



## The home garden

You are responsible for what takes place in your garden, whether or not you are the one tending to it. If a professional gardener tends to your garden, make sure that s/he observes *shemita* laws. If your garden is shared with others (apartment buildings), try to convince others to hire a *shemita*-observant gardener for your joint garden. If you are unsuccessful, let them know that you will not take part in paying for gardening activities. Instead, your HMO dues will cover cleaning and electricity expenses.

### Dos and don'ts during *shemita*

- ✗ Do not plant or sow during *shemita*.
- ✓ Water your garden during *shemita* to maintain plants and prevent them from dying. Program your irrigation system to supply only the amount of water necessary to keep your plants alive.
- ✓ If you have an automatic fertilizing system, load it before *shemita* with enough fertilizer for the year. If you fertilize manually, do so before *shemita*. Slow-release fertilizer is best. Only if absolutely necessary, it is possible to fertilize to prevent the plant from dying.
- ✓ **Weeds** – It is permissible to weed if you are concerned that weeds will take over or provide shelter to pests. It is best to use herbicides, mow above ground with an electric scythe. Do not uproot, till, or hoe.
- ✓ **Pruning bushes, trees, and living fences** – Pruning is allowed to maintain the plant's shape. Likewise, you may trim full living fences for maintenance and trim tree branches that prevent passage or are hazardous. Do not prune to encourage growth or fill in the gaps of a fence.
- ✓ **Mowing the lawn** – You may mow full lawns regularly. Do not mow lawns with bald spots to encourage growth.
- ✓ **Non-agricultural/gardening activities** – It is permitted to perform such activities, such as paving roads and sidewalks and erecting supporting walls, without filling in the garden with dirt.

## Garden plants



**Annual plants** that sprouted on their own during the *shemita* year are considered *sefichin* and may not be eaten or used. Plants that began to grow before *shemita* are not *sefichin* and may be eaten and used.



**Vegetables** harvested during the *shemita* year have *kedushat shevi'it*. Herbs growing in the garden that are picked during *shemita* also have *kedushat shevi'it*.



**Fruit** that began growing before the beginning of the *shemita* year, even if harvested during the *shemita* year, do not have *kedushat shevi'it*. Only fruit that began to develop during the *shemita* year have *kedushat shevi'it*. This is true even if the fruit is harvested after the *shemita* year is over.

## Hefker

When fruits or vegetables with *kedushat shevi'it* are growing in your garden, you should allow anyone to enter your garden to harvest them. If you are concerned that people might damage your garden or garden equipment, it is permissible to limit entrance and place ownerless (*hefker*) produce outside the home for the taking.

## Preparations for *shemita*

Actions that can be performed before *shemita* should be done in advance, even when permitted during *shemita*. Apply slow-release fertilizers, prepare the irrigation system, prune trees for aesthetics and safety, etc.

All agricultural activities are permitted until the onset of *shemita*, except for planting and sowing trees and plants. Planting and sowing deadlines are as follows (there may be exceptions in certain cases):

