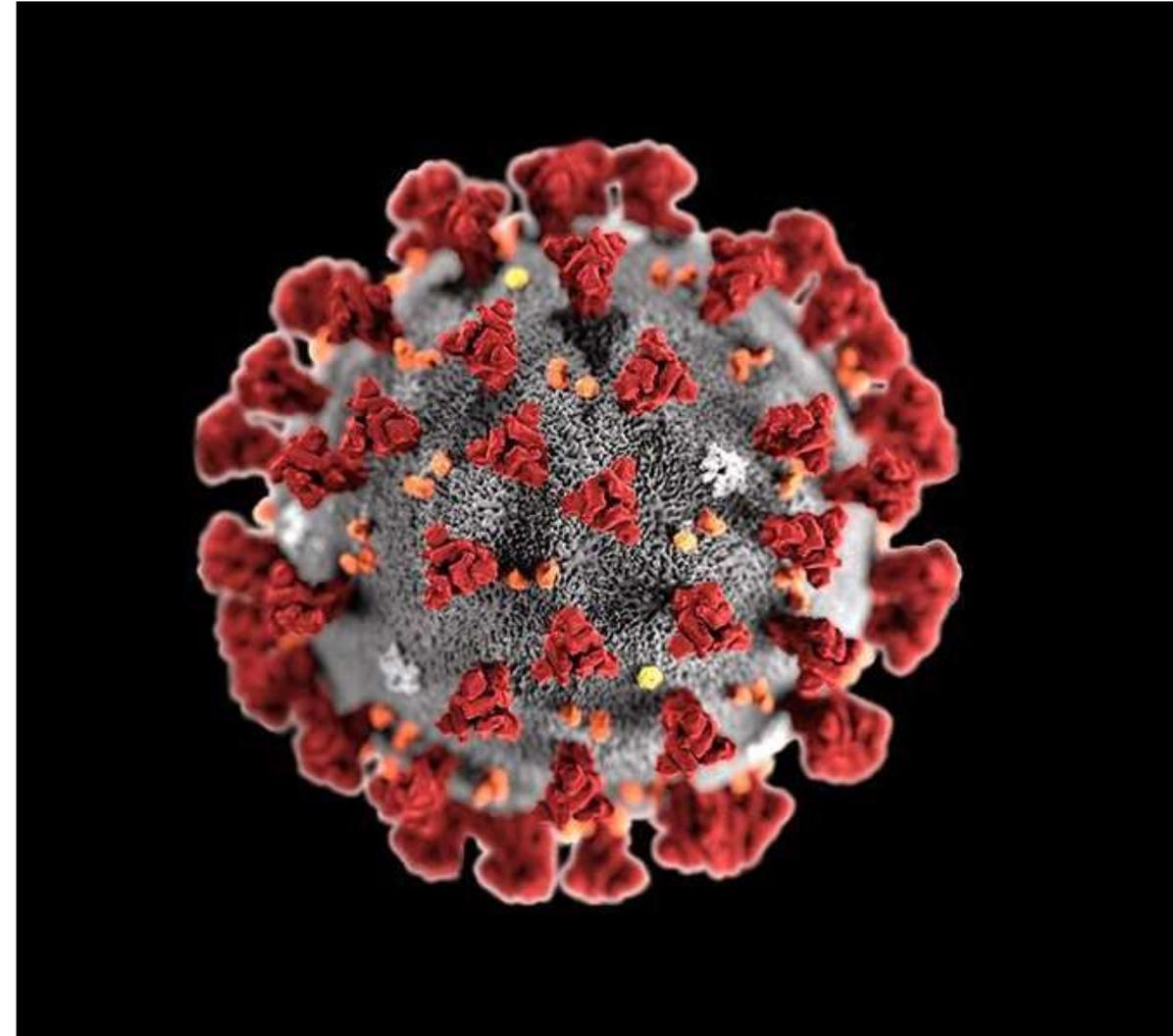
Overview

- What is known about COVID-19
- Concerns and Controls
 - Gardeners and Visitors
 - Surfaces, Tools and Harvest Containers
 - Cleaning and Sanitation
 - Water sources
- Protocols, Training and Communication
- Take Home Messages
- Questions



The Facts on COVID-19

- Covid-19 is the disease caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2
- Respiratory virus
- Spread through person to person contact via respiratory droplets
 - Between people in close contact (~6 ft)
 - Coughing
 - Sneezing
 - Talking
 - Possibly breathing





May be spread by people who are not showing symptoms

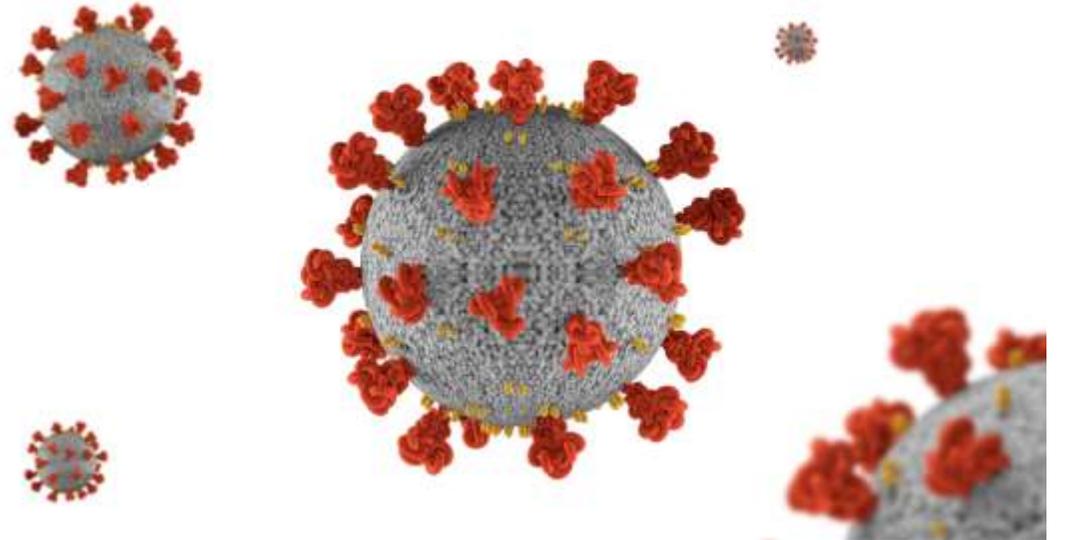
More on Virus Spread

- Not a foodborne pathogen!
- Extremely unlikely that someone will catch it through eating



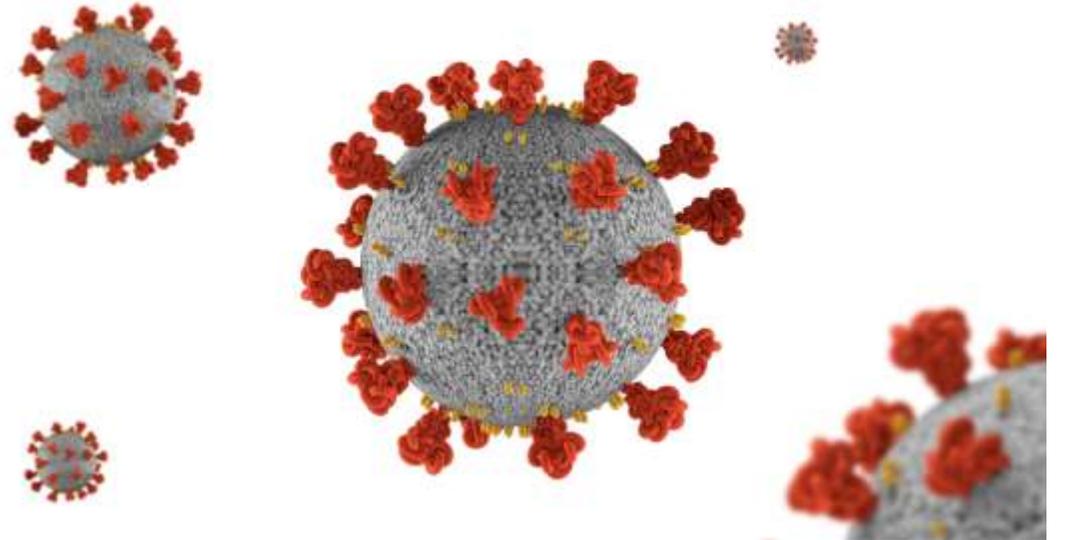
More on Virus Spread

- *May* be spread by touching a contaminated surface then touching mouth, nose, or eyes
 - *Not the primary method!*
 - Virus does not “grow” on surfaces
 - Survives up to 24 hours on cardboard and 2-3 days on plastic and stainless steel



More on Virus Spread

- Virus spreads very easily
 - More efficiently than influenza
- It is a new virus!
 - Much to be learned





Concerns and Controls

Gardeners and Visitors



Visitors

- May spread virus to others
- Difficulty maintaining social distancing
 - Close working quarters
 - Movement throughout garden
 - Shared resources
 - Peak hours
 - Lack of control/management



Controls

- Postpone all events
 - Unknown when pandemic will end
- Limit gardeners (<10)
 - Close to the public
 - Sign up sheets
 - Visitor logs
 - Enforce social distancing

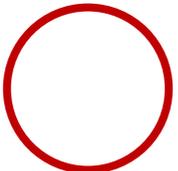


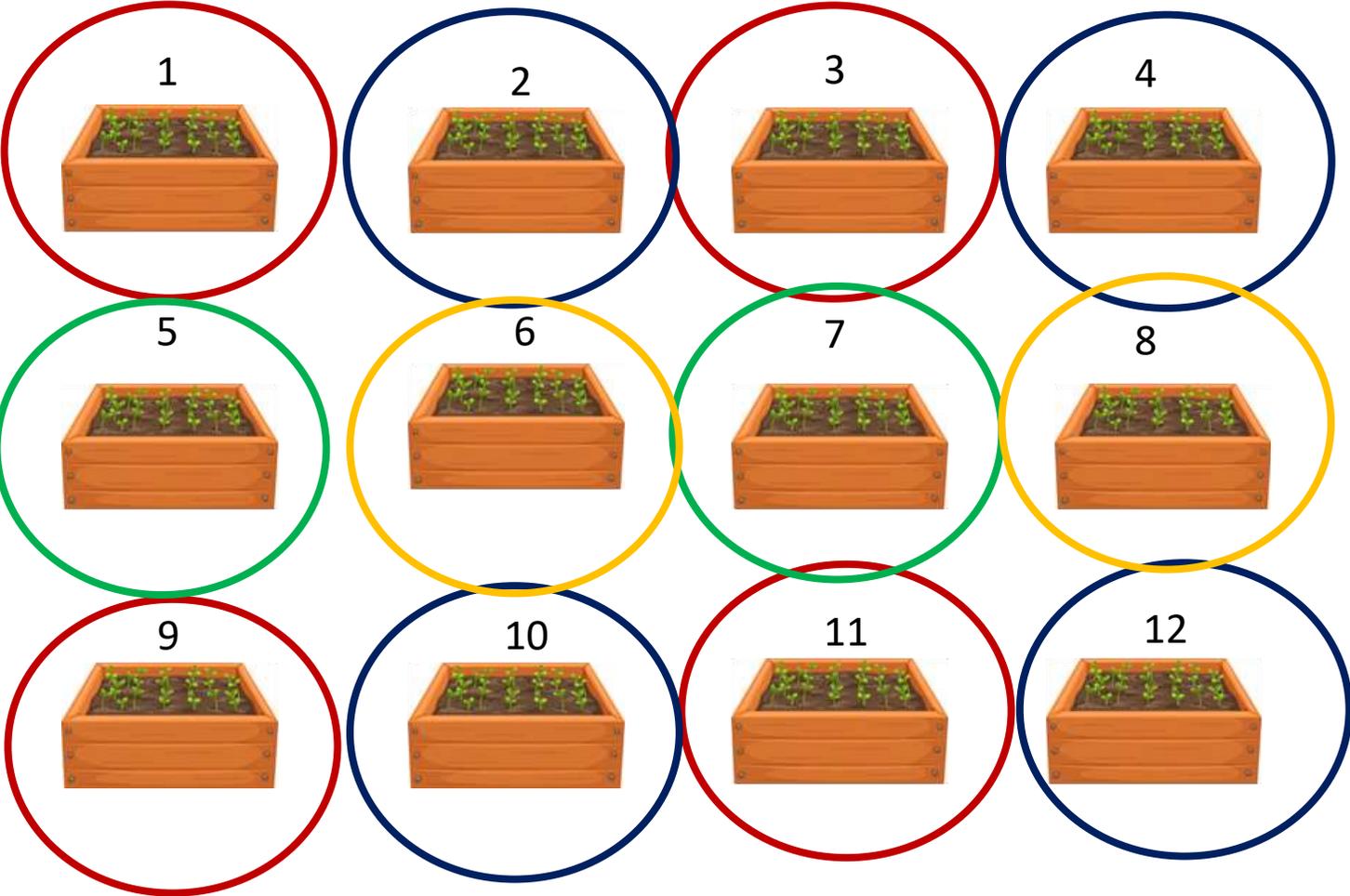
Controls

- Have someone in charge!
 - Volunteers
 - Garden manager
- Manage:
 - Gardeners
 - Exclude visitors
 - Social distancing
 - Protocols
 - Maintenance
 - Cleaning and sanitation



Use Sectors and Schedules

	8-10 am
	10:30-12:30
	1:00-3:00 pm
	3:30-5:30 pm



Controls

- Children need to stay at family plot
- Leave kids at home if they cannot patiently stay by plot
- Try to limit to no more than 1 adult and 1 child
- Leave sick kids at home to rest



Controls

- Wash hands before and after visiting
 - Soap
 - Potable water
 - Single use towels
 - Paper
 - Cloth that is single use then washed and sanitized
 - Trash bin - empty regularly
 - Monitor facilities and keep stocked
- Post signs



Scrub hands for a minimum of 20 seconds!

DIY HANDWASHING STATIONS

no frills – all the function

You likely have many of these items on hand, but if not, it would cost roughly \$32 to create a compliant handwashing station

- Jug (7-gallon) with open/close valve: \$15
- Paper towels: \$5
- Soap: \$3
- Catch: 5-gallon bucket: \$4
- Bungee cords: \$5

Also needed

Trash receptacle, ideally with hands-free lid

Water that is free from detectable E.coli

Surface for it to sit on – truck bed works, too



Controls

- Hand sanitizer is not a replacement for hand washing!
- Only use commercially produced sanitizers
- Must contain >60% alcohol



Controls

- Each person should have their own gloves
- Do not cough or sneeze into gloves
 - Cough into sleeve
 - Exclude ill gardeners
- Gloves should be cleaned and sanitized before and after use
- Change gloves if contaminated



Controls

- May have visitors wear cloth masks
 - New CDC recs
 - Asymptomatic people may spread disease
- Do not visit if ill or in contact with ill person
- Do not let people in who show any signs of illness!
- Post signs



Controls

- Toileting facilities should be regularly cleaned and sanitized
- Close facilities if they cannot be regularly cleaned and sanitized
- Regularly monitor



Controls

- Do not eat or drink in garden
- Leave food and beverages in car or outside area

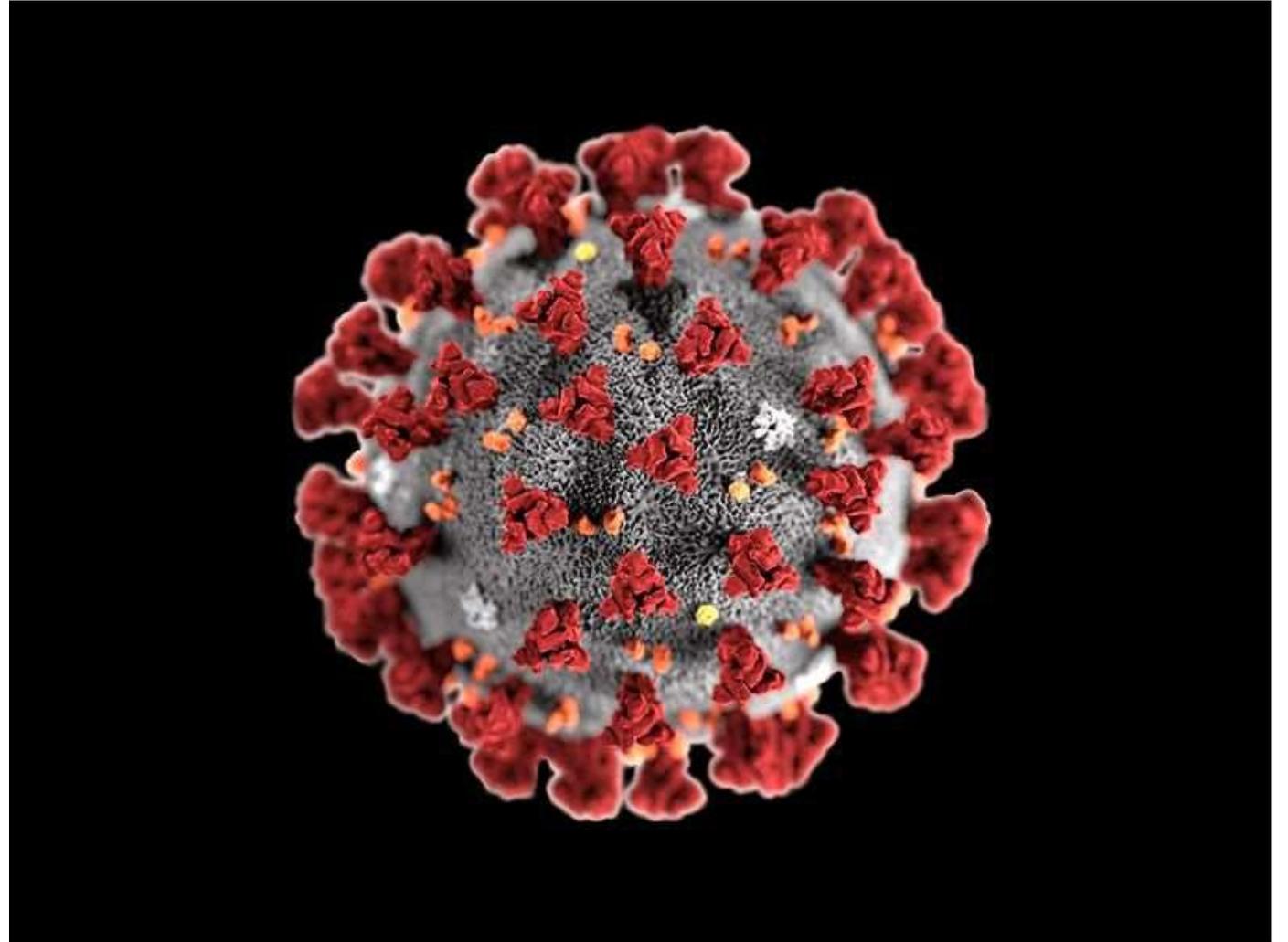


Surfaces, Tools, Harvest Containers



Concerns

- Virus *may* be spread through contact surfaces
 - Ill person touches surface
 - Healthy person touches contaminated surface then touches face
- Although risk appears low, prevention reduces risk



Controls

- Leave gates open
- Post “No Visitors” signs on gates and fences
- Use flags or other means to define garden perimeters and entrances
- Remove/cordon off benches, picnic tables, play structures etc.



Controls

- Avoid/minimize contact with surfaces
- Require or encourage gardeners to bring their own tools and harvest bins
- Assign tools/tasks to specific individuals



Controls

Perform regular cleaning and sanitation of:

- Doorknobs
- Padlocks
- Water spigots
- Gates
- Tools
- Wheelbarrows
- Harvest containers
- Reusable bins or buckets
- Any other contact surfaces



Proper Cleaning and Sanitizing



Sanitizers

- List of EPA approved sanitizers - <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- Bleach solutions
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water
 - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water



Sanitizers

- Other common sanitizers
 - $\geq 70\%$ alcohol (ethanol or isopropyl alcohol)
 - Clorox Multi Surface Cleaner + Bleach
 - Clorox Disinfecting Wipes
 - Lysol Disinfecting Wipes



Sanitizers - Warnings

- Always follow directions on the label!
- Only use sanitizers approved for food contact surfaces for items in contact with food (e.g. harvest bins)
- If present, use disinfection instruction for commercial products
- Product must remain wet on surface for extended time



Water Sources



Water Sources

Per the CDC...

- Virus has not been detected in drinking water
- Conventional water treatment methods that use filtration and disinfection (e.g. municipal drinking water systems) should remove or inactivate the virus



Keeping Sources Clean

Potential Sources:

- Hoses and spray nozzles
- Faucets
- Water spigots
- Pails
- Watering cans

Cleaning and Sanitation:

- Clean and sanitize per previous section
- Dependent on usage
 - Example - between scheduled times





**Protocols,
Training and
Communication**

Protocols

Put protocols into place for the following:

- Times of operations, when to close
- Gardener policies and excluding ill persons
- Manager/volunteer responsibilities
- Monitoring facilities
 - What and when (e.g. handwashing stations, toileting facilities)
- Cleaning and sanitation schedules



Training

- May wish to hold official training sessions
 - Prior to opening garden
 - New visitors
 - Reminders
 - Change in policies
- Can be done in-person or remotely
- Can use this training and add garden policies



Communicate

- Communicate to gardeners and the public
 - Use signs, social media or newsletters, other media, etc.
- Use volunteers/management to remind gardeners and exclude visitors



Communicate

- Post signs
 - Handwashing
 - Visitor policies
 - Social distancing
 - Excluding ill visitors
 - Use of masks
 - Cleaning and sanitizing
 - Any other policies
- Post near entrances, water sources, and storage areas



Communicating to

- Ensure gardeners understand policies are for their safety
- Post signs in different languages
- Email or print request confirmation that all policies are understood
- Gardeners must abide by policies
 - Ramifications for failure to adhere



Communicating

- Do not garden if sick!
- Have a back up person to water, etc.
- Back up person should be authorized by garden manager



Produce Protocols



Produce Protocols

- Harvest produce into cleaned and sanitized personal containers
- Wash and clean produce at home
- If donating, pick in field and bring as is to donation facility





Take Home Messages

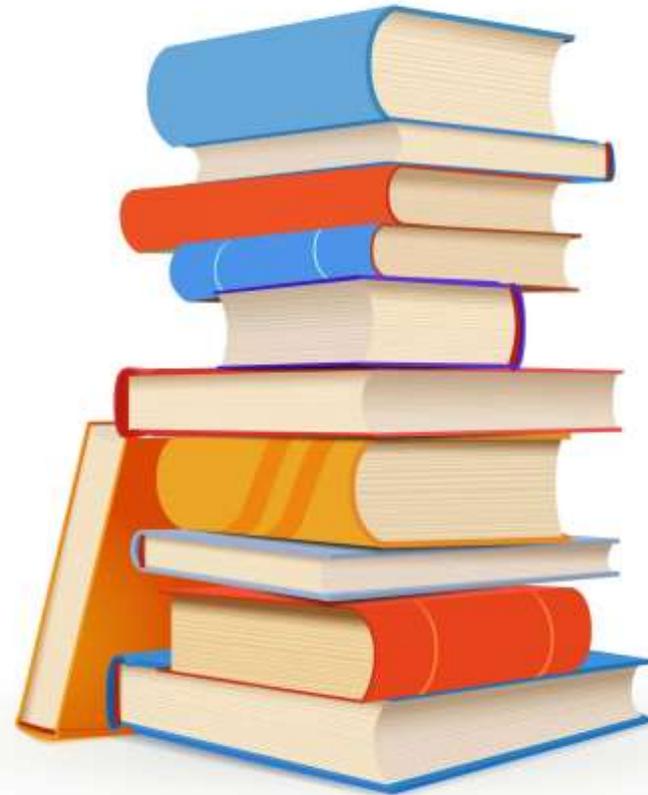


Take Home Messages

- Controls need to be implemented to ensure safety
- If controls cannot be implemented, then temporary closure may be best option
- This too will pass!
- Look for other options
 - Encourage/support individual gardening
 - Container gardening
 - Provide your expertise
 - Delayed opening after pandemic passes
 - Alter crops grown this year
 - Donate privately grown food

Fore More Information

- <https://extension.wsu.edu/foodsafety/covid-19-resources/>
- <https://extension.purdue.edu/article/36666>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronaviruses/2019-ncov/index.html>
- <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/food-safety-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>
- Your Extension office





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- Tuesday, April 12th – Getting Started with CSA (Community Supported Agriculture)
- Tuesday, April 12th – Best Practices for Farm Deliveries, Pick-Ups & CSAs During COVID-19

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