This handbook is a guide to help familiarize volunteers with the LGL’s policies, procedures, and benefits, and to describe some of the expectations we have of our volunteers.
Introduction

Welcome New Volunteers!

Thank you for joining us at The Learning Gardens Laboratory (LGL). We appreciate that you have chosen our organization for volunteering your time. We believe that each volunteer contributes directly to the growth and success of LGL, and we hope you will take pride in being a member of our community.

This handbook is a guide to help familiarize volunteers with the LGL’s policies, procedures, and benefits, and to describe some of the expectations we have of our volunteers.

We hope that your experience here will be fun, challenging, rewarding, and enjoyable. Again, welcome and thank you for your service!

Our Organization and the Importance of Volunteerism and Participation

The Learning Gardens Lab is a 4-acre educational garden located on the 12 acre Green Thumb site in SE Portland; LGL is the result of a partnership formed in 2005 between Portland State University, Portland Public Schools and the City of Portland. In 2008, Oregon State University Extension Service joined as a partner organization.

The LGL is a project of the Leadership for Sustainability Education (LSE) graduate program in the Graduate School of Education at Portland State University. LGL is staffed by graduate students in the LSE program. The Learning Gardens Laboratory primarily serves as an educational garden site, serving students, youth and families from diverse cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. Our mission is to: support academic achievement, leadership development, and a local sustainable food system by providing multicultural, interdisciplinary, intergenerational, and experiential garden-based education for public school students and their families, university students, and community members. Our primary Portland Public School partner is Lane Middle School, (LMS), located directly across the street from LGL. Over 150 students from LMS come to LGL weekly to participate in garden-based education. LGL is also home to Portland Public School’s Community Transition Center (CTC). OSU Extension works with CTC to help develop a student run business called GardenWorks. This program teaches students how to sustainably grow food, prepares students for work in horticulture, fosters respect for land use, provides a pathway to meaningful employment, and engages students in problem-solving challenges.

In addition, Oregon State University Extension Service, Portland State University, and on site Master Gardeners offer a variety of classes at LGL focused on topics such as organic gardening techniques, service-learning, community and sustainable food systems, and permaculture techniques. For more information about LGL projects and opportunities see: http://www.pdx.edu/elp/learning-gardens-laboratory

The LGL could not succeed without the incredible dedication, inspiration, and skills of its volunteers and staff members. Maintaining the gardens and greenhouses requires significant labor and organization. In order to achieve the mission and goals of the LGL, we view the active participation and feedback of community members as our most valuable resource.

Starting Out

As a new volunteer, you will be given an overview of the essential protocols and best practices used at LGL. For example, you will be instructed on how to sign-in, how to use, clean, and store gardening tools, requirements and procedures required to volunteer with children, how to work in the garden, and much more.
New Volunteer Schedule:
1. Sign-in
2. Welcome/Introductions
3. Overview and tour of LGL
4. Tour & Tool use/cleaning
5. LGL volunteer opportunities & questions

**Being an LGL Volunteer and Drop-in Hours**

**Our Volunteers come with a wide variety of purposes and motivations.**
We want to make your time here educational, informative, and meaningful, so please communicate your needs and interests to LGL staff members. They may be able to help you find tasks that are relevant to the goals you have. Likewise, if you are interested in lighter-labor tasks or have physical limitations, please let us know. For inquiries or more information, please email lglvolunteer@gmail.com

**What to bring:**
Generally, you can expect to get dirty, as well as use your back and hands. We advise you to dress appropriately for optimal comfort, and to stretch before beginning work. In the rainy season, rain gear is essential. If you will require food during your volunteer time, please bring your own sack lunch or snack. Meals are not provided at LGL, although the garden will often provide its own treats.

**What not to bring:**
Please don’t bring pets (even on leashes), alcoholic beverage, or illegal substances to LGL.

**Drop-in Volunteer times and work party dates change with each academic term.**
Please visit http://www.pdx.edu/elp/lgl-volunteer-information for the current schedule. The schedule is also posted in the kiosk outside the LGL gates.

**When coming to the LGL for drop-in volunteer times, please:**
1. Enter Greenhouse Five (see map)
2. Sign-in in the Volunteer Sign-In Book & record your estimated volunteered hours
3. Find and check in with an LGL staff member before beginning any work tasks
4. Clean & return tools before leaving the gardens

The procedures listed above are very important. The information you provide on the Volunteer Sign-In Sheet is used for funding purposes, tracking hours, and informs our learning and practice.

**Check in with a staff member**
Making contact with a LGL staff member when you arrive ensures that the highest priority tasks are attended to first, the proper gardening techniques/tools are employed, and we can continue to build a relationship with you. LGL is a big place; don’t be frustrated if you have to walk for a few minutes around the site to find a staff member—think of it as time to wander and enjoy the garden!

Although as a volunteer at LGL you will be working with some degree of autonomy, please do not hesitate to ask questions, pose concerns, or notify us of problems.
There is no minimum amount of time volunteers are required to participate.
You are encouraged to come and work for as little or as much time as you like. Of course, when staff members indicate it’s time to close shop, it’s time to go home and relax!

Contacts
If you have any questions or comments pertaining to volunteering at LGL, please contact the LGL Volunteer Coordinator at lglvolunteer@gmail.com or please visit http://www.pdx.edu/elp/learning-gardens-laboratory for more information.

Volunteer Policies
These policies provide overall guidance and direction for volunteering at the Learning Gardens Laboratory. The LGL reserves the right to change any of these policies at any time and volunteers must adhere to the changed policies. Unless specifically stated otherwise, these policies apply to all volunteers in programs and projects undertaken at or on behalf of the Learning Gardens Laboratory.

Returning, Cleaning and Storage of LGL property
All tools and other properties of LGL need to be cleaned, returned, and properly stored by volunteers when finished with a task. Taking any LGL property off LGL properties is not allowed. This is a violation of the code of conduct and grounds for dismissal from the site.

Use of Power Tools
Only trained staff members are allowed to use power tools, mowers, weed eaters, etc. There is no exception to this policy.

Health and safety
We seek to provide a healthy and safe environment for everyone at LGL: participants and staff members alike. The LGL has specific emergency procedures that must be followed for everyone’s safety.
Please review these procedures:
In case of Injury:
1. Immediately inform an LGL staff member; if a staff member is not in the immediate area, call 911
2. If possible, stay with injured party or assign someone to stay with the injured party
3. Before leaving the site, please report to an LGL staff member to complete an Event Report
In case of Fire:
1. Use Fire Extinguisher to smother fire (see map on p.6)
2. In the case of a large fire, evacuate the Greenhouse
4. Inform an LGL staff member; if a staff member is not in the immediate area, call 911
3. Meet in the field (see map on p.6) and remain there until staff members obtain a headcount
In case of Earthquake:
1. Evacuate Greenhouse
2. Meet in field (see map on p.6) and remain in the field until staff members obtain a headcount
In case of Severe Storm:
1. An LGL staff member will round up volunteers & staff
2. Meet inside Greenhouse #3 (see map on p.6)
3. An LGL staff member will announce when it is safe to return outside

Safety & Health Rules:
1. In case of emergency, follow the emergency procedures to the best of your ability
2. Volunteers are expected to be responsible and use tools for their intended purposes only. Proper practices for tools will be reviewed in orientation and should be employed at all times.
3. If and when driving through the LGL circle drive please proceed SLOWLY. Be aware of children and other pedestrians in the road.

Please Note
*The LGL is not responsible for any injuries that occur while volunteers are at LGL or on LGL properties.*

Emergency Closing Policy
If the LGL has to close in case of an emergency, notification will be posted on the gate. An email will also be sent out to notify volunteers.

Personal Property
The LGL is not responsible for the personal property of volunteers. Please do not leave valuables in vehicles at LGL or anywhere on the premises.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity
Diversity is very important at the LGL. The Learning Gardens Lab follows Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act which prohibits discrimination against workers (in this case, volunteers) because of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. All volunteers and staff must follow these same guidelines while at LGL.

Code of conduct
Volunteers must follow the Code of Conduct that will protect the interests and well being of all community members at LGL.
The following is a list of inappropriate conduct that could lead to a disciplinary procedure:
• Theft or improper removal or possession of LGL property or another person’s property
• Tampering with or altering LGL records or reports
• Distribution or use of any illegal substances on the LGL property
• Creation of any disturbance on LGL property that could endanger others or disturb neighbors
• Inappropriate use of LGL property or any other individual’s property
• Any disrespectful, discriminatory, aggressive, or improper conduct: including profanity, aggression, discriminatory language or behavior, or malicious behavior, etc. (see Equal Opportunity and Diversity)
• Violation of any safety and health rules (see Safety and Health Rules)
• Sexual harassment or misconduct in any manner: including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature

If any of the above code of conduct provisions listed above is violated, LGL staff members will immediately dismiss you from the LGL property while the issue is being investigated. If you feel that any of the above codes have been violated while you are at LGL, please report it immediately to a staff member. We will handle the situation with the utmost discretion, sensitivity, and urgency.
Dress Code
Following this dress code is required when volunteering and working at the LGL. Volunteers may be working with kids and representing the organization, so it is imperative that you are dressed properly.

The Dress Code does not allow:
- Derogatory, offensive, or slanderous words or pictures on clothing, (if you are unsure if it could offensive, don’t wear it)
- Clothing that is inappropriately sexual or revealing