

## **Water Options for Community Gardens**

Access to water is essential to the success of both food production and ornamental gardens. This information sheet is designed to provide background and strategies for obtaining water access for community gardens within the City of Rochester.

### **Economical Alternative Methods for Watering Your Community Garden:**

**GOOD NEIGHBORS.** If you are on good terms with the neighbor and feel you can trust him/her, you might be able to work out an arrangement to use their water: offer the neighbor \$55 to cover the cost of 15,000 gallons of water (\$3.62 per 1,000 gallons, good through 6/30/20). The Community Garden could provide the neighbor with flowers or vegetables from their own gardens as a thank you.

**WATER CREDITS.** The Water Bureau will apply a credit of 7,000 gallons (annually) to the water account of a neighbor who supplies water to a community garden. Water usage would not be metered separately from the neighbor's home, so again, you would only want to enter into this if you feel comfortable with the owner. For information, contact Kevin Johnson, Superintendent of Water Distribution at 428-7417.

**COMPOST & MULCH.** The organic matter will hold tremendous amounts of water and the mulch insulates the ground from the burning summer sun and wind. Also, plant densely so that plants shade the ground and limit moisture loss.

**RAIN COLLECTION SYSTEMS.** Rain barrels are becoming very popular in drier areas of the country, but are also growing in number in Rochester. There is a wealth of information online for products, DIY instructions, specific projects, resources, etc. Or, just stop in to Home Depot or Lowe's to get advice on the rain barrels they sell.

**DRIP IRRIGATION.** This system uses a tiny fraction of the amount of water wasted by sprinklers. A simple stand alone drip irrigation system can have a single line attached to a 3 or 5 gallon pail that acts as a reservoir to deliver the water. Again, look to online for all kinds of applications and guidance.

**PLANT SEEDS.** Seeds that are sown directly into the soil may need virtually no water all summer long. Their roots go in search of water on their own, and are less likely to become dependent on hand watering as compared to plants you purchase as seedlings.

**WATER LINES.** There is no City funding to support water installation at community garden sites – all installation costs must be incurred by the permit holder. For more information about the water line installation process, please contact Diane Powell at 585-428-6807.