

# **Growing Community**



**Starting and nurturing  
community gardens**



**Government of South Australia**  
SA Health



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*“Gardens, scholars say, are the first sign of commitment to a community. When people plant corn they are saying, let’s stay here. And by their connection to the land, they are connected to one another”*

Anne Raver

# Welcome!

Community gardens are places where people come together to grow food and community. This booklet, and its companion website, were created to encourage the establishment of new community gardens and to support the flourishing of those already growing. The booklet and website have been designed to be relevant to

- groups starting a community garden
- professionals considering using community gardening as part of their programs
- people who are asked to support community garden projects
- those sustaining and developing established community gardens.

The information this booklet contains is based on questions posed by people starting community gardens, and advice from experienced community gardeners, as well as research in community development, project management, and sustainable gardening.

There are as many ways of starting and maintaining a community garden as there are gardeners. This booklet is not intended to be prescriptive, but to provide resources, contacts and information for groups to develop their own ways of working, and to draw on others' experience to avoid some of the common pitfalls.

## The website

Throughout the booklet there are references to further information available at <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx>. This website contains up-to-date web links, workshop handouts, administration forms that you can adapt for your own garden, and additional resources. You can also download the pdf version of this booklet from the website.

## Essential community garden resources

### Australian City Farms and Community Gardens

**Network** connects and advocates for community gardens around the country. The website has information on starting a community garden, news and updates about community gardens around the country and links to more resources. Join their listserv to draw on the wisdom of hundreds of community gardeners. See website for regional contacts.

[www.communitygarden.org.au](http://www.communitygarden.org.au)

**Australian Community Foods** contains contact details for community gardens across Australia.

[www.communityfoods.org.au](http://www.communityfoods.org.au)

**The American Community Gardening Association** has start up information and resources, links, and access to publications. [www.communitygarden.org](http://www.communitygarden.org)

The Canadian **City Farmer** website has extensive information and links about urban agriculture and community gardening, including some Australian content.

[www.cityfarmer.org](http://www.cityfarmer.org) and [www.cityfarmer.info](http://www.cityfarmer.info)

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# **Advocating for community gardening**

# Advocating for Community Gardens

There is an increasing amount of research evidence that supports what community gardeners have long known – that community gardens are a great way to grow food, foster good health, green urban environments, support lifelong learning, and cultivate vibrant communities. The following information about the many benefits community gardens bring to individuals and communities is included not only to reinforce your enthusiasm about community gardening, but also to arm you with information to help explain and advocate for your garden project, and to address concerns and objections that you may encounter.

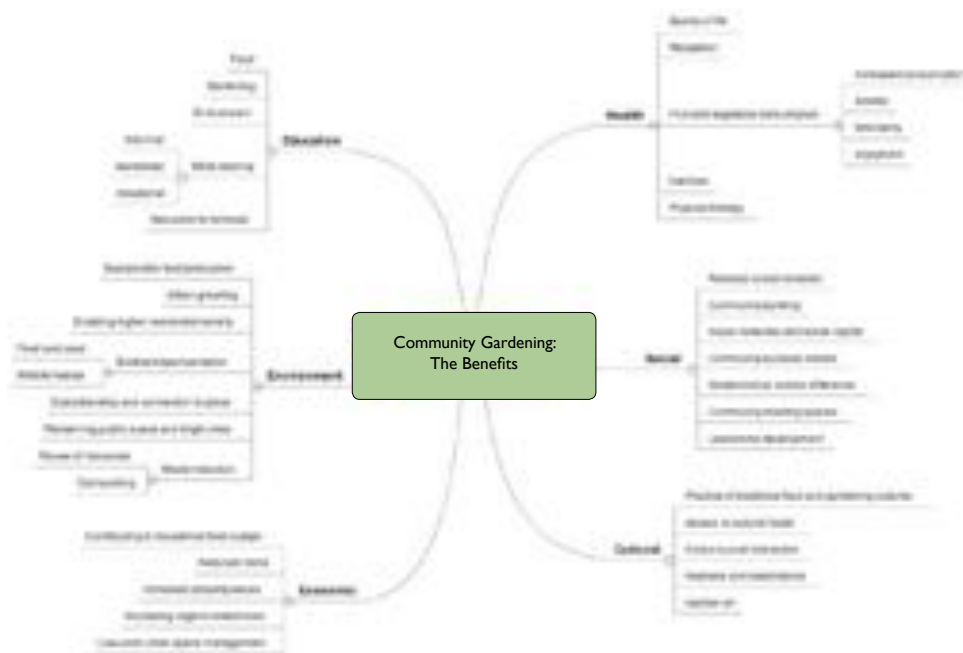
Throughout this section there are references (author's name and date in brackets) which refer to academic and other research publications that substantiate the benefits of community gardens. These are included for those occasions when you're asked to provide evidence for your claims – in grant applications, formal submissions, and presentations. Details of these publications are available in the Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network publication, *Community Gardening: An Annotated Bibliography*, which can be downloaded from their website.

## Health benefits

Community gardens promote the enjoyment of a wide variety of fresh, locally grown produce, enable gardeners to supplement their families' diets with organic herbs and vegetables, and provide opportunities for teaching gardeners and the broader community about healthy food. Community gardens contribute to food security by enabling people to grow some of their own food at a relatively low cost.

Community gardens provide many opportunities for recreation and exercise, from a simple stroll amongst the flowers, to the day to day work of maintaining the garden – exercise carried out in convivial company, with a real sense of satisfaction and purpose.

Access to a garden has numerous positive impacts on people's physical and emotional wellbeing (Ulrich 1981, Lewis 1996). Community gardens allow city-dwellers to reconnect with natural processes, alleviating stress and providing opportunity for reflection and relaxation. Horticultural therapy has become an important part of several community gardens in Australia.



Community gardens also address key health promotion goals such as creating supportive environments, strengthening communities, and developing personal skills.

Researchers have found that community gardens:

- Improve participants' 'quality of life' (Blair, Giesecke, et al 1991)
- Provide opportunities for exercise and relaxation and increase participants' physical activity (Twiss, Dickinson, et al. 2003)
- Support fruit and vegetable consumption through increasing access to fresh produce (Alaimo, Packnett, et al 2008), increasing the amount of fruit and vegetables gardeners consume (Blair, Giesecke, et al 1991; Twiss, Dickinson, et al 2003; Alaimo, Packnett, et al 2008), helping people to become more familiar with fresh produce and adding to the enjoyment of fresh vegetables and fruits (Somerset and Markwell 2008).

## Environmental benefits

Community gardens improve the quality of urban environments, rehabilitating degraded land, contributing to urban greening, providing sanctuary to urban wildlife, and creating a setting for environmental education. They are also part of broader moves to ensure a secure and ecologically sensitive food supply.

## Ecologically Sustainable Food Production

Community gardens demonstrate practical solutions to the negative environmental impacts of commercial food production. Bringing food production into cities reduces its ecological footprint by cutting down 'food miles' – the energy used to transport produce over many hundreds of kilometres from growers to processors to retailers to people's tables.

Care for soil and for biodiversity are at the heart of the organic practices used by most community gardens. These practices lower the economic and environmental costs of food production by minimising or eliminating chemical use, and returning nutrients to the soil.

The genetic diversity of our food is protected by community gardeners who grow and save the seeds of local plant varieties which are adapted to the particular conditions and cultures of the communities who grow them.

## 'Waste' minimisation and nutrient cycling

Community gardens promote waste minimisation and nutrient cycling strategies, demonstrating composting techniques that can be used by people in their home gardens, and sometimes providing community composting facilities. Community gardens demonstrate strategies for the creative reuse of discarded resources. In community

gardens all over the world, bath tubs become aquaculture systems, scrap timber and metal are shaped into tool sheds, bed heads become trellises, old tyres are used as stabilisers for banks and earth berms, yesterday's news smothers weeds, and the kitchen sink is transformed into a thriving worm farm. Community gardeners have found ways to redeploy waste resources without sacrificing safety or aesthetics.

Researchers have found that community gardens:

- Contribute to urban greening (Patel 1991; Bartolomei, Corkery et al. 2003)
- Provide a setting for environmental education (Bartolomei, Corkery, et al. 2003; Howe and Wheeler 1999; Corkery 2004)
- Reclaim public space and blight sites (Bartolomei, Corkery, et al 2003)
- Provide habitat for urban wildlife (Matteson, Ascher, et al 2008)
- Mitigate the effects of increased urban density and urban decay (Hall 1996)
- Develop innovative urban agricultural practices and incubate organic enterprises (Fulton 2005).

## Cultural benefits

Community gardens are often a space for community members of diverse cultural backgrounds to practise and share traditional and contemporary expressions of their culture. This provides a unique opportunity for learning and exchange. Urban gardens can provide a critical link to culture through seeds that have been passed down for generations, and through the cultivation and preparation of traditional foods that are not available in local stores. Community gardens may also become venues for elders to explore their cultural traditions and celebrate their lives.

Community gardens often integrate a range of community arts projects, from murals to sculptural installations, photo essays to poetry performance. Many community gardens create community culture through festivals and celebrations. These may include fairs, produce sales, farmers' markets, music performances,



◀ Bath tubs transformed into water gardens

## Social benefits

Community gardens engage and involve people in their own communities. They give people the chance to physically shape the character and culture of their neighbourhoods, and to take responsibility for their common land. Community gardens are meeting places, bringing together diverse aspects of local communities. They allow neighbours to meet on neutral soil, and provide common ground for people of varying cultural backgrounds, experiences, ages, and interests.

Researchers have found that community gardens:

- Reduce social isolation (Urbis Keys Young 2004)
- Provide community development outcomes (Barotolomei, Corkery, et al 2003; Salvidar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004)
- Build social capital (Armstrong 2000)
- Create opportunities for communities to develop and tell success stories (Glover 2003)
- Foster relationships across difference (Shinew, Glover, et al 2004)
- Provide community meeting spaces (Salvidar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004)
- Foster leadership development (Salvidar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004)

## Economic benefits

Community gardens can bring economic benefits both to their gardeners and to their local communities. Researchers have found that community gardens:

- Contribute to household food budgets (Patel 1991)
- Incubate small enterprises (Fulton 2005)
- Are a low-cost form of urban space management (Francis 1987)
- Lead to reduced crime and vandalism (Urbis Keys Young 2004; Maxwell 2002; Hatherley 2003)

## More information

*Community Gardening: An Annotated Bibliography*, Claire Nettle, Sydney: Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network 2008

An overview of academic and research-based publications about community gardening. Available from

[www.communitygarden.org.au](http://www.communitygarden.org.au)

## Objections to community gardens

Groups presenting a proposal for a community garden – whether to a public meeting, local council officers, or people neighbouring the garden site – can expect to encounter concerns about and objections to the project. It is important to provide opportunities for people to voice their concerns, to listen openly to what they say, and to seek solutions that address everyone's needs. Listening openly to questions people raise will help you develop stronger relationships with potential supporters, foster goodwill for the garden, and may even help you to improve your garden plan.

Consider developing a formal process for addressing complaints as part of your management plan for the garden. Once you have started work on your garden site, ensure that there is a contact person available for people to direct any concerns to and consider posting a name and phone number on the gate for issues arising after hours. This will help your neighbours to help you keep the garden safe, and may mean that complaints will be directed to your community garden organisation, where they can be addressed, rather than being allowed to brew or being directed to local council or the garden's landholder.

Provide informal opportunities for neighbours and other community members to visit and learn about the garden, and to discuss any concerns they have: invite people from neighbouring houses for a morning tea or a barbeque, offer a bunch of flowers or some of your surplus zucchini crop every now and then.

While any concerns or objections raised should be taken seriously, and changes to your garden plan may need to be considered, some common concerns and objections may be addressed by providing additional information. Anticipating and addressing potential concerns will help you to tailor effective submissions and presentations advocating for your project.

### It will look ugly

Demonstrate that you have taken garden aesthetics into consideration in your plan. A garden that appears beautiful, inviting and well used is in everyone's best interests – it will make the garden easier to promote, attract involvement and support and keep the neighbours on side.

If concerns about aesthetics are raised by local council or businesses, ask them to provide funds for professional signage. In some cases, local council landscape designers have assisted with community garden design processes, their input may allay council's concerns.

✱ see notes for landscape professionals on page 41

### **It will get vandalised**

Community gardens are no more likely to be vandalised than other community facilities.

Choose your site and design your garden to minimise vandalism\*. The presence of a community garden has been shown to decrease the amount of graffiti and vandalism in the surrounding neighbourhood (Maxwell 2002; Hatherley 2003; Urbis Keys Young 2004).

### **It will be taking space away from the wider community for only a few people**

Community gardening is increasingly recognised as a valid use of public space. There are many accepted uses of public space that involve limits to public access – sporting clubs are an obvious example.

Plan for maximum community access. Not all community gardens have barrier fences; some have completely open access. Some fenced community gardens leave the garden gate unlocked during daylight hours, closing it at night to deter dogs and potential vandals. If your garden will be locked sometimes, publicise regular opening hours and events when the wider community can visit the garden.

Identify multiple uses for the site (workshops, displays, open days, venue for community groups). Show how different groups in the community will be able to access – and benefit from – the garden.

Any loss of public access to the garden site can be balanced by the benefits the garden provides to the community – including those who walk past the garden or see it from their window without directly participating.

### **The chickens and cows will be too loud**

Northey Street City Farm in Brisbane was initially opposed by residents who were concerned about noise from cows – despite cows never being part of the plan. Find ways to communicate effectively about what your garden will include. Assure people that regular council restrictions on animals will apply to the garden. You may decide to delay the introduction of any animals until the garden has been established and all stakeholders have a better understanding of the garden and increased confidence in the project.

### **Compost will smell and attract vermin**

Learn about effective composting so you can reassure people that efficiently managed compost smells great and can be kept free of rats and mice.

Host composting (and worm farming and bokashi) workshops at the garden.

Some community gardens have conditions in their lease or a memorandum of understanding with the landholder about not producing excessive noise or odours – this may provide reassurance that these concerns will be addressed.

### **We're in a drought – a community garden will require too much water**

Community gardens – unlike the water and fuel-intensive lawns they often replace – have the potential to be models of water-wise garden design and to demonstrate practical water-saving gardening strategies for use in home gardens.

Community gardens have successfully complied with the same government water restrictions that have applied to home gardeners. However, some have argued that there should be additional water allocations for urban food production. A significant amount of the water-use of suburban households – possibly up to half – doesn't come through a tap, but is embodied in the food we buy. Broadacre industrial agriculture alone uses 65% of Australia's controlled water resource, households and gardens only 8%. Informal studies<sup>1</sup> have suggested that food grown in home and community gardens can be significantly less water and energy intensive than commercial production, and can therefore represent substantial water savings, even when not complying with water restrictions. People have also advocated for water restriction exemptions for community gardens in recognition of their limited capacity for reusing greywater (no showers...) and for harvesting rainwater (limited roof space), and the involvement of people with mobility restrictions that make hauling buckets and watering cans inappropriate.

\* see page 21 for information about designing your garden to minimise vandalism

<sup>1</sup> David Holmgren (2005) *Garden Agriculture: A revolution in efficient water use* *Water: Journal of the Australian Water Association* 32 (8)

Adam Grub (2007) *Grubb Grow your own – doing the maths* *Eat the Suburbs* available at <http://www.eatthesuburbs.org/2007/10/grow-your-own/>



### **It will bring additional cars into our neighbourhood – where will they park?**

Consider transport and parking requirements when assessing and choosing a site for your garden. Make a transport and parking plan, emphasising proximity to public transport and the number of gardeners living within walking distance of the garden. Include bicycle racks as part of your site design.

### **We're not confident that your group has the capacity to manage a community garden**

This booklet suggests that people starting community garden projects invest time in developing a capable working group as a first step in your process. This may include mapping the skills of the people in your group to identify expertise you can promote and any training or research gaps to be addressed. You may decide to seek out people with particular qualifications or skills to become part of your working group or to make up an advisory board for the project.

If your group is confident that it does have the skills and knowledge necessary to bring the garden into fruition and to manage it in the long term, include information about your working group members' competencies in your proposal documents and submissions.

Not all community gardens are created independently by grassroots groups. Community gardens have benefited from professional advice and support in their initial stages and beyond. Your group may decide that it would be preferable to join with a community agency (such as a health centre, welfare group or community development organisation) to access the skills and resources necessary to manage the project; to enlist the support of a community gardening organisation (such as Growing Communities in Queensland or Cultivating Community in Victoria); or to obtain funding to hire a project officer.

### **After a few months, your group will get tired of the project, and responsibility will fall back to council**

In Australia, there are a number of community gardens that have been continually self-managed for more than 20 years. A few examples include Nunawading Community Garden (est. 1977) and Ringwood

Community Garden (est. 1980), both in Melbourne, and Glovers Community Garden (est. 1985) in Sydney. One of the main reasons that established community gardens cease to operate is because of loss of tenure to their site, not because of loss of interest. The interest in and demand for community gardens continues to increase.

Community gardens do benefit from support from local councils. Community gardens are important community resources, often fulfilling council's own objectives. It is appropriate that community gardeners should look to local councils to provide support. Council support may include assistance in securing land, soil testing, start-up funding and resources (such as loan of council landscaping staff), promoting the garden in council publications, adding support for community gardens to the job descriptions of council officers (such as community development or sustainability officers), and consideration of community gardens in the development of council policy, open space planning, and environmental programs.

Demonstrate your succession planning and how the organisation will continue even if present leaders move on. What if someone hurts themselves?

Include information about how you will manage risk in your submissions and presentations.

All community gardens should carry public liability insurance.

✿ see page 12 for information on writing submissions

✿ see page 38 for information on agency supported community gardens

✿ see page 57 for information on succession planning

✿ see page 66 for information on minimising risk

✿ see page 65 for information on public liability insurance



**In the  
beginning:  
Starting  
a new  
community  
garden**

# Starting a new community garden

Starting a community garden from scratch is a major undertaking that takes time, energy, and commitment. This booklet will help you to target your efforts to where they will be most effective. It suggests that you

- prioritise forming an effective, committed and sustainable working group to share the load
- work slowly, and allow time for planning and research
- look for opportunities to form relationships and build community
- develop a clear shared vision for your project early on
- use planning and design processes to bring your vision into being.

The 'community' aspect of community gardens is especially important at the initial stages. It's relatively easy to dig garden beds and build compost heaps, but forming a group of enthusiastic and committed participants who can sustain the project can take considerable effort and time – don't rush to get your hands in the soil before you've done the community-building groundwork. Planning and group building in the beginning will pay off in the longer run. As Russ Grayson and Fiona Campbell write in the Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network's 'Getting Started' guide, "When the time comes to put your submission for land access to council or some other landholder, they will be more impressed and ready to co-operate with a group that has thought through how they would go about designing and managing a community garden."

There are many different kinds of community gardens, each with unique circumstances, visions, and people. What follows is not a prescription for establishing a community garden, but some ideas to help you develop your own process.

## Who starts community gardens?

Community gardens have been initiated by individuals, small groups, community organisations, health agencies, environment groups, church groups, schools, and local councils.

Community participation is an important aspect of all community gardens. While a community health worker considering starting a community garden to promote food security and fruit and vegetable consumption will have somewhat different needs and resources to a group of residents wanting to rehabilitate derelict land between their houses, the basic steps to starting a community garden will be similar.

## Should we start a community garden?

The first step in initiating a new community garden is deciding that it's the right project to be working on. Is there a group of people with enough interest and energy to get the garden going and to sustain it in the long term? Would a community garden be an effective way to address some of the needs that exist in your community: for open space, food security, social opportunities, health promotion, environmental improvement, or training?

Consider some of the other options:

- Could you join and support an existing community garden in your area?
- Could your particular area of interest (perhaps a horticultural therapy program or growing produce for a soup kitchen) be an independent project within an established garden?
- Would another form of 'gardening in community' be more appropriate to your situation – gleaning and redistributing produce from neighbourhood fruit trees, gardening collectively in people's backyards, joining or starting a native plant revegetation project, or creating sensory gardens on sidewalks?



## Forming a working group

At this initial stage of the process, you may choose to organise and promote an open public meeting, inviting many people to get involved, or to use your networks to form a small start-up group and invite the involvement of more people later on.

The number of people needed in a start-up working group will depend on your particular situation and the resources you have access to. One or two local council workers, with the support and resources of their department may be able to get a sustainable community garden project up and running; five is probably a minimum number for a group of neighbours.

Finding working group members:

- Contact local environment groups, local gardening, organic and permaculture groups, residents' associations, and neighbourhood watch groups. Offer to write an article for their newsletter.
- Make flyers and put them up in community centres, shops, schools, etc
- Do a letterbox drop of the immediate area, particularly if you have a site in mind
- Use your personal networks and invite people directly
- If you're setting up the garden as part of your job, you might include other workers in your team, people from your client group or target group, and people from other local organisations.
- Consider using local media ✨

✨ See the promotion section page 44 for more ideas.

## Case study: Permaculture Education Zone

The Permaculture Education Zone working group grew out of an exercise in a permaculture design course. During the course, a group of students explored ways to introduce food production to Adelaide's parklands. Once the course was over, they decided to make it happen. Others were invited to join and a group of ten people was formed, bringing together a range of skills and experiences.

The PEZ working group visited and evaluated a number of sites, eventually deciding to target their efforts towards establishing a city farm and sustainable living demonstration site at an inner-city location that fulfilled their criteria for sun, soil, accessibility, infrastructure and freedom from planning constraints.

Selecting a high-profile site managed by state government rather than local council necessitated a fairly formal planning process. The working group presented their initial concept to representatives from Planning SA, the Capital City Committee, and the SA Department of Environment and Heritage. After gaining positive feedback, they focused on developing a formal proposal and business plan to present their city farm idea to potential stakeholders. They sought mentoring to help them develop a comprehensive and professional proposal.

The process of creating a business plan helped the PEZ working group to develop their vision and objectives and to make detailed plans about how their city farm would function, including their organisational structure, marketing plan, income streams, and management systems.

Along with their business plan and proposal, the PEZ working group submitted a petition to the landholders, with more than 370 signatures demonstrating community support for the project.

While still waiting to secure a site (and attending numerous meetings...) PEZ began carrying out its aims, running permaculture courses and offering professional development workshops for teachers.



✿ See page 10 for ideas for running successful meetings

✿ see page 4 for suggestions about addressing concerns and objections about community gardens

## Your first get-together

The first formal meeting of people interested in being part of your working group can be an important milestone in your garden's development. Make your meeting fun, interesting, productive and participatory. Decide who will facilitate the meeting and who will introduce your project. Find an easily accessible venue – perhaps a meeting room at a community centre, a quiet café or a park. Plan an agenda, allocating time for an icebreaker, time for everyone to introduce themselves, an introduction to the group and your planning or ideas so far, and ways people can get involved. You may want to invite someone from an established community garden to talk about their experiences. Emphasise that the project will be what people make it, and that new ideas are welcome.

Aim for everyone who comes to the first meeting to leave with a good understanding of the group's purpose, how they might be part of it, and with confidence that the group is going to be effective, convivial, action-oriented and a good use of their time. Start and end on time, welcome people warmly, listen attentively. Consider providing food and/ or drinks.

Think about how to encourage people to come back for a second meeting. Agree on a place and time for your next meeting before your first meeting closes. You may want to invite people to join a working group or to take on a small task. Work assignments not only make new people feel like vital and needed members of the group, but people are also more likely to return for future meetings when they feel that they have a responsibility to the group.

At the meeting, pass around a sheet to get everyone's name and contact details.

You might like to plan to adjourn to a nearby café or community garden together after the meeting to keep discussing ideas and building relationships.

## Public meetings

Whether you chose to open up and promote your meetings from the beginning, or to start out with a small working group, sooner or later most community garden initiators will host a meeting (or perhaps many!) to tell the wider world about their plans. Public meetings are fantastic opportunities to share your vision and gain support for your project. The first section of this booklet will help you present the benefits of community gardens.

A well known speaker or interesting presentation topic may draw more people to your meeting. You may like to invite someone from an established community garden

to share their story, or to show slides of established community gardens. The Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network has a number of PowerPoint presentations available for community garden groups to use.

Make sure you have an experienced facilitator to run the meeting. You might invite a respected local, or someone from the local council or a community organisation to facilitate for you. At the end of the meeting, collect the names and contact details of everyone who wants to be involved ✿.

Be prepared to hear and address concerns that people may raise ✿.

## Developing shared visions and aims

Early in your planning process, allow plenty of time to develop clear and inspiring shared visions for your garden. Visioning processes can bring your working group together at the initiating stages, and provide a strong basis for all of your planning and decision making. Your vision will continue to evolve as your garden grows and develops.

Your vision for the garden will develop informally as you discuss your ideas and learn more about other community gardens. It will probably happen in a combination of ways, sometimes involving the wider community, sometimes just the core working group. Many groups set aside time for more formal visioning processes to encourage everyone to share their ideas and hopes. This can be an opportunity to invite people to talk about what really matters to them – their hopes, values, commitments, needs and desires. This will not only generate ideas for the project, but also strengthen the connections between people involved in the process. There is often significant common ground among participants' hopes for the kind of community (environment, public spaces, etc) they would like to see. Start with these general visions before focusing on the more specific details of your particular garden project. Work towards developing a 'vision statement' and set of aims for your garden that reflect what people care most passionately about.

You will eventually need to make all sorts of decisions about your garden: whether it will be a communally gardened space and/or have individual plots, whether it will be organic, if it will target a particular group of people for involvement, what will be on site. All of these decisions can be informed and made easier by having shared aims and visions to base them on.

## Learn from other community gardeners

Don't start your garden from scratch! There is no substitute for visiting established community gardens and learning from the people who have made them grow. Visit [www.communitygarden.org.au](http://www.communitygarden.org.au) and [www.communityfoods.org.au](http://www.communityfoods.org.au) to locate gardens in your local area. Call first to arrange a visit, perhaps during a workingbee or shared gardening session.

Garden visits or tours generate and sustain excitement about your project and spark lots of new ideas. An invitation to a community garden tour can be a great way to attract new people to your working group. Carpool, cycle or see if your local council has a community bus available.

Russ Grayson and Fiona Campbell from the Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network suggest some questions to ask when visiting other gardens:

- how did the garden start?
- what type of organisational structure do you have?
- what do you do about public liability insurance?
- where do you obtain resources (mulch, compost, seeds etc)?
- what are your links to local government?
- how are you funded?
- how do you make decisions, solve problems and resolve conflict?
- how do you pass on skills to new gardeners and improve everyone's skills?

Take photos, keep notes, discuss what you have learned and use it to make decisions about how you want to organise and manage your community garden. Keep in touch with the people you meet so you can call on them for (and offer) advice and support as your garden progresses.

## Finding a place to grow your garden



Some groups begin with a particular site in mind, perhaps a vacant block in their neighbourhood or the land surrounding the school or community centre where they work. Others develop a plan for a garden then look for land to work with.

Community gardens can be located on:

- Council owned land
- Existing parks and playgrounds
- Grounds of housing estates, government housing and other flats.
- New residential developments
- Grounds of community centres and neighbourhood

- houses
- Church grounds
- Hospital and health centre grounds
- School, kindergarten and childcare centre grounds
- Universities
- Unused private land, particularly when neglected
- Land owned by businesses
- Land near railway tracks and stations
- Rooftops
- Old bowling greens
- Roadsides

Keep your eyes and imagination open and talk to people in your area to come up with ideas for potential locations.

Approaching local council for advice and support is often the first step for start-up groups looking for land . You may find it useful to approach an environment or community development officer as a first point of contact. Find out if your council has a community gardening policy. Their policy documents may provide information about the kinds of support your council can provide, and how they would prefer to be approached .

### Security of tenure

This is a big issue for many community gardens. It's hard to plan for the development of an orchard if you only have a year to use the land.


Many garden groups negotiate a formal lease with the landholder. If possible, two years to start with and the option for 5 or 10 year renewals. Others have found it effective not to have a periodic lease (which by definition has an end date) but to focus on making their project so central to their community and so well supported that it would be difficult to turf them out.


Try to increase your security by getting the garden incorporated into local council policy, or its master plan. You might also investigate zoning regulations and green space requirements to help secure your land.

## While you are waiting to find the site...

It can take time to find the right place, and to negotiate use. There are lots of things you can do to develop your community garden before you get your hands in the soil at your site:

- Keep visiting and forming networks with other community gardens
- Use libraries and the internet to research community gardens in other states and countries
- Attend other gardens' working bees as a group

 See working with local government section on page 12

 Information in the Site Design section, page 14 will help you decide if a particular piece of land is suitable for your project

✿ see page 62 for suggestions on establishing management systems

✿ see page 93 for information on plant propagation

✿ see page 4 for some common concerns raised about community gardens

- Build your skills by holding or attending workshops and by gardening in each other's homes
- Start a small garden bed in a community centre, aged care facility, kindergarten, or similar
- Keep getting to know each other and developing your vision. Eat together, garden together
- Work on developing management systems for the garden ✿.
- Learn how to propagate plants and start a nursery so you have plants ready you begin on site. ✿

## Working with your local council<sup>2</sup>

Developing a constructive and supportive working relationship with your local council is of great benefit to community gardens. It is useful for your group to understand how the council works, what its priorities are, and what help it has provided to other community and voluntary organisations.

Local councils may help with land access, funding, promotion, access to materials (mulch, park benches), occasional loan of landscaping workers, advice and support.

Having a local councillor on side can help ensure ongoing support and advocacy for your garden – try to get community gardening into policy so you always have grounds for support.

### The mechanics of council

Find out where power lies, who has influence and where decisions are made. There are two important groups that make up the council. First, the elected councillors including those who represent the area where the garden is/ will be located, and those who serve on the sub-committees relevant to your garden. Second, council officers – the council's paid staff. They advise councillors and carry out council decisions.

Local councils' activities are guided by their policy. Find out if your council has a community gardening policy, and what it says about how community garden groups should approach council.

### Plan and present

Councils often require community groups to present a formal submission as the first step. Even if it's not mandatory, a well written and presented submission is a good way to present your proposal and address concerns council may raise. Present the garden as something that will reflect positively on the council. Put some thought into ways you can demonstrate that community gardens help meet the council's service agenda and improve the local natural and social environment. Think about what you can offer to the council,

such as logos on signage. Try to anticipate questions or reservations council may have and address them in your submissions, meetings and presentations. ✿


Your submission might contain:

- A description of your group
- The skills and competencies of your members and their commitment to the project
- Your aims and objectives
- Your actual or proposed legal structure (eg. incorporated association)
- Your project plan, including what you want on site, activities that will happen there, design sketches if you have a site in mind, how the garden will be managed, how community members will be engaged
- Evidence of community need and desire for a community garden
- The characteristics and size of the land needed and any sites you have in mind
- Case studies and photos of other community gardens
- A budget estimate and potential sources of funding
- Your links with other community organisations
- What you require from council
- How you will manage risk
- The benefits of community gardens to communities and councils
- Links to council policy or programs
- A clear request for what you require (depending on your group – it could include access to land, funding to cover start up costs, staff advice/ support, etc.)

Try to arrange an informal meeting with appropriate council staff to discuss your proposal, and to give you a chance to amend your submission before it progresses through council. Your proposal may then go through a more formal process of being considered by the elected councillors at their monthly public meeting. At this meeting a council officer (such as the planning officer) would speak to the proposal, outlining their recommendations. This is an opportune time for you to make a brief and convincing presentation to the councillors. It is helpful if at least some of the councillors are aware of your proposal prior to this meeting.

<sup>2</sup>This section was adapted from *Cultivating Community's Good Practice Guide for Community Gardens*

# Garden design



# Garden design

Community is about planning your site so that it meets your needs in the most inspiring, ecologically sensitive, and efficient way your group can imagine. Community gardens can be models of sustainability and sociability, so work towards a design that shows how much is possible. Use recycled and local materials and create spaces for people to meet as well as to garden.

Effective, participatory design processes are essential for starting and developing community gardens. Actively involve as many people as possible in the garden design. This:

- Gives the garden the benefits of many people's thinking and experience
- Encourages genuine community ownership
- Enables the garden to reflect many needs and visions
- Is a way of sharing design skills, increasing community capacity.

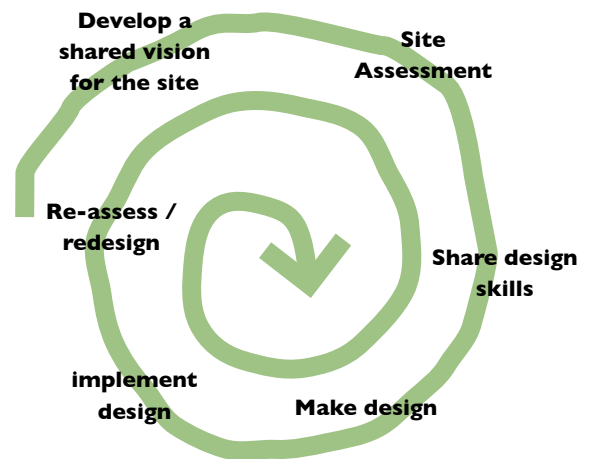
'Consultation' processes that do not include the people involved cannot achieve these things. Some gardens do, however, effectively utilise professional advisers such as landscape architects, permaculture consultants, garden designers, and urban planners.

Garden design is a continual process, not just something that happens in the planning stage of a new community garden. No design is perfect, and you will keep learning as you garden – expect and allow for your design to change as your needs and skills develop.

While some parts of the design process (such as sharing design skills) can happen before you find a place to create your garden, every site is unique and your garden design should only be made with the characteristics of a particular site in mind.

## A community garden design process

- Develop a shared vision for the site
- Site assessment
- Share design skills
- Make design
- Implement design
- Re-design, reassessment



## Refining your vision

Ideas for developing a shared vision for your community garden are discussed on page 10. Here are some things to consider when deciding what physical elements may help bring your group's vision into being:

Meeting and community building spaces:

- shady places
- sitting areas
- covered areas
- eating areas
- kitchen
- barbecue
- cob oven
- performance space (for festivals, parties, weddings, children's playgroups, etc)
- artworks

#### Garden infrastructure:

- tool shed
- drop off and storage areas for wood chips, straw, compost materials, etc
- composting areas
- composting toilets
- taps
- irrigation system
- water catchment system and rainwater tanks
- pathways
- fences
- bike racks

#### Educational facilities

- signage
- information boards
- displays
- solar panels, cookers, etc
- on site office
- teaching space

#### Garden spaces

- Individual plots
- shared gardens
- sensory garden
- predator and pollinating insect attracting garden
- bushfoods garden
- butterfly, bird habitat garden
- medicinal herb garden
- compost growing areas (for comfrey etc)

- demonstration gardens
- teaching gardens or plots for workshop participants
- fruit and nut trees or orchard
- raised beds (wheelchair accessible)
- smaller plots for children
- children's play space
- propagation area
- plant sales nursery

#### Small animals

- chickens
- other animals
- worm farm

What elements will be your initial priorities, and which will you work towards implementing in the future?

#### Site assessment

A site assessment is a way of gathering information about the site you're working with – it is the research and observation phase of garden design. The more time spent getting to know your land and local community, the better equipped you will be when it comes to drawing up and implementing a site plan.

A site assessment is essential for

- selecting a site for your garden
- planning for a chosen site
- ongoing planning and design at an established community garden site.

Gardeners implementing their design, Henley Community Garden, SA. Photo: Carolyn McArthur



A site assessment should include not only what is on your piece of land, but also information about the neighbourhood and community it is part of: people and community networks are your most important resources.

Keep an open mind and use your imagination when conducting a site assessment – don't immediately decide whether what you find is going to be good or bad for your garden, just observe what's there. Things that were not part of your initial plan may become valuable assets for the garden. ✿

✿ A comprehensive site assessment checklist is provided on page 97, and can also be downloaded from <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx> and adapted to meet your garden's needs

✿ See the Garden Design Workshop outline in the training section page 80

### Ongoing site assessment

Once a garden is established, you can begin to compile ongoing records of your deepening knowledge of the site. Some ideas:

- Make a rain gauge and record rainfall patterns
- Map sun and shade patterns over the seasons

- Note plants that grow well, plants that have struggled
- Keep a record of community groups you've made contact with

All of these things will assist you in the ongoing development of the garden, and in developing a rich knowledge of the land and community you're working in – this can become a resource for the whole community.

### Share design skills

Hold workshops, draw on the knowledge within your group, and consult with professionals.

You might decide to hold a series of gatherings and forums. ✿

You will continue developing design skills as you garden – make sure to plan ways to formally and informally share them.

## Case study: Fern Avenue Community Garden

Fern Avenue Community Garden incorporates numerous site design features on its 2200 square metre site.

Glimpses of the site's previous incarnation as a 19th Century jam factory and orchard are visible around the garden, in old garden walls, paving and a few remaining trees, including a huge persimmon that arches over the front corner of the garden.

The garden includes communally and individually cultivated areas. There are 34 individual plots in various shapes, each around 10 square metres in size. Additional plots are reserved for organic gardening courses that are held on site. Raised beds provide access for people who find bending difficult.

Native plantings, local food species, and a frog pond provide habitat. A small orchard with many varieties of fruit demonstrates space-saving strategies for growing fruit trees in urban gardens.

A strawbale house was built in a series of community workshops in 1999. It provides space for workshops and courses, a small library, garden administration, and tea and coffee making facilities. It is also used as a meeting space by other community groups. Wide steps to the entrance provide informal seating. Rainwater tanks

collect water from the roof, and solar panels provide power. A side porch holds a notice board and pigeon holes for garden members.

At the back of the garden there are bays for making compost and storing materials, and secure storage for garden tools. There is also a wood-fired cob oven, a composting toilet, chicken and rabbit enclosures, and a 'fairy garden' for children. Mosaic signage on the front gate was created with the help of a community artist and local community members.

The Fern Avenue Community Garden site has evolved gradually over 10 years, and gardeners continue to plan improvements.





## Making the design

Decisions: which of the design elements on your wish list will you include now? Which will you introduce later? What features identified in your site assessment will remain on the land?

Make a map on paper – you may be able to obtain a survey map of the land from your local council. Include measurements, permanent features, and other information you've gleaned. ✨

## Implement your design

Take time into account. You may not have the funds, volunteers, or expertise to implement your whole design straight away. Go slow. Take on small sections that you know you can achieve – and celebrate – before taking on larger projects.

It makes sense for some things to happen before others. If you have a windy or degraded site, for example, you may want to improve your soil and create shelter before planting out expensive fruit trees, perhaps by planting hardy leguminous 'pioneer' species to assuage strong winds, fix nitrogen in the soil, and produce leaves and branches for mulch, creating an environment where your fruit trees are much more likely to flourish. Similarly, you may want to cultivate your volunteer workforce before taking on major projects.

You may choose to convert your design into an action plan – with specific objectives to be met by set dates. Give yourselves plenty of time and set realistic goals – some of your design elements may take years to establish, but plan to achieve small goals early on – like putting in vegie beds with quick growing plants like salad greens so you can share a meal from the garden soon after work on site begins.

## Reassessment re-design

Some things will inevitably work better than others and you will continue to learn more about your site and how it can be used. Your garden group may decide to start an ongoing site design working group, or to hold an annual design forum to assess and improve the design of your garden as it develops.

## General site design resources

*Introduction to Permaculture* Bill Mollison, NSW: Tagari Publications 2000

*A Pattern Language* Christopher Alexander, et al, Oxford University Press 1977

*Futures By Design: The Practice of Ecological Planning* Doug Aberley (ed), NSW: Envirobook Publishing and New Society 1994

*Attracting Butterflies to Your Garden* Densey Clyne, Sydney: New Holland Publishers 2000

*Permaculture: A Designers' Manual* Bill Mollison, NSW: Tagari Publications 1988

Landscape Architects in state government housing bodies (eg Housing SA) and local councils

Plus, look for garden design books at your local library.

## Designing welcoming and accessible gardens

Good landscape design can help create a community garden which draws people in and makes them feel welcome. Considering people's diverse needs is an important way to express a desire to make everyone welcome. Basic considerations like these are essential:

- shade from sun
- shelter from rain
- a place to sit
- information about the garden and how people can use it
- a friendly welcome from other gardeners.

## Street appeal

The way the garden appears to people walking by will have a big impact on how it is perceived: somewhere beautiful, welcoming and purposeful, or ramshackle, dangerous and exclusive. This doesn't mean avoiding the creative use of recycled materials, or sticking to formal garden design, but it does mean paying attention to aesthetics, ensuring composting systems are working properly, and storing mulch and other materials in an orderly way.

Clear, attractive signage is important to help people understand what the garden is about, who it's run by, how they can get involved, and what's permitted – can they walk through? Can they pick produce? Incorporate visual clues for people with limited literacy or English language.

## Seating and resting areas

Seating can make a huge contribution to community gardens – from enabling older people to visit comfortably to helping to build connections among gardeners. Seating can provide a place:

- to eat – together or alone
- to rest
- to stop and experience the garden: observe, listen, smell...
- to sit and chat
- to be quiet or to be social
- to invite people stay around rather than leave once their day's tasks are done
- a point of focus in the garden, a place to walk to – inviting people to explore different parts of the garden

✨ Some aspects of community garden design deserve special attention. See sections on designing for inclusivity page 17, Designing for sustainability page 19, Designing to enhance community safety and deter theft and vandalism page 21, and Designing individual plots page 23.

- a place for performances or workshops
- an opportunity for creativity or a community arts project (painting, sculpting, mosaics).

### Making seating accessible

Consider the needs of all the different people using the garden – and those you would like to feel welcome. Young children and their parents, people who use wheelchairs, walking sticks or walking frames, people feeling ill or visiting from a hospital, people wanting to exercise, homeless people, people who like sun and people who like shade, older people, teenagers, may each have unique preferences and needs.

Variety is a good general principle – try to integrate a range of different sitting options: high, low, wide, narrow, social and secluded, sunny and shaded.

Leave room for wheelchairs when designing sitting areas and picnic tables.

Place seats at regular intervals throughout the garden, so that people who need to rest after walking short distances can still explore different parts of the garden. Places for leaning can also assist.

High seats and seats with handrails or places to hold can be of assistance to people who find it difficult to get up when they sit down, as can seats with high armrests you can sit on.

Do you want to make some seating that's good to lie on?

If your garden is not accessible to the public at all times, consider putting a seat outside the fence, so people still can enjoy being near the garden.

### Seating materials

Seating can be made using a variety of materials:

- cement, cob or strawbales, covered with mosaics
- amphitheatres carved into the earth, covered with lawn or ground covers, or with wooden benches
- 'naturally' occurring seats such as logs and large stones, grassy inclines, tree trunks for leaning against
- stairs can make great sitting places – design any stairs so there is room for people to sit as well as move through
- park benches, perhaps donated by local councils or service agencies – some local councils have used community gardens to trial new seating designs.

### Enhancing non-visual elements in the garden

People who are blind or have vision impairments require non-visual signals to find their way around: smells, sounds, textures, tastes. Paying attention to non-visual senses can enhance everyone's experience of the garden – reminding us to use and enjoy all our senses in the garden, and providing an extra memory-trigger; aiding learning.

Use plants with strong scents to define particular areas of the garden.

Wind chimes, bird feeders, and other gentle noise-makers can mark distinct areas.

Use different materials on major and sub-pathways – sawdust, gravel, woodchips and grass each have different textures, sounds and smells. If you come up with a 'pattern language' of pathways, try to keep using the same materials in the same places. Be aware that some surfaces, such as grass, are more difficult to navigate for people using wheelchairs or crutches.

Plant specific 'sensory' areas in your garden – encourage people to smell, touch and taste the plants in these places. Brainstorm plants that are juicy, rough, aromatic, colourful, prickly, have interesting shapes and seedpods. Notice the different sounds plants make as well – the swoosh of wind through bamboo, the scratching of tree branches, crunching autumn leaves. There are many books and resources about creating sensory gardens, some of which are listed below.

Create a music playground in the garden – metal pipes to hit, bells to ring...

Make a three dimensional site map on a board, with different textures and raised areas to represent features of the garden.

Create vantage points to draw attention to sensory experiences in the garden – sitting places, lookouts.

Seating area under a mango tree at Northey Street City Farm, Brisbane



## Raised beds

Many community gardens integrate raised beds into their design. These allow easy access to the soil for people who use wheelchairs or have trouble bending down to ground-level gardens, and make gardening more comfortable for all users.

Raised beds can be made using a range of materials – let your imagination run free! Bricks, wood (untreated), steel, even plastics. Used car tyres are not recommended for use with food plants because of their potential to leach toxins.

Some raised bed designs allow a person sitting in a wheelchair or on a chair to fit their knees under the garden bed like a table. The Horticultural Therapy Association of Victoria produces a useful booklet about building raised beds (see below).

Other options include hanging baskets, vertical garden beds, and window boxes. Tables which have room for wheelchairs are useful for propagation and other garden activities.

If your garden involves people with restricted mobility, consider the accessibility of water sources, tool storage areas, and toilets, as well as garden beds.

## Resources \*

*Accessible Landscapes: Designing for Inclusion* Phillip S Evans and Brian Donnelly, Department of Plant Operations, San Francisco State University 1993

Many ideas about designing welcoming, accessible public spaces, particularly for innovative seating ideas to meet a range of different needs.

*Accessible Gardening for People with Physical Disabilities: A Guide to Methods, Tools and Plants* Janeen Adil, Woodbine House 1994

## “Horticultural Therapy – Create an Enabled Garden”

Joyce Schillen

Available at [www.gardenforever.com/pages/artenabled.htm](http://www.gardenforever.com/pages/artenabled.htm) Useful ideas for gardening with people with disabilities, including a section on coping with arthritis.

## CSIRO

CSIRO publish several information sheets about Access for People with Disabilities in their Building Technology Files series. Includes pamphlets on buildings, kerbs, ramps, bathrooms and signs. \$5 each. Can be ordered on line at [www.publish.csiro.au](http://www.publish.csiro.au) or ph. (03) 9662 7555

## Horticultural Therapy Association of Victoria

HTAV produce booklets on raised garden beds, sensory gardens, and starting a horticultural therapy program as well as online fact sheets. [www.horticulturaltherapy.com.au](http://www.horticulturaltherapy.com.au) ph.(03) 9848 9710

## Disability Information & Resource Centre Inc.

[www.dircsa.org.au](http://www.dircsa.org.au) Provides information, referral and advice 195 Gilles Street, Adelaide SA 5000. Ph: (08) 8236 0555 or 1300 305 558 (SA only), fax: (08) 8236 0566 TTY: (08) 8223 7579, email [dirc@dircsa.org.au](mailto:dirc@dircsa.org.au)

## Designing sustainable gardens

### Make your design responsive to its particular place

Design to suit the particular environmental conditions of your unique location.

Begin with careful site analysis. Consider

- year round solar access and patterns of shade and light
- gradient
- rainfall
- frost
- wind intensity and direction
- water movement and retention
- soil type and condition, including any possible contamination
- heat retaining or reflecting surfaces
- any trees or other existing vegetation that will remain on site and the root zones of nearby trees
- Identify and create microclimates to suit different plants and purposes

### Minimise energy inputs in the development of your garden, and design for minimal energy requirements

Work with what is already on site.

Use recycled and redeployed materials.

\* See <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx> for more links and resources on accessible garden design.



◀ Raised bed at Wandana Community Garden, SA. Photo: Alan Shepard

Seek out local, sustainably-produced products and materials when you need to buy new. Refuse products that disrupt, destroy, pollute or damage natural systems or communities where they are sourced, such as native forest timbers and moss rocks.

Avoid or minimise lawns and areas that need mowing or power trimming.

Use human energy fuelled hand tools rather than fossil fuel powered tools wherever possible.

Avoid chemical inputs – design for organic pest control and soil fertility.

Use renewable energy sources where possible, such as solar powered lighting.

Design to recycle green waste and minimise use of imported compost. Reserve space for composting systems, including space to grow compost plants and store materials. Provide information and training about composting.

### **Design for water conservation**

Harvest rainwater with tanks and infiltration ditches (swales).

Improve the water-holding capacity of soils by incorporating compost and organic material.

Mulch to reduce evaporation.

Install a dripper system to apply water under mulch, so water can soak deeply into the soil without runoff or evaporation.

If building raised beds, consider the water-retaining qualities of your edging materials.

Use and create microclimates to situate plants for maximum water efficiency.

Investigate options for greywater recycling. Contact SA Health or SA Water for information on greywater regulations.

### **Design for biodiversity**

Identify, conserve and maintain existing biodiversity. Help maintain the biodiversity of our food. Grow and share heritage, locally adapted, and non-hybrid seeds. Become a Local Seed Network.

Allow some plants to go to seed, not only to replenish your seed supplies, but also to attract beneficial insects.

Provide habitat for native birds, lizards, insects and animals. Select plants that provide food and shelter for native fauna, including native grasses and nectar-producing shrubs. Allow space for fallen branches, logs and rocks.

Keep dogs and cats out of the garden, particularly at night.

Improve the biodiversity of garden soils with compost, mulch, and care for soil critters. Minimise digging.

Include perennial plantings and minimise paved areas.

Consider the weed potential of plants, and potential for escape into waterways, parks or natural areas.

### **Garden organically**

Build living soil.

Foster a diverse garden ecology.

Eliminate harmful chemicals.

Make organic practices part of your garden guidelines or plot holder requirements.

Provide information and opportunities for gardeners to learn about organic practices.

### **Use Permaculture principles and strategies**

Permaculture is a design approach drawing on observation of natural systems, that emphasizes relationships among design elements. David Holmgren's 12 Principles for Permaculture design (along with other permaculture tools and strategies) can provide practical guidance for community garden design:

- **Observe and interact** - take time to get to know your site and design solutions that suit your particular situation.
- **Catch and store energy** – harvest resources, including water, that enter your site
- **Obtain a yield** – ensure that you are getting truly useful rewards from work that you are doing.
- **Apply self-regulation and accept feedback** – continue to observe and monitor your garden as it grows, make changes where needed.
- **Use and value renewable resources and services** – reduce consumption of non-renewable resources. Design to make use of 'natural services', such as predatory insects to keep pest populations in check.
- **Produce no waste** – produce lots of compost! Consider the lifecycle of any materials you bring into the garden.
- **Design from patterns to details** – draw on patterns in nature and observe the ways people use the garden site.

- **Integrate rather than segregate** – look for potential symbiotic relationships between design elements in your garden, locate things so they can work together and support each other.
- **Use small and slow solutions** – start small, work slowly, and celebrate your success. Make sure you can maintain and sustain what you have already established before embarking on new projects.
- **Use and value diversity** – both biological and cultural.
- **Use edges and value the marginal** – often the most productive areas are where one system meets another.
- **Creatively use and respond to change** – remain open to new possibilities, use your creativity to design appropriate responses to new information and situations.

## Resources

**Gardening Basics** leaflets in the back of this booklet

**'Making Community Gardens more Sustainable'**, Sustainable Landscapes

This brochure includes information on to minimising water use, selecting herbs, vegies and fruit trees, and growing bush tucker plants. Available for download from <http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/botanicgardens/programs/landscapes.html> or phone 08 8222 9311.

**'Designing Landscapes for People and Place'**, Sustainable Landscapes

A general introduction to sustainable garden design. Available for download from <http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/botanicgardens/programs/landscapes.html> or phone 08 8222 9311.

**Local Seed Network Manual**, Jude Fanton and Michel Fanton, Byron Bay: Seed Savers Network 2004

All you need to know to set up a local seed network at your garden. Also see <http://www.seedsavers.net/local-seed-networks>

**Permaculture Principles and Pathways Beyond Sustainability**, David Holmgren, Victoria: Holmgren Design Services 2002

Holmgren explores the understandings which underpin permaculture practice, and questions many of the assumptions of the 'sustainability' debate.

**Introduction to Permaculture**, Bill Mollison, NSW: Tagari 2000

An introduction to the theory and practice of permaculture design.

**'Permaculture: A Design System for sustainable human settlement'**, Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network/TerraCircle

A succinct two page introduction to permaculture available from [www.communitygarden.org.au](http://www.communitygarden.org.au)

## Designing to enhance community safety and deter theft and vandalism

Most community gardens will experience minor theft or vandalism at some stage. It may be preferable to find ways to live with a low level of loss rather than investing substantially in deterring it. Many gardens, for example, find that hand tools such as trowels disappear fairly regularly – you may decide to include buying periodic replacements in your ongoing expenses budget rather than coming up with a complex way to chain them to the tool shed... Likewise, many gardens choose to plant extra veggies, rather than attempting to completely eliminate unauthorised food harvesting.

Be prepared: take the possibility of theft and vandalism into account in your planning and site design processes, talk about the possibility with your gardeners, and think about how you would respond if theft or vandalism did occur.

### Cultivate many allies

Safety can be fostered more powerfully through building community and a sense of belonging and connection than through fences and security alarms. Foster community involvement and sense of ownership and appreciation towards the garden. The more people who support and feel ownership of the garden, the more eyes you will have watching over it. As gardeners and local residents come to recognise and know each other, looking out for potential unsafe activity becomes easy.

Involve as many people as possible from the beginning and as the garden grows. Particularly seek to involve or befriend residents of the immediate neighbourhood and people who may be potential vandals. Actively avoid any groups feeling excluded. Make sure people in neighbouring houses have phone numbers so they can contact one of the garden co-ordinators if necessary.

Some community gardens work with the local Neighbourhood Watch group to encourage people to be aware of what's happening at the garden. Others have found it useful to build co-operative relationships with local police and council rangers, and to encourage them to include the garden on their regular rounds.

In some circumstances it may be necessary or desirable to involve the police in unlawful or unsafe situations. Make sure relevant contact numbers are easily accessible.

Children and young people can be especially good allies to the garden. You may want to encourage their involvement by including special plots for children (perhaps

offer a free child's plot for children of parents with a plot in the garden) or inviting school groups to visit. Involve young people in art projects at the garden – particularly people with aerosol art skills. Some gardens hold special events to invite young people's participation, offering enticements like cob oven pizza. Make contact with local youth agencies to get assistance.

### Designing to deter theft and vandalism

Safety and crime prevention strategies should be incorporated into all community garden designs. Designs should not restrict visibility, and should encourage informal surveillance with sitting and meeting places to encourage community use and clear lines of site from public spaces and local residences. If possible, don't locate the garden in an isolated area. Avoid creating hidden spaces in the garden.

*"Vibrant neighbourhoods, where the streets are alive with people... are places which are inherently safer than deserted streets where curtains are drawn"*<sup>3</sup>

David Engwicht

People may assume that food growing in a park is available for them to pick. Have clear signs and other information letting people know who is allowed to pick produce, that the garden is for community benefit, and how to get involved. It may be useful to state that food is grown by volunteers, or used to for community projects.

A perimeter fence can help to define the garden. A low, unlocked fence can be sufficient to indicate the boundary of the garden and to deter unauthorised harvesting, as well as dogs and balls. The cost of high, anti-vandalism fencing could be much higher than losses you may experience from unauthorised harvesting or graffiti. Make sure that fences do not restrict the visibility of the garden.

Make occasional friendly requests for gardeners to check their tool sheds at home to make sure no community garden tools have found their way there.

Keep the garden looking neat and well maintained to communicate that it is actively used and valued. Harvest regularly so you don't create the impression food is going to waste. Fix any damage or remove any graffiti as soon as it occurs.

Spiky plants and vines covering walls and fences may help deter graffiti. Plants with thorns will also deter people from climbing fences.

Murals and mosaics may make walls less inviting for graffiti writers. Invite local artists, school groups, or graffiti artists to decorate your walls.

Easily recognisable foods like ripe red tomatoes and butternut pumpkins are the most likely to be taken. Grow them out of site of passers by, hide them amongst taller, less attractive plants, or experiment with varieties which look different to what you see in the supermarket – like heritage varieties of tomatoes and eggplants that are white or yellow when ripe. 'Unusual' plants or varieties are much less likely to be taken, as are root crops.

Some community gardens have sprinkled flour on ripening veggies to give the impression of pesticide dust.

Plant extra food so there's enough for everyone. Some gardens have planted a free garden at the entrance, marked with a sign: "If you need vegetables, please join our community garden. If you need food today, then please pick from this plot only." Others have installed a 'free box' in a shady place near the garden gate, where people can leave surplus produce for other gardeners and passers by to take. Others in the neighbourhood could be invited to use this box to swap and share their excess fruit and garden produce.

### Resources

#### Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Community garden design can benefit from CPTED strategies, such as maximising natural surveillance; using strong visual clues to differentiate between 'public' and 'private' spaces; selective placement of entrances, lighting, signage and other physical elements; and ensuring spaces are – and appear to be – well maintained. A web search will reveal a number of resources for applying CPTED principles. The Queensland Government's CPTED guidelines can be downloaded from <http://www.police.qld.gov.au/programs/crimePrevention/cpted.htm>.



<sup>3</sup> Towards an Eco-city, Envirobook p.57

### **Nonviolent Community Safety and Peacebuilding Handbook**

Pt'chang Victoria: Pt'chang Nonviolent Community Safety Group Inc. Outlines an approach to community initiated and controlled peace and safety initiatives which brings together strategies from the peace movement with ideas from community development. Nonviolent community safety ideas can help build a community where people take shared responsibility for a safe environment and where everyone's safety is valued. This booklet contains many useful ideas for creating peaceful environments and dealing with situations that feel unsafe. It can be downloaded from <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~ptchang/download.htm>.

## **Designing individual plots**

Individual plots are a feature of many – but certainly not all – community gardens. They can be an effective way to facilitate people's initial involvement in a community garden, and can be as successful as communally gardened spaces for building community. If you do include individual plots in your garden, there are some particular design considerations.

### **People – who will be using the plots?**

What are their needs? For example, wheelchair accessible raised beds, shady resting places, children's spaces.

How often will they be visiting their plot? Will they be maintained daily, weekly, less often?

What is their gardening experience? Are they ready to take on a big plot?

What do they want to use the plot for? Do they intend to grow a substantial proportion of their food or are they more interested in learning or recreation?

How many people do you estimate will want a plot?

### **The land**

How much land do you want to devote to individual plots? Take into account all of the other things you want to use your land for. Even community gardens that are predominantly used for individual plots should allocate land for shared facilities such as tool storage, seating and social space. Some community gardens have plots as small as one square metre. Some of the biggest in Australia are up to 30 square metres, however these have proven to be too large for most plot holders to manage.

How much of the land is appropriate for plots? Can you rule out areas that do not have sufficient access to sunlight, water taps, soil?

### **Plot design**

Use good design to facilitate intensive gardening techniques so people can grow as much as possible on whatever size plot they have.

Make plot shapes narrow enough so that gardeners can reach the centre without stepping on the beds.

Design for equity – ensure plots all have good solar access, and that they are the same size (or sizes).

Ensure clear and permanent definition between individual plots.

Each plot needs to have direct access from a shared pathway.

Make pathways wide enough for wheelbarrows to pass through, and allow places for barrows to park.

Avoid locating individual plots against perimeter fences to deter passers-by reaching through and picking produce.

Ensure adequate access to water sources.

Use stakes at corners of garden beds to guide hoses, stopping them dragging across beds.

Consider including some very small plots (one square metre or even less) for new gardeners or for children to have their own garden plot. Some gardens have a system where new gardeners start with a smaller plot, and can apply for a larger plot after managing it well for a year.

Set aside a plot for participants in courses and workshops at the garden to use.

Use shared garden areas to grow plants that attract pollinating and predator insects, so people can use their plot space for productive plants.

### **Plot holder agreements**

It is important to have clear information for plot holders about what they are entitled to and what is required of them. Having a plot holder agreement for people to sign can be an effective way to communicate about plot holders' obligations and the conditions of participation. Agreements should cover plot fees, acceptable use of the plots, and plot-holder requirements.

 There are examples of plot holder agreements on page 63 of this booklet and a sample plot application form on page 101. There are examples of plot holder agreements at <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx>

Rent for plots can be a reliable source of core funding for community gardens. Some things to consider:

- Will different sized plots have different fees?
- Will you have concessional fees to reflect people's differing abilities to pay plot rental?
- What costs will plot fees have to cover? Will you be providing mulch or other materials? Do you need to pay for water usage?
- How will you organise renewals? Will you have a rent renewal day once a year or quarter when everyone pays?

Are there any things people are not allowed to do with their plots? Things to consider:

- Is the garden organic? Is the use of pesticides, herbicides and artificial fertilisers permitted?
- Do the plots have to be food producing or is it acceptable to grow only ornamental plants?
- Are there plants that you don't want people to grow, for example things over a certain height (which may shade nearby plots) or invasive species?

Plot holders' requirements

- Will plot holders be required to garden organically?
- Will you ask plot holders to participate in other aspects of the garden, such as meetings, working bees, maintaining communally gardened areas?
- Are there things you want to ask of plot holders – such as cleaning and replacing tools and hoses?
- Do you have other garden rules that people need to agree to? Are dogs allowed? Parties? 🌱

Other considerations

- Will there be conditions for plot leases being renewed?
- What will the process be for reclaiming plots if not used for a specified period of time?

🌱 See **Cultivating Community's Garden Rules** at <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx> for one example of how these issues have been approached







# **Involving people and growing community**

# Involving people and growing community

✿ See the promotion section, page 44 for ideas

## Inviting involvement

### Let people know about the garden

Use a range of ways to let people know that the garden exists and about events that are happening there. ✿

### Bring people into the garden

Getting people into the garden to experience it directly is the most important step in encouraging people to become involved.

Some ways of encouraging people to visit the garden include:

- Plant sales, nursery
- Workshops and courses
- Directly inviting people – local residents, businesses, community groups, schools...
- Non-gardening activities, such as art projects and open days
- Festivals and community events
- Allowing spaces in the garden to be used for other activities – play groups, yoga classes, quilters' circles...

### Make people welcome

Make it easy for visitors to make sense of the garden – use signs, leaflets, explanatory displays. Make sure the garden landscaping appears welcoming, neat and interesting from the street front. Encourage diversity and design for inclusivity.

Think about ways to address preconceptions about not fitting in (such as perceptions that gardeners are all of a particular age or subculture)

Create a culture of welcoming people – say hello and have a chat with everyone who comes in. A kettle and teacups are some of the most essential community gardening equipment!

### Encourage people to become and remain involved

Provide information about how people can get involved with the garden – for example renting a garden plot, joining a particular volunteer project, coming to monthly working bees. This could take the form of signage and leaflets.

Taking on an individual plot is often a first step towards getting more involved. Many gardens request or require plot holders to contribute to the management or upkeep of the wider garden.

Have ongoing activities at the garden so people keep coming back.

Have regular opening/ working days so people know the best times to come.

Encourage a sense of community ownership – invite and welcome the input of new gardeners and visitors. Allow people to share their skills, thinking and creativity.

## Volunteers

Volunteers are the lifeblood of all community gardens – take good care of them!

### Getting ready for volunteers

Before you invite people to volunteer, make sure you have:

- A clear outline of what you need from volunteers – this may take the form of job descriptions. ✿ This is particularly important when asking for specific voluntary assistance from professional garden supporters
- A process for 'inducting' new volunteers ✿
- A volunteer co-ordinator – someone who can show new volunteers what to do, and provide ongoing mentoring or supervision
- A safe work environment and space for volunteers to make cuppas, rest between tasks, shade, water, etc
- Relevant insurance
- A volunteer application form ✿
- A filing system for volunteers' info.

### Engaging volunteers

Provide positions that allow people to use and build on their skills and to take on leadership roles.

Use your networks and ask people directly, particularly when seeking specialist support (such as graphic design work or book keeping).

✿ There is a sample volunteer job description on page 98, which can also be downloaded from <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx> and adapted to meet your needs

✿ see page 76 for information on inducting volunteers

✿ there is a sample volunteer application form on page 99 which can also be downloaded from <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx>

Be strategic about attracting people to your board or management committee who have skills and networks your garden needs.

Use agencies such as Volunteering SA and Volunteering Australia.

Register as a volunteer project with Job Network Members and employment agencies. Mature age unemployed people may be able to volunteer instead of seeking employment.

Businesses are increasingly implementing 'corporate social responsibility' programs, which facilitate employees volunteering or working for community organisations on company time. Major corporations have details on their websites. United Way, a non-profit organisation, can help connect community organisations and corporate supporters.

Universities have internship programs in which students gain work experience through placements with community organisations and businesses. Contact the career or employment services department at your local universities for details.

Working in collaboration with local health, welfare and disability services can create opportunities for people who are socially isolated due to illness or life circumstances to be supported to participate in a community garden.

Consider work-exchange programs such as Willing Workers on Organic Farms (WWOOF) and Willing Workers in Appropriate Technology. This may involve paying a membership fee, and providing volunteers or interns with food and a place to stay in exchange for work. A cluster of community gardens could share a WWOOFer.

## Contacts

**Volunteering Australia** [www.volunteeringaustralia.org](http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org)

**Volunteering SA** [www.volunteeringsa.org.au](http://www.volunteeringsa.org.au) ph (08) 8221 7177 or 1300 135545

**Go Volunteer** [www.govolunteer.com.au](http://www.govolunteer.com.au)

**Willing Workers on Organic Farms** [www.woof.org.au](http://www.woof.org.au)  
ph 03 5155 0218

**Willing Workers in Alternative Technology**  
<http://greenbuilder.com/mailman/listinfo/wwat>

**United Way Australia** [www.unitedway.com.au](http://www.unitedway.com.au)

**Good Company** [www.goodcompany.com.au](http://www.goodcompany.com.au) connects professionals with community organisations requiring pro bono assistance (for gardens in Sydney and Melbourne with Deductible Gift Recipient status)

**Pro Bono Australia** <http://www.volunteermatch.com.au> connects skilled professionals with not-for-profit organisations

**Office for Volunteers, Government of South Australia** [www.ofv.sa.gov.au](http://www.ofv.sa.gov.au) provide fact sheets and certificates

**WorkReady Internship Program** at Flinders University, ph (08) 8210 2832 or [workready@flinders.edu.au](mailto:workready@flinders.edu.au)

## Retaining volunteers

Find ways to acknowledge and support volunteers. Ask people what they want from volunteering – for example on volunteer sign up sheets. Do what you can to help people achieve their aims, and be realistic about what the garden can support.

Allow people to contribute their skills, experience, and knowledge – and not just gardening skills! Take the time to find out what people have to offer – someone might not tell you that they're a fabulous mediator or web designer if they think you're looking for someone to pull weeds.

Build volunteers' skills – allow them to do a range of work, provide training to enhance people's gardening and other skills.

Provide good facilities – cuppas, resting places.

Acknowledge the contribution of volunteers to the garden – think creatively about ways to do this...

- Say thank you
- Arrange special social occasions for volunteers
- Give volunteers a t-shirt or hat with the garden's logo
- Give honorary garden membership to volunteers, perhaps life membership to people who have made major voluntary contributions
- Certificates
- Provide references for people seeking employment
- Write articles in newsletters about what people are working on – be sure to include everyone.

## Employment and other programs

Some gardens host people on 'Work for the Dole' and other government employment programs or community corrections programs. These programs have made significant contributions to many gardens, bringing in new skills and energy. They require someone at the garden to be able to process the paperwork and administration involved, and a person with the necessary skills to supervise program workers.

Before taking on one of these programs, design a particular project for participants to work on – something they can carry through to completion, and which won't make garden volunteers feel displaced.

If you are hosting people on employment or community service programs, give them the same consideration you would volunteers – provide training and mentoring in their areas of interest, involve them in the running of the garden, and find ways to acknowledge their work.

For more information about these options go to [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au) or phone 132850.

## Skills mapping

Because community gardens can work on so many levels, they can give people the opportunity to put into practice a huge range of skills, not just the more obvious things like making compost or harvesting vegies. Yet sometimes vital skills and resources remain unknown, perhaps because people don't think they're relevant or because they don't recognise and promote their own skills.

### What can we map?

People's resources include networks and access to materials, as well as practical skills and competencies, experience, formal and informal training and education, knowledge, and personal qualities.

Valuable assets which should also be part of a skills audit include people's enthusiasm, passions, interests, values, willingness to learn and their 'insider knowledges' of living with a disability, coming from a non-English speaking background, being a parent, being a child, and so on.

When embarking on an audit of the skills and resources of people at your garden, think broadly about what your garden needs, and how it can provide the opportunity for someone to contribute. Here are a few starting points:

- Networks – membership of other community organisations, schools, faith communities, government bodies, businesses, media...
- Gardening – pruning, grafting, compost, propagation, plant identification...
- Technical skills – use of particular equipment, familiarity with systems at your garden...
- Access to equipment – a home computer, photocopier, fax machine, chainsaw...
- Administration – designing systems, computer skills (specific programs or tasks?), answering telephones, financial management, book keeping...
- Interpersonal and communication skills – welcoming people, dealing with conflict, relating to people of non-English speaking backgrounds or with disabilities...
- Leadership and learning – facilitating meetings, presenting training sessions, supervising volunteers, prioritising tasks...
- Fundraising – organising events, writing grant applications...
- Promotion – marketing, writing media releases, public speaking, giving interviews, making flyers, webdesign...
- Knowledge – of local community and history, of gardening, community development, law...
- Licences – car, chainsaw, bus...
- Research and writing skills – finding available support, producing publications...

People sometimes need some good questions and a little encouragement to identify and share what their skills and resources are.

### Ongoing record keeping

Include questions about skills, experience and interest on registration forms for new volunteers, and develop a filing or data base system that enables you to access and utilise this information. ✨

Keep records of training sessions that people undertake at the garden and elsewhere.

### Skills workshop

Getting people together to think about what skills, resources, networks, and enthusiasms they could contribute to your community garden can bring forth many new ideas, help people to identify what they have to offer, and give everyone a sense of the richness of your community.

If you are starting a new community garden, you might decide to spend some of your meetings mapping the skills of your working group.

✨ see page 99 for a sample volunteer registration form

Questions you might ask:

- What do you do at the garden (or in the process of starting one)?
- What skills and knowledge do/ could you bring to the garden?
- What are you interested in learning more about or getting more experience in?
- What areas of the garden are you particularly interested in?
- What role would you most like to be playing at the garden in five year's time?
- What would help you to move towards doing this?

**Questionnaire**

One way of composing a skills questionnaire is to list the skills you're seeking down the left hand side of a page, and allow people to tick along a scale from 'do often & confidently' to 'never tried' or similar. You might also want to include 'confident to teach/supervise'. Allow space for people to add extra skills.

	can teach/ supervise	confident/ have done often	have tried	never done	interested in learning
watering nursery					
propagating cuttings					
planting seeds					

**Community building**

Ideas for growing community at your garden

**Socialise together**

Organise regular social activities so gardeners get to know and better understand each other.

Take breaks together. Morning tea time is a ritual at many community gardens, a chance for everyone to take a break from what they're working on and meet other gardeners, swap recipes, discuss upcoming events, identify weeds, and just chat.

Eat together. Regularly share the produce of your garden in co-operatively prepared meals.

Hold monthly or bimonthly working bee days, so people who don't usually visit the garden at the same time have a chance to meet. Have a shared lunch or cook up a feast from the garden.

**Celebrate**

Celebration is core business for any community garden.

Celebrations are essential to give recognition to your achievements large and small – a new fruit tree planted, a successful grant application, a good day's work, an anniversary.

Hold harvest feasts, morning tea parties, street parties, barbeques, impromptu rainwater toasts, and solstice bonfires. Celebrate cultural festivals and birthdays. Incorporate music and food. Invite the neighbours, invite the Mayor; include everyone.

Use celebrations to tell stories about the garden and its gardeners.

Celebrations can be part of your practices of acknowledgment of volunteers' and workers' contributions.

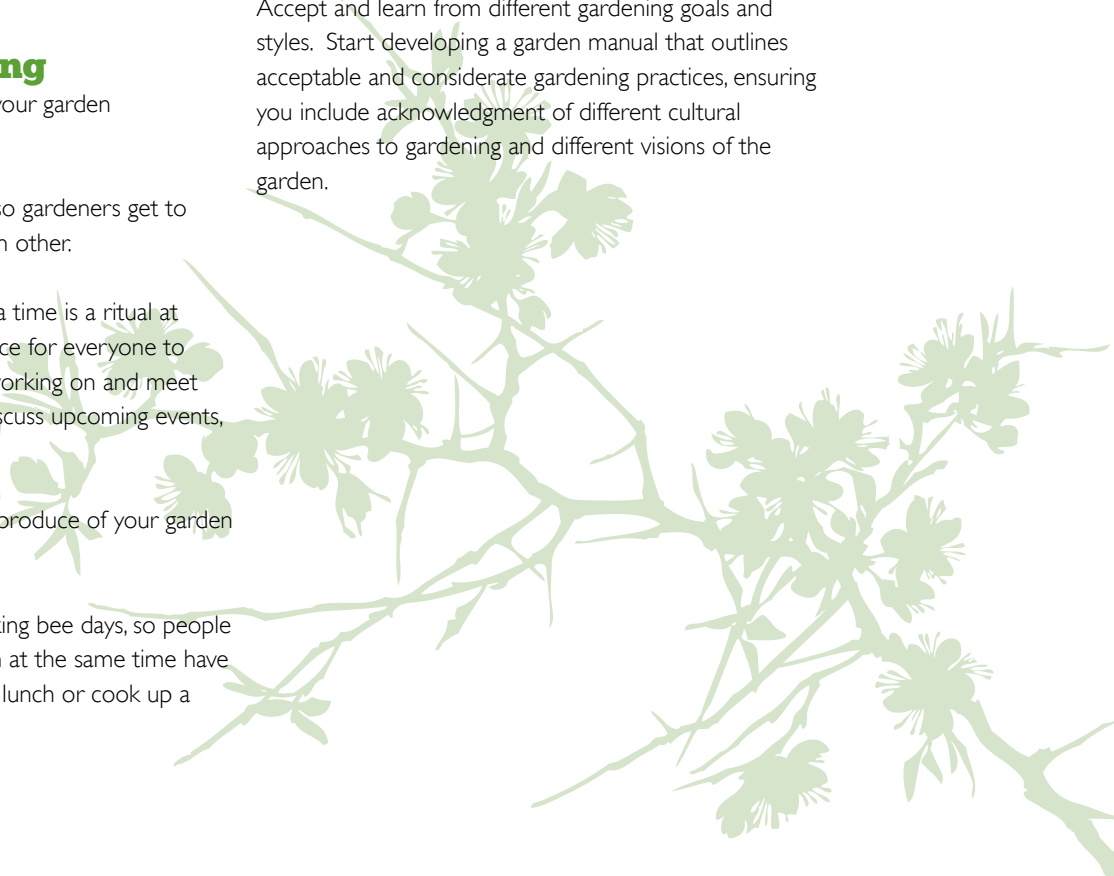
Celebrations are excellent ways to publicise your success and make it contagious – with members of the garden, the local community, in the media.

**Value and share skills and knowledge**

Be on the look out for opportunities to facilitate and encourage knowledge sharing and mentoring.

Recognise the benefits of sharing gardening knowledge, produce and recipes.

Accept and learn from different gardening goals and styles. Start developing a garden manual that outlines acceptable and considerate gardening practices, ensuring you include acknowledgment of different cultural approaches to gardening and different visions of the garden.



## Embrace diversity

There is great potential for community gardens to be heterogenous, culturally diverse places.

Recognise the benefits of drawing skills, experiences and knowledges from a wide range of people in the community.

Design and redesign the garden so that as many people as possible feel welcome and can access the garden.

✱ see page 17 for ideas on designing welcoming and accessible gardens

✱ see page 63 for examples of community garden rules

✱ see page 26 for ideas on welcoming people into your garden and page 44 for promotion ideas

## Find creative ways to communicate

Issue continual invitations to people to get involved, and provide lots of opportunities for new and old gardeners to be welcomed.

Come up with creative ways of letting gardeners and the wider community know what's going on at the garden, and inviting their participation. Some community gardens have letterboxes at each plot. Some send out regular email updates. Notice boards on site are important for sharing information.

A garden diary can be useful: fill it in when you visit, note what you did, record a quick site check (fences, tools out, vandalism...). A communication box can be a way of inviting people who visit the garden when no one else is around to share their thoughts, excitement, observations, etc.

Newsletters can provide a forum for discussing issues and sharing ideas, as well as keeping people up to date with things happening, upcoming events, and goings on in the wider community gardening movement and community. Contribute to regional community gardening network newsletters and the Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network newsletter; Community Harvest.

## Manage participation in the garden

Be active in managing participation in the garden. Seek outside assistance if necessary (for example, if a difficult dispute cannot be resolved).

Develop garden rules and guidelines adequate management systems and appropriate grievance procedures.

## Build community beyond the garden gate

Be proactive in seeking outside support for garden activities. Work with the wider community to involve appropriate groups for support.

Look for opportunities to promote the garden and invite people in.

Make links with other community gardens – they will be your best resources for experiential knowledge, practical advice, and great ideas. Find ways to link with gardens in your local area, and with state and national community gardening networks. Visit [www.communitygarden.org.au](http://www.communitygarden.org.au) and [www.communityfoods.org.au](http://www.communityfoods.org.au) as a starting point.

## Resources

*Growing Communities Curriculum: Community Building and Organisational Development through Community Gardening* Jeanette Abi-Nader; Kendall Dunnigan and Kristen Markley Philadelphia: The American Community Gardening Association 2001 352pp.

A hefty spiral bound volume detailing the ACGA's Growing Communities curriculum, including background information, workshop handouts, and facilitation tips. Workshop outlines cover creating and strengthening community gardening organisations, leadership development, planning, and forming partnerships. Contains an enormous amount of material on using community gardens for community development within an assets-based community development framework.

*Cultivating Community: Principles and Practices for Community Gardening as a Community-Building Tool* Karen Payne and Deborah Fryman Philadelphia: American Community Gardening Association 2001 56pp.

Outlines a range of strategies for using community gardening for community organising and development, including nurturing leadership, including families, and 'economic empowerment'. Examples from across the US.

A composting workshop at Kurruru Pingyarendi Community Garden, SA





# **Gardening with children and schools**

# Gardening with children and schools

✿ See page 21 for ideas about children's potential roles in protecting the garden

✿ There is a sample booking form for school group visits on page 100

## Gardening with children

Gardens can be delicious places for play, exploration, and connection with nature. Children all over the world are gardeners. They plant and harvest food, take care of animals, and have as they learn.

Some gardens are designed especially for children, such as the Ian Potter Children's Garden in Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens and Collingwood Children's Farm. Many community gardens find there are great benefits to including children at the centre of integrated garden projects. Children are involved in community gardens as plot holders, visitors with school and other groups, and come along with parents who are involved in many

ways with the garden. Children bring vitality, creativity and imagination to community gardens. They contribute their ideas and skills, ask fantastic questions, and take on responsibility for the garden's wellbeing. Including children also has the extra benefit of helping parents to participate in the garden. ✿

Some community gardens find that offering programs for visiting school groups addressing particular curriculum areas becomes an additional income stream, as well as being a way to promote ecological literacy and community engagement. ✿





## Ideas for making child (and parent) friendly community gardens

As with any group of people you wish to make welcome in the garden, involve children in design and planning processes, and take their particular needs, skills and interests into account. Consult with children already familiar with your garden or site to get their ideas. Remember and draw on your own childhood garden experiences.

Provide child-size garden tools: trowels, rakes, spades, watering cans, wheelbarrows and gardening gloves. Look for good quality metal tools in appropriate sizes and avoid expensive toy garden sets.

Set aside a space where children can dig, move soil around and get fabulously muddy without disturbing plants.

If you have a library, include books on gardening with children and children's books about the wonders of gardening. Review or recommend children's books in your newsletter (see Resources list below for suggestions).

Invite parents' groups and playgroups to use the garden. Ask them about what would make the garden more user-friendly for them.

Encourage baby wearing (carrying young children in slings and baby carriers while gardening) and consider space for nappy changes and breastfeeding. Do you need a potty next to your composting loo?

Offer small plots (a square metre or even less) to older children so they can plant and tend and experiment with their own garden. Alternatively, allow children to decorate and plant out a large pot or container.

Establish a children's grazing area, where everything is safe to nibble, and fill it with interesting, easy to grow herbs and vegetables that children can help themselves to. Try parsley, fennel, peas, rocket, violets, and radishes. Fill your garden with plants that delight children. Grow huge sunflowers, curious cacti, strawberries to hunt for, fascinating carnivorous plants, giant pumpkins, stunning passionfruit vines and bean tipis to disappear into. How long would it take to grow a climbing tree?

Encourage interesting critters. Grow plants which attract butterflies, birds, and predator insects (good for controlling pests too!). Find a place for a birdbath, create habitat for lizards, allow visitors to your worm farms.

Provide some simple non-gardening activities for children whose parents want to focus on gardening. A sand pit

is ideal. If you have more room, perhaps a swing or a musical playground. Ensure children's equipment has adequate shade and is located so that adults and children can see each other easily.

Allow children to contribute to the garden by participating in working bee and shared gardening activities at the level they are capable of, such as sweeping paths, organising empty plant pots, or winnowing seeds for saving.

Chickens are often fascinating to young children. Gardeners have been known to use a clean chook pen with friendly chickens as a short-term toddler pen. If a swing is placed near a chicken enclosure a young child may be content observing and swinging for long enough for parents to plant out a few seedlings.

Offer children's activity sessions during school holidays. Make scarecrows, eat flowers, hunt for tiny garden beasts, harvest seeds and scatter them in the garden. 🌱

Do a safety audit of your garden and consider the special needs of children. Provide small hats and sunscreen. Garden organically so you don't need to manage chemical pesticides and fertilisers around children. 🌱

🌱 Visit <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx/> and your local library for ideas for gardening with children and garden craft.

🌱 see page 66 for information on safety assessments

Musical playground,  
Northey Street City  
Farm, Brisbane



## Gardens in schools

### Why have gardens in schools?

✿ There are numerous links at <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx>, in addition to the key resources listed at the end of this section. There is a sample booking form for community gardens hosting school visits on page 100

**Accomplishment** – Children have the opportunity to work cooperatively on real tasks, to take responsibility for the care of plants, and to take pride in the food they've grown themselves. Children who struggle in classroom settings can find ways to be 'good' at school, and experience efficacy and acknowledgement.

**Understanding** – In the garden, students can observe and interact with all of the principles of ecology. Gardens provide a context for understanding seasonality and life cycles. Students learn about where food really comes from and understand the roles of food in life. A kitchen and garden promote exploration, discovery and risk taking, such as trying new foods, activities and making new friends.

**Learning** – Garden experiences reinforce classroom curricula and offer opportunities to integrate curricula across subject areas. The garden setting helps broaden the way teachers look at both curriculum and their students. Gardens provide opportunities for informal one-on-one time for teachers and students to talk. They offer opportunities to teach life skills such as gardening and cooking.

**Celebrating cultural diversity** – gardens, particularly if combined with cooking programs, offer opportunities to honour the various cultures comprising the school community. Gardens provide opportunities for community involvement – a link with neighbours, volunteers, parents, and community businesses.

**Nourishment** – Gardens provide positive experiences of healthy foods, increase students' knowledge of fruits, vegetables, and herbs and can improve nutrition.

**Connection with place** – Students learn about and connect with the outdoors. Gardens (and kitchens) can be beautiful spaces that connect students to their school.

### Starting a school garden

Much of the general information in this kit will be useful for people starting school-based gardens. There are also resources available which address the specific needs of school gardens, such as forming links to curriculum areas and maintaining the garden over school holidays. ✿

As with all community gardens, there is no substitute for learning from the direct experiences of people who have been through the process of getting a school garden up and running. Some schools have developed programs where their students visit other schools to instruct and mentor them in their initial stages of establishing a school garden.



Amber with broc and cauli. Photo: Brian Hosking >



The kitchen garden at Collingwood College, Melbourne >

## Resources

### Gardening with Children

#### The Ian Potter Children's Garden, Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne

This magical garden is designed to encourage children's delight in nature and passion for plants. It celebrates the imagination and curiosity of children and fosters the creative nature of play. Information at [http://www.rbv.gov.au/rbg\\_melbourne/ian\\_potter\\_foundation\\_childrens\\_garden](http://www.rbv.gov.au/rbg_melbourne/ian_potter_foundation_childrens_garden)

#### Collingwood Children's Farm

An organic farm on the banks of Melbourne's Yarra River; designed to give city children a taste of farm life. [www.farm.org.au](http://www.farm.org.au)

#### *Roots, Shoots, Buckets & Boots: Gardening Together with Children* Sharon Lovejoy, New York: Workman Publishing Company 1999. 176 pp.

Garden adventures, plant care, garden craft, organic theme gardens like pizza patches, snacking and sipping gardens, projects designed to 'cultivate wonder'.

#### *Gardening with Children* Beth Richardson Taunton Press 1998. 153 pp.

Aimed at gardening parents seeking to involve children in the garden, contains organic gardening basics, plant selection ideas, and special projects.

#### *A Child's Garden: 60 ideas to make any garden come alive for children*, Molly Dannenmaier, Timber Press Books 2008

Inspiration for creating magical gardens for children, full of secret hideaways and sensory delights, trees to climb, creatures to encounter, soil to dig, and much to learn.

### Gardening in Schools

#### *Outdoor Classrooms: A handbook for school gardens*, Carolyn Nuttall and Janet Millington, PI Productions 2008

Written by two experienced teachers and permaculturalists, this book includes both inspiration and practical advice for creating gardens in schools. Provides resources for teachers to teach the entire curriculum from the garden.

Details at [www.outdoorclassrooms.com.au](http://www.outdoorclassrooms.com.au).

#### *Kitchen Garden Cooking with Kids*,

Stephanie Alexander, Penguin 2006

Focusing on the food and the kitchen, this book tells the story of the kitchen garden at Collingwood College, Melbourne, and offers more than a hundred of the recipes the kids have cooked from the garden. Easy to follow instructions and lots of photos.

#### *A Children's Food Forest: An Outdoor Classroom*

Carolyn Nuttall, Brisbane: Food Forests and Learnscapes in Education 1996 72pp

Based on a school garden project in Brisbane. Curriculum focus. Permaculture perspective.

#### *Beyond the Bean Seed: Gardening Activities for Grades K – 6* and *Cultivating a Child's Imagination Through Gardening*, Nancy E. Allen Jurenka and Rosanne J. Blass,

Greenworld Publishing Group 1996

Both of these books use children's literature to connect garden-based activities with literacy development.

Contain numerous lesson plans including dance, cooking, and poetry and covering cultural diversity, ecology and geography.

#### *Greening School Grounds: Creating Habitats for Learning*, Grant, Tim and Gail Littlejohn, (eds) Toronto: *Green Teacher* 2001

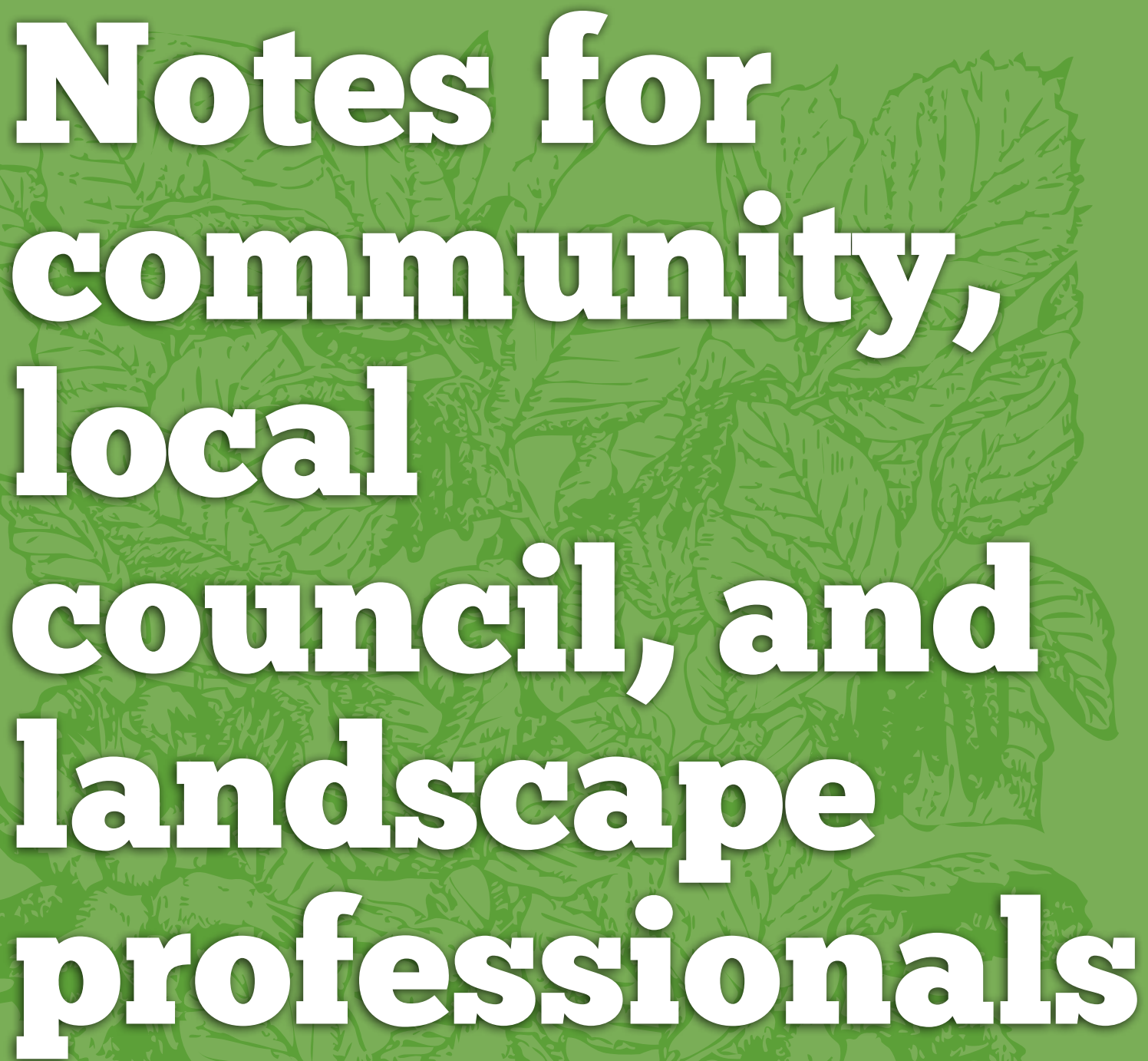
This anthology from the Canadian Green Teacher magazine includes step-by-step instructions for numerous schoolyard projects, for reception to year 12. Articles on rooftop gardens, practical tips on minimising vandalism, maximising participation and raising funds, outdoor classroom activities and curriculum links. 144pp.

 Many more resources, including websites and children's literature and curriculum packages are listed at <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx>

Parents and children exploring together.  
Photo: Joel Catchlove





The background is a solid green color with a faint, repeating pattern of stylized leaves and branches. The leaves are a slightly darker shade of green, creating a subtle texture.

# **Notes for community, local council, and landscape professionals**

# Notes for community, local council, and landscape professionals

## Developing agency-supported community garden programs


Government and non-government agencies such as welfare or community development organisations, disability support programs, health centres, or local councils can initiate community gardens that are as sustainable, empowering and convivial as community-initiated projects, provided they have (or generate) support from the community, and they enable input at every stage of the process.

There are a wide range of agency-initiated and supported community garden models. Some aim to engage the wider community to develop a self-managing garden project. Others anticipate ongoing involvement in the garden. Some agency-supported community gardens involve groups of people who, at least initially, require significant support to manage the garden. Some agency-supported community gardens focus on a particular group of people (for example the users of a health service or residents of a public housing estate) others seek to involve the wider local community. Community and council workers who initiate community gardens may have a particular focus or outcome they hope the garden will achieve, such as improving nutrition, educating for sustainability, or counteracting social isolation. Whatever the particular focus, a community development approach is essential to achieving positive outcomes.

Some of the following suggestions based on research in Sydney's public housing community gardens<sup>4</sup>, may be useful people embarking on agency-initiated community garden projects.

- Allow adequate time to facilitate the project or appoint a project officer in the initial stages.
- Ensure community ownership of the garden.
- Involve the community at the outset - the gardens must be led and fuelled by community desire for a community garden.
- Work with the community to identify visions and goals for their gardens.
- Use participatory design processes.
- Create multiple opportunities for people to have input.

- Develop cultural and social understandings of the diverse gardening needs, dreams and hopes of the different groups in the garden (for example, the cultural relevance of gardens to different ethnic groups and how this is manifested in gardening activities).
- Look for opportunities to include people with special needs and from marginalized groups (for example, people with disabilities; people from non-English speaking backgrounds; young people; children) in the garden. This may require strategically targeting specific groups and the provision of a supportive infrastructure (for example, translators; culturally appropriate meeting places; education and motivational programs).
- Maintain communication between stakeholders (the landholder or local council, the agency's board of management, any workers involved, the individual gardeners) at all stages of planning, implementation and development of the garden.
- Ensure that there is adequate resourcing for gardens – this includes translations for gardeners of non-English speaking backgrounds as well as garden supplies.
- Establish a broad base of support for funding, in kind materials, information and training.
- Assist the gardeners to form a management group and provide access to training in management skills.
- Assist the garden management group to develop a garden protocol that sets out rules and regulations for acceptable, tolerant and considerate garden practices.
- Assist the management group to develop a grievance process and to develop skills in conflict resolution.
- Encourage on-going self-management of the gardens, but recognise that there may be limits of capacity for some communities, particularly in the area of applying regulations and resolving disputes. Community workers need to be willing to step in when conflicts get out of hand and/or require an outsider to make a decision. Skills in mediation and conflict resolution are accordingly required by people assisting community gardens.

 The information in the 'In the beginning' section of this booklet page 8 is applicable to agency-supported community gardens

<sup>4</sup> Linda Bartolomei, Linda Corkery, Bruce Judd, and Susan Thompson (2003) *A Bountiful Harvest: Community Gardens and Neighbourhood Renewal in Waterloo* Sydney: New South Wales Government - Department of Housing and University of New South Wales pp 55-60

## Case study: Kurruru Pingyarendi Community Garden

For some time, people mused about the possibilities of a bitumen carpark lying disused and disintegrating between a community health centre, Aboriginal neighbourhood house, school and childcare centre. A local Aboriginal Reconciliation group came up with the idea of creating a community garden.

Community workers at Gilles Planes Community Health Service recognised the health benefits of community gardens, and saw the potential for a garden to engage community members and make connections between the various services operating at the site. Funding was sourced through Federal Government's Stronger Families and Communities Strategy through its Local Solutions to Local Problems initiative, and from a number of small grants.

The health service facilitated the project in its initial stages, hosting meetings and distributing information about the garden in the local community. Once the garden was established, a management committee was formed, including people from the health service, the local primary school, child care centre, Aboriginal reference group, Anglican church, community house, a domestic violence support group and local residents. Health service workers continued to support the garden after the management committee was formed.

From idea to spade-turning, the project was 18 months in the planning. In a culturally diverse area, with high levels of socio-economic disadvantage, there was a conscious decision to proceed slowly, focusing on building relationships across difference and engaging as many people as possible along the way. The project has retained a strong focus on forming connections

between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the area.

The garden now includes an indigenous bush tucker trail, fruit trees, vegetable beds, a herb wheel, fruit trees, sensory garden, and a community meeting and performance space featuring a spiralling mosaic.

Collaborative artworks have been a focus for community involvement at the site. The adjoining school, childcare centre, community assistance project, and local residents were all involved with creating the mosaic installation. Other community members came along for the art project and have since become involved in the garden. A landscape designer and Kaurua cultural advisor were employed to facilitate the project, which contains images and the Kaurua names of plants, insects, and animals that inhabited the site prior to colonisation.



## Successful community gardens

The following elements of a successful community garden are based on recommendations by community garden co-ordinators consulted for Marrickville Council's Policy Directions paper<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Russ Greyson (2007) Policy Recommendations for Marrickville Council, Sydney: Marrickville Council pp. 46 – 52



## Recommendations for garden co-ordinators

- Accept individual gardening goals and styles. This is best addressed in the garden protocol, which outlines rules and regulations for acceptable and considerate gardening practices. The garden protocol is also linked to the development of cultural understandings and acceptance of different approaches to the role of the garden, and ways of undertaking planting and cultivation.
- Recognise the benefits of sharing gardening knowledge, produce and recipes.
- Organise regular social activities so that gardeners get to know and better understand each other. This will lay the foundation for a harmonious community of gardeners.
- Be proactive in seeking outside support for garden activities.
- Commit to the smooth running of the garden (this will be enhanced by the development of a garden protocol, adequate management support and having appropriate grievance procedures in place).
- Be active in managing participation in the garden. Seek outside assistance if necessary (for example, if a difficult dispute cannot be resolved).
- Look for opportunities to promote gardens and involve new people. Network with other community gardens.



## Recommendations for garden designers and landscape contractors

In addition to the requirements of sustainable garden design, community gardens have a number of particular needs which must be taken into account in garden design, and design processes. Specific elements, such as individual garden plots, food preparation areas, garden beds for people with limited mobility, communal seating areas, composting facilities, and secure storage for tools and equipment must be considered. Participatory processes are essential to the success of community gardens. The people who will use the garden should be given opportunities for input and review at every stage of the planning and implementation process. ✨

## Suggestions for local councils

Local councils are often a first point of contact for groups hoping to start a community garden. Until recently, few local councils had formal procedures or policies for dealing with proposals for community gardens. The following suggestions, based on policy recommendations developed for Marrickville Council in Sydney<sup>6</sup>, may assist councils in developing clear and supportive procedures for their dealings with community gardeners.

**Identify possible forms of council support** and assistance for community gardens. This may include locating suitable council or non-council land, assisting with grant applications, assistance in navigating council processes, such as development applications, providing specialist advice, such as in landscape design, and helping to promote the community gardens in your council area.

**Provide a community garden contact person** within the council. Having a single contact point, possibly a sustainability or community development officer, helps community garden groups navigate council departments and requirements and ensures they liaise with someone who is familiar with relevant council policy and information. Encourage community garden groups to appoint a person to liaise with council.

**Develop a clear process** for groups making proposals for new community gardens and make this available on the council's website. This may include a requirement for a formal submission, with particular topics to be addressed.

**Determine criteria** for assessing proposals for use of council land for community gardens.

**Form an assessment team** of council staff to evaluate proposals for new community gardens. It could include representation from sustainability and environment, planning, waste management/ education, community development, and parks and landscape departments. This team should ensure an open and accountable process for decision making, and enable input from all stakeholders and relevant council departments. Groups seeking council support to develop a community garden should have the opportunity to present their ideas to the assessment team and to negotiate any points of concern. Liaison can be ongoing as the council team deliberates so as to clear up any issues that arise.

**Develop a model lease** for community gardens on council land. This may include a short initial period (two years) to ensure the viability of the project and give gardeners sufficient time to construct and promote the garden. After a successful first period, gardens benefit from longer lease periods (five – 10 years) to enable long-term planning.

**Develop a community gardens policy** that gives council an enabling rather than directive role in the establishment and management of community gardens. Link community gardening with council's strategic plans, land use planning, and other policy documents.

<sup>6</sup> Russ Greyson (2007) Policy Recommendations for Marrickville Council, Sydney: Marrickville Council pp. 86 – 102

✨ See the Garden Design section of the booklet for information and resources for designing sustainable, welcoming, accessible, safe, and vandal resistant gardens.



# Promoting your garden



# Promoting your garden

Investing in promoting your community garden can really pay off. Effective publicity can help generate greater community involvement, attract financial support and give gardeners positive feedback and something to celebrate.

Some questions to consider:

- What local publications/ newsletters exist?
- What community notice boards are there in your area?
- Who else regularly distributes information in your area?
- Where do community organisations and groups get together?
- What schools are in the area?
- Which local organisations regularly get positive press, radio or TV coverage and why?
- What TV and radio programs cover stories like yours? (current affairs, news, gardening, lifestyle, travel, children's...)
- What contacts do members of your garden have with local media, schools and community groups?
- Is there an organisation in your area that can help you with promotion and publicity?

## On-site promotional materials

All community gardens should have clear signage explaining what the garden is about, when it's open and so on.

Most gardens produce leaflets about their garden, with more detailed information about the garden's aims and how people can get involved. Make sure these are widely available at your garden, and in the local area.

Some gardens make t-shirts or hats with the gardens' name or logo for volunteers to wear so they are easily identified at the garden and when at events.



Welcoming signage at Eastern Suburbs Community Garden, Sydney

## Events

Events such as workshops, open days, fairs and festivals at your garden give you something specific to generate publicity for.

Hold seasonal or frequent events at the garden and invite the wider community.

Offer the garden as a venue for local events. Participate in community events, such as festivals, conferences and meetings. Take display materials where ever there is an opportunity: photo albums, scrapbooks, posters, leaflets...

Attend conferences and forums to promote your garden, and to build your networks.

Provide your garden's flyers or posters to other organisations who regularly organise stalls and displays, such as permaculture and organic groups and regional community garden organisations. South Australian community gardeners can add their promotional materials to the community garden display kept at the Community and Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association office.

## Public relations

- Find a prominent local person to become a patron for your garden – perhaps someone from a gardening program, from your local council, etc.
- Enter competitions and awards.
- Hold a competition, eg for local schools.
- Ask a local business to donate window space to you, and design a display with a community gardening theme.

## Using the media

Harness your group's creativity and give the media something new and interesting to report on. Learn about how to write an effective media release. Provide media releases for local newspapers when you have an event or project happening – they are always seeking local 'good news' stories.

Better still, cultivate personal relationships with reporters from your local paper, major newspapers, and

magazines. Many journalists turn to their list of contacts first when looking for a comment or a story. Approach gardening columnists and environment reporters. Invite them to visit the garden, show them what you do, prepare them a fabulous lunch from the garden, let them know your areas of expertise.

Write your own articles for magazines like *Earth Garden*, *Grass Roots*, *Warm Earth*, *ReNew*, etc. The ABC's *Organic Gardener* magazine has a regular community gardening column.

Radio presenters are constantly on the look out for local content, and particularly like to interview people 'live' during an event.

Organise interviews on gardening, lifestyle and community focused shows. Make contact with program producers and find out about when and how they decide what will go to air.

Phone up talkback radio programs.

Ask radio stations to promote your garden or event as a community service announcement.

Don't forget community media. Tell your story on community radio (eg. Environment Show on Three D Radio 93.7FM or Back to Basics on 5RPH 1197AM). Or perhaps create your own community radio show.

Consider local community print media options – ethnic newspapers, university papers, the lesbian and gay press, political publications, and street papers.

Write articles and calendar items for community and voluntary sector newsletters (local community centre, health centre, Permaculture Association, Soil Association, Rare Fruit Society, local community garden networks, the Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network newsletter, Community Harvest, Neighbourhood Watch, school newsletters, etc)

Write short articles for government department newsletters and publications (eg. Housing SA's Customer Chat newsletter.)

Keep copies of any articles published and use them in your displays.

## Contacts

### Permaculture Association of SA

[www.permaculturesa.org.au](http://www.permaculturesa.org.au)

[info@permaculturesa.org.au](mailto:info@permaculturesa.org.au)

### Soil Association of SA

<http://homepages.pickknowl.com.au/sasa>

### Rare Fruit Society of SA [www.rarefruit-sa.org.au/](http://www.rarefruit-sa.org.au/)

Housing SA [www.dfc.sa.gov.au](http://www.dfc.sa.gov.au)

*Earth Garden* [www.earthgarden.com.au](http://www.earthgarden.com.au)

*Warm Earth* [www.warmearth.com.au](http://www.warmearth.com.au)

*ReNew* [www.ata.org.au/publications](http://www.ata.org.au/publications)

### *The Organic Gardener*

[www.abc.net.au/gardening/Grass Roots](http://www.abc.net.au/gardening/Grass%20Roots)

Magazine PO Box 117, Seymour 3661

phone: 03 5792 400

## Internet and email

The internet can be a low-cost and effective way of promoting your garden.

List your garden at [www.communityfoods.org.au](http://www.communityfoods.org.au)

Contribute stories and news items to [www.community-garden.org.au](http://www.community-garden.org.au)

Make a simple website – your local community centre or council may give you a page on their site.

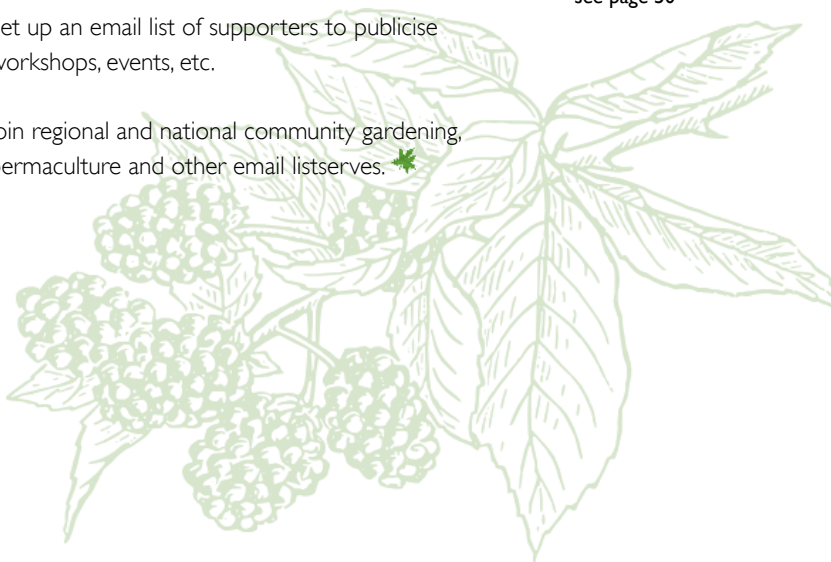
Set up a page on a social networking site such as MySpace, Facebook, [change.org](http://change.org), <http://my.ecoearth.info/>, [www.WordPress.com](http://www.WordPress.com), or similar.

Start a blog, post your photos on [flickr.com](http://flickr.com), make your videos available on YouTube.

Set up an email list of supporters to publicise workshops, events, etc.

Join regional and national community gardening, permaculture and other email listserves. \*

\* There are also profile raising suggestions in the fundraising section of this booklet, see page 50







# Accessing resources and funding

# Assessing resources and funding

✿ see page 65 for other insurance options

Money is just one of many ways to acquire what you need to help your garden grow. Good advice, good volunteers, creative re-use of resources, and in-kind contributions can meet many of your garden's requirements. Your most important and valuable resources are the people involved and the voluntary time and expertise that they contribute. This section contains information on reducing your need for money, seeking in-kind resources, fundraising projects for your garden, and applying for grant. It also includes suggestions for accessing local council resources

## Fundraising principles

- Reduce your need for money
- Seek in-kind resources and support
- Raise money from a diversity of sources

## What do you need?

For many community gardens, much of the cost is incurred in the initial stages. As they mature and grow, some gardens begin to generate some of their own resources and income streams, but may need to access funding for a special project, new infrastructure, an event, or to employ someone to take them to the next stage of development.

## A start up budget for your garden

Planning a budget requires a reasonably well-developed vision for the garden – will it be a small herb garden or an education centre with a passive solar classroom? Will it have fruit trees? Animals? Water features? A children's play ground? Raised beds for people with disabilities? ✿

Costs will vary greatly according to the project, but some to consider include:

- Costs involved with consulting/ involving the community in the garden project – producing and printing a leaflet or poster, an advertisement in the local paper, a mail out or letter box drop to local residents, hiring a community hall for a public meeting, phone calls and general administrative expenses.
- Training for people in the start-up group and for people getting involved.
- Public liability insurance is essential for all community gardens. It will be required by many

groups such as schools who may use the garden, and covers the garden against charges of negligence if a visitor is hurt at the garden. This may cost \$700 per year or more. You may also wish to consider insurance for fire and theft. ✿

- Services may need to be installed if the land does not have them. Water supply is essential, and many community gardens will also need electricity and phone access. As well as the costs of fittings and so on, the labour may have to be carried out by a professional. Local councils may 'loan' workers.
- You may want to establish a tool library containing basic tools and equipment suited to the work which will be done in your particular garden. This may include a couple of forks and shovels, a leaf rake, a soil rake, a mattock, wheelbarrows, several hand tools such as trowels; watering cans, hoses and fittings, and possibly irrigation equipment. More specialised equipment, such as pruning saws, or propagation equipment may also be needed. Obtaining good quality, safe tools should be a priority. Also take into account the varying abilities and sizes of people using tools such as shovels – it may be appropriate to have several sizes available. Secure storage for tools is also vital.
- Garden establishment materials such as compost and mulch, materials to build beds and make pathways should be considered. Council may be able to help with left over or used pavers or bed construction materials.
- A small library can be a valuable resource for a community garden. It may only contain twenty carefully selected titles, again, chosen according to the particular needs of the community garden. Investigate non-profit organisations such as the Permaculture Association of South Australia who may supply relevant books at a discount price. A specific grant application could be made to establish a community library.
- Some community gardens have permanent or occasional paid staff, such as a co-ordinator; training facilitator; or design consultant whose wages may need to be covered.

✿ The Design section of this booklet provides some suggestions for options to consider if you are at this stage of planning



## Reducing your need for money

### Cutting costs

Use forward planning, creative recycling, and community networks to reduce your need for money.

Is your garden using the money it has efficiently? Are there expenses you could eliminate? Are you paying too much for services or products you use regularly?

Reducing unnecessary expenses:

- Do you pay bank charges?
- Do you have clear financial controls that help prevent wasteful expenditure?
- Do you have effective and cost efficient insurance?
- Do you have good recruitment and support systems for volunteers? 🌱
- Do you buy in bulk with other community gardens?
- Do you reduce, re-use, repair, and recycle?
- Do you make use of in-kind donations?
- Do you barter or belong to a Local Exchange Trading System (LETS)? (see [www.lets.org.au](http://www.lets.org.au))

### Finding it for free<sup>7</sup>

#### Tips for finding it for free

- Look for local resources going to waste
- turn wastes into resources
- make a problem for others a bonus for you
- cultivate many connections between your project and the local community
- investigate groups like Freecycle ([www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org)) that facilitate keeping unwanted resources out of landfill.

#### Compost – make you own – look out for these valuable ingredients

Lawn clippings, prunings or leaves from local parks and gardens.

Lawn mowers and landscapers often pay to dump their green waste – organise a system so they can leave it with you.

Animal manure – do you have a local race track or police stables? Often owners are happy to have their stalls cleaned out and you get all the good straw and manure.

Food waste – this can include food scraps from restaurants or left-overs from fruit and veggie co-ops or retailers. If you develop a good relationship with these people they can ensure the material is sorted and suitable for composting. It can save them money too.

Kitchen waste from nearby residents (particularly apartment dwellers) and schools.

Juice pulp from juice bars and coffee grounds are ideal compost or worm food.

#### Plants – grow your own or get them donated

Save seed – a great cost saver that preserves genetic diversity and heritage varieties – see *The Seed Savers Handbook* by Jude Fanton and Michele Fanton and [www.seedsavers.net](http://www.seedsavers.net).

Propagate plants from cuttings. 🌱

Organise plant swaps with other gardeners or community gardens.

Graft your own heritage fruit trees – contact the Rare Fruits Society for assistance [www.rarefruit-sa.org.au](http://www.rarefruit-sa.org.au)

Approach local nurseries and garden stores – they may have some older root-bound stock to donate. Try for bare-rooted fruit trees at the end of the season (late August).

#### Building Materials – keep your eyes peeled

Make contacts with a demolition business – they may keep your needs in mind.

Take a trip to your local tip and keep an eye on skip and hard rubbish contents around the streets (ask before taking).

Use recycled timber and bricks wherever possible.

Make contacts with local street tree pruning businesses and local council tree loppers. Their chips/ mulch can make excellent path surfacing and it can save them time and money.

#### Water – it's free from the sky

Do you have roof run-off going down the drain? Install a tank and catch water for free.

Use swales, mulch, and wise watering methods. 🌱

### In-kind support

Volunteers' donated time, work, energy and expertise are the major in-kind resources for community gardens. Businesses are often more willing to donate goods and services than money because it's cheaper for them.

#### Approaching businesses

Think about what you have to offer to businesses and others donating goods and services: advertising in your newsletter; a certificate of appreciation for their shop wall, their logo on garden signage, listing as sponsor on leaflets, etc.

🌱 see page 93 for plant propagation instructions

🌱 see page 26 for information on engaging and supporting volunteers

<sup>7</sup> This section was adapted from Cultivating Community's *Good Practice Guide for Community Gardens*

🌱 see the Water fact sheet on page 86, and Designing for sustainability on page 19

Rather than approaching businesses and immediately asking for money or goods, invite potential supporters to have a cuppa at the garden, give them a tour, introduce the volunteers, and show them the dream. Build ongoing relationships.

Build relationships with your local council for wood chips, The Royal Show for used manure and straw, WOMAD for bamboo poles, etc.

### **What to ask for...**

Negotiate ongoing discounts with local garden suppliers. Ask nurseries to donate plants that are unsaleable. Invite local nurseries to hold workshops at the garden and allow them to sell their products there on the day. Local, state, and federal MPs may allow you to use their photocopiers for printing newsletters and fliers.

You could charge compost and manure suppliers to come and promote their products at your garden. Ask supporters for services as well as materials – graphic design, printing, sign writing, meeting space, mediation... whatever your garden needs.

## **Fundraising**

### **General principles...**

Make sure fundraising is effective. Critically consider common fundraising activities such as raffles, fetes, car boot sales, and cake stalls and decide whether the money raised is worth the time and effort expended.

Share the work – and the cost – around. Some community organisations find that their best financial supporters are the volunteers and organisers who are most committed to the project. Try to avoid using your volunteers or client groups as funders (for example, the raffle that only garden members buy tickets for).

Think of ways to turn fundraising into community building. Develop and maintain relationships with people who have or might provide funding and resources for the garden. People who contribute to your garden will feel more committed and connected to it.

Below are some ideas to spark your thinking about ways to raise money at your garden.

### **Ongoing income**

If your garden has individual plots, set the fees to provide a reliable source of income for ongoing costs. Charge annual membership fees, and offer incentives such as newsletters, library borrowing rights, discounts on courses, invitations to special events. Come up with a pricing structure that acknowledges some people's limited income, but asks for more a substantial contribution from



those who can afford it. Some organisations have tiered fee options such as concession, low wage, waged, and sustaining.

A plant nursery can be a great way to raise funds, encourage people to come into the garden, and introduce productive plants into people's gardens.

Install donation boxes for visitors – use your creativity in the design.

Create a self-service deli with a small fridge and a money box for people to buy drinks and snacks.

If you have a meeting room or suitable outdoor area, lease spaces to other groups for workshops, weddings, yoga classes, meetings, playgroups, etc – a good way to invite more people into the garden at the same time. Charge for educational site tours for schools, TAFE and university courses, community groups.

### Events

Open days (gold coin donation for entry).  
Festivals (donations for entry, plant sales, coffee shop).  
Participate in the ABC Open Garden Scheme (see [www.opengarden.org.au](http://www.opengarden.org.au))

Host a one-off or regular farmers' market.

Short courses and workshops (basic gardening, pest control, preserving fruit, bush foods, herbs, composting...)

### Products and services

Offer your services to do garden designs, maintenance, etc in other community, public and private gardens.  
Allocate space to grow small, high value commercial crops – ask local restaurants what they would most like to buy.

Sell preserves, craft items or other products made at your garden (check food regulations first!).

Produce a recipe book with ideas for using unusual, bush and permaculture plants.

## Grant funding <sup>8</sup>

### Benefits of grant funding

Because community gardens contribute to meeting a variety of community needs, they may be eligible for a wide range of grants, with focuses such as environment, community development, health, and arts.

Small grants from local councils are often relatively easy to get.

Grant applications can be good opportunities for forming partnerships and beneficial relationships with funding bodies, businesses, and other community groups.

### Drawbacks to using grants for funding

It can be difficult to get money for fixed assets, ongoing wages, and administration through grants.

The changeable funding priorities and grant schemes of government and private benefactors may not provide

<sup>8</sup> Thanks to Ben Neil, Dick Copeman and Ben Yengi for contributing to this section.



secure, continual funding. Applications may be accepted only once or twice a year, and this might not fit with your preferred schedule.


It requires ongoing effort to seek funding opportunities and prepare submissions – having a person who is prepared work on grant applications rather than spending time in the garden.

Most funding bodies require regular detailed reports on the progress of the project.

### Designing your project

Be clear about what your garden's short and long term objectives are. Plan projects to meet your aims and work out exactly how you want to use any funds you apply for:

Make sure the project you design is one you can follow through – don't try to take on too much. Consider your existing resources – people, office space, land, tools, etc. You may decide to modify your proposal to meet the criteria of a funding body, but planning ahead will clarify your priorities, and assist you in finding funding sources that will allow you to enact your objectives.

Developing a thorough and realistic budget is essential. It is important not to exaggerate or underestimate costs. Costs to take into account 

- Costs involved with consulting/ involving the community in the project – producing and printing a leaflet or poster; an advertisement in the local paper; a mail out or letter box drop to local residents, hiring a community hall for a public meeting
- labour – including wages, workcover, superannuation. Also include all the hours of work committed to the project by volunteers
- any consultants, trainers or other professionals to be called in
- insurance
- materials required
- postage
- phone calls
- internet
- office supplies and running costs
- travel
- equipment.

### Preparing to make a submission or grant application

The planning, thinking, research, group work and networking you do before sitting down to write the submission or grant application is often the most important part of the process.

Don't leave submission writing to one person – get ideas and input from multiple people: many minds from within your group, advisers, allied organisations, experienced grant writers.

Start a file to collect materials to support your proposals. Gather:


- Information and evidence that substantiates community needs you have identified
- copies of research or surveys that demonstrate the benefits of community gardening and the particular projects you're seeking support for
- information about similar projects – what they've learnt, how they got funding
- lists of potential partner organisations
- ideas about people who might be willing to provide letters of support – prominent and respected members of the local community, local councillors, politicians, people from service or community organisations (perhaps those addressing similar needs), experts, academics, local businesses
- materials about your community garden – newspaper clippings, mission statements
- support documents you may need for applications – audited financial records, certificates of incorporation, documentation of other current and/or previous grants received.

### Incorporation, auspicing and partnerships

Most funding sources require grants to be administered by an incorporated body such as an association or charity.

Community garden groups are eligible for incorporation as non-profit organisations under the 1985 Associations Incorporation Act (Government of South Australia 1999). Organisations are required to have a constitution in order to become incorporated – developing one can clarify goals, strategies, and decision making processes.

The alternative to becoming incorporated is being auspiced by another organisation. Strategically chosen auspicing bodies can be very useful. Seek out organisations that have a track record of receiving funding and a reputation for effectively delivering on their promises. These may include community centres, neighbourhood houses, service and welfare organisations, community health centres, environment organisations, or organisations associated with specific needs being addressed by

 Also see the suggestions for a garden start-up budget above, page 48

your garden's project (eg disability access, recently arrived migrants).

Large organisations are more likely to donate to Public Benevolent Institutions (PBI) with tax deductible status than to small community groups.

Bodies may vary in what they require in order to act as auspicers. In general they need to agree to sponsor the community garden's funding application/s, and take responsibility for monies awarded, including having them deposited into their bank account. Auspicers generally require regular submission of financial records and progress reports. They may also take a percentage of the grant for administrative costs.

Could the project be carried out as a joint venture with another organisation – a school, community centre, community group, residents' association?

This can benefit your project by giving you access to additional resources and perspectives and, if formed strategically, can increase your access to funding. Inviting people from a range of incorporated bodies to be part of your management committee or board can assist in fostering relationships with other organisations.

### Identifying potential grant sources\*

To find out about upcoming rounds of grants:

- Stay in touch with your local council, particularly environment, community development and cultural development officers – these folks often have information about funding opportunities
- Small grants are often advertised in local newspapers and Saturday editions of major papers.
- Visit websites such as <http://www.grantslink.gov.au> and [www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au)
- Easy Grant is a subscription-based service that contains information about many grants available – you may be able to access it through your local community centre or other friendly organisation. [www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au)
- The Australian Open Garden Scheme provides an annual grant specifically for community gardening projects [www.opengarden.org.au](http://www.opengarden.org.au). At the website you can sign up for their mailing list for upcoming grant information Any queries should be directed to the National Office of AOGS: (03) 5428 4557.

To find potential funding bodies:

- Get a copy of Philanthropy Australia's Foundations Kit [www.philanthropy.org.au](http://www.philanthropy.org.au)
- Note the sponsors listed in the promotional materials of other groups
- Contact church groups and community service clubs (Rotary, Lions, Apex, etc.)

### Writing the grant application or submission

Allow sufficient time (two months) to write applications and get feedback – including from people in your organisation and experienced submission writers.

Come up with a good name for your project – make sure it is descriptive and doesn't promise too much!

Notice the kinds of language used by the organisation providing the funding and take into account their aims and values.

Make sure you get your application to the funding body on time! If you're sending it by post, allow a couple of extra days to make sure it gets there on time. Late applications will usually not be considered.

### Sample Grant questions

Grant applications generally require the following information:

- a contact person who will take responsibility for the grant
- a brief description of the body applying for the grant, including its legal structure, activities, and aims or 'mission statement'
- a description of the specific project or expense the grant is to cover, including specific objectives and how they will be met
- what community needs will be addressed and sometimes why these needs are not being met by other programs
- who will be involved in the project and who will benefit
- information about how your project will contribute to the particular objectives of the funding round (whether it's health promotion, community development or environmental improvement)
- how the project will be evaluated, how success will be judged and recorded \*
- a proposed budget
- other sources of funding, resources, and support
- grants received previously
- some grants also require statements of support from local council members or recognised community organisations.

Tips

- Contact organisations you're thinking of applying to – ask questions, find out if yours is the kind of project they are looking to fund. They may even help you write the application.
- Target funding bodies specific to what you're seeking funding for – funding for fruit trees might be sought from one body, a community event from another.

\* see page 65 for information on project evaluation

\* Numerous up-to-date links to grant and funding opportunities are available at <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx>

- Arts grants can be very useful for funding garden projects – particularly for wages. Arts grants can often pay wages and can be used for community arts projects, mosaics, trellises, etc.
- Frame your projects to fit with themes such as 'Year of...'
- Take advantage of workshops on grant writing offered by local councils, community organisations and Our Community.

### **The results**

Whether a grant application is successful or not, maintain contact and a good relationship with the organisations which provide grant funding.

If you don't receive funding in a particular round, ask the funding body for feedback on your application.

If you get the funding, send a formal acknowledgment letter. Be prepared to write regular reports, etc as required.

Keep detailed and accurate records of expenditure of the grant monies.

Put energy into recording projects that have received grant funding – take photos, implement effective evaluation processes, produce beautiful reports. This will help you maintain good relationships with bodies that have given you funding, and impress bodies you approach in the future.

# Decision making and meetings



# Decision making and meetings

Community gardens are managed in a variety of ways. Some have co-ordinators or management committees who make the day-to-day decisions about running the garden, others have working groups responsible for different areas, or 'all in' processes to involve all members/gardeners in decision making. Whatever structure you decide on, clear and effective decision making processes are essential for community gardens' wellbeing and growth.

All garden decision making processes will involve at least some (and perhaps many!) meetings. These are opportunities for gardeners and their supporters to gather together, enjoy one another's company, share ideas and enthusiasm, make decisions, and further the growth of the garden and its projects. Utilising effective facilitation and decision making skills and processes can help your group not only to come to good decisions, but ensure that decisions are put into practice effectively.

## Management /co-ordinating committees

Community gardens that are incorporated as Associations usually have a management or co-ordinating committee (sometimes called a co-ordinating collective or an executive) as one of their decision-making and management structures. A well functioning and convivial committee can contribute greatly to a successful, resilient, flourishing community garden. Support yours to be its best.

### What is a management/ Co-ordinating Committee?

A management or co-ordinating committee (or collective) is elected by members to run the business of the community garden on behalf of members. Associations have an Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year to decide who will be on the management committee for the coming year.

It includes designated roles and responsibilities such as treasurer, public officer, and secretary.

A management committee is accountable to members, gardeners, funding bodies, and external 'clients'.

### Effective committees

- Work in support of the garden's aims, objectives, and vision.
- Include cross sectional representation from the garden organisation – volunteers, plot holders, supporters, training participants, local community members, employees, client groups, etc.
- Have an induction process that ensures committee members understand their personal roles and responsibilities and those of the committee.
- Are well informed about the workings and goings on of the garden.
- Have good support from the community garden as a whole.
- Target and attract people with key interests, skills and networks to fill management committee roles.
- Rely on agreed meeting and decision making procedures.
- Have friendly, efficient, well facilitated meetings.
- Provide training and/ or mentoring for management committee members.
- Have effective communication between management committee and garden members/ volunteers/ grassroots.

### Resource:

*"Just a tick!" – a Best Practice Survival Guide for Committees and Boards of Management* Kate Reynolds, Adelaide: Volunteering SA 1999 69 pp  
Targeted at community organisations, this guide covers constitutions, legal structures, systems of management and governance, roles and responsibilities of committees, finding and keeping committee members, and dealing with conflict. Available from CANH and other community organisations for around \$7.

## Working groups

A working group may be ongoing, such as a fundraising sub-committee; or temporary, like a working group to design a new seating area.

Delegating tasks and decisions to smaller working groups can be an effective way of getting things done and making general or committee meetings more efficient.



Working groups (and individuals taking on tasks on behalf of the garden) need clear guidelines about what they are responsible for and by when, within a context of how their work fits with the larger project.

Any person or group who takes responsibility for an aspect of the garden needs the trust and support of other gardeners and clear information about what decisions they are able to make and what should be referred to a larger group or co-ordinator.

Agree to processes for 'checking in' on the progress of working groups, for example asking working groups to present a report or update at each committee meeting.

## Succession planning

Ideally, all roles at the garden should have at least three people involved: the person currently filling the role, the person who has handed it over to them and is still available for advice, and a person learning the ropes to take it on next. Part of every role in the garden, whether as Treasurer or as Tuesday chook feeder, should be to prepare to hand the role onto the next person who will take responsibility for it. What can you do to make it easy for them to understand and do what you do? This may mean writing down or otherwise sharing the range of tasks you do for the garden. It may mean gathering and filing information in a way that can be easily used by the next person (last year's financial records, phone numbers for chicken grain suppliers...). It may mean developing and recording systems that make the role easier and more effective (setting up templates in a computer program, redesigning the chicken dome...). It may also mean mentoring someone, or several people, to learn the skills you are using in your role.

## Decision making processes

A clear and agreed upon decision making process is essential for any group to function effectively. There are numerous variations on decision making processes, from the parliamentary style 'Robert's Rules of Order' to unanimity under the apple tree, informal delegation to formalised consensus processes. Some involve a high level of participation from many people, others delegate more decision making authority to individuals and small groups. The decision making process you choose or develop can reflect and strengthen the values of your group and contribute to the effectiveness and pleasantness of your garden's management.

### Voting processes

There are more options for voting-based decision making than there may appear at first glance!

Some groups find that requiring a two-thirds majority helps the group to reach better decisions and maintain group cohesion than a simple or 50% + 1 majority.

Some groups restrict voting rights to certain people at a meeting, for example financial members of the organisation, people who have attended a certain number of previous meetings, or people who are actively involved in or effected by a decision.

Any voting model will achieve better outcomes with good facilitation.

### Consensus decision making

Consensus decision making aims to make creative decisions which draw together the whole group's best thinking, without the creation of 'losers', and with attention to the maintenance of non-hierarchical relationships. Consensus decision making enables groups to attend to two equally crucial aspects of group process:

- The task dimension – achieving the group's purposes and the goals it sets itself
- The maintenance dimension – building and maintaining good relationships, commitment, and creativity within the group.

Consensus is both a goal and a process. The goal is to reach decisions that everybody in the group can live with and is committed to seeing put into practice effectively. The process is a decision-making structure that enables the expression of individual ideas, opinions and creative thinking, while at the same time prioritising collective values and goals over the goals or ideas of the individuals within the group. In order to achieve this balance, the consensus decision making model is (contrary to many people's expectations) formal and highly structured, with each stage of the decision making process designed to reinforce the model's underlying principles. The practice of respectful and reflective listening is a key element of the decision making process. Consensus is also a very flexible model, adaptable to the structure and goals of very different organisations. The process of consensus decision making involves inviting people to voice their ideas and opinions, listening carefully, and appreciating different points of view to one's own. Each person brings different skills, experiences, and attitudes to the consensus process. All have value.

It is essential that everyone involved in a consensus decision making process has a clear understanding of the principles and practice of consensus, and is willing to give it a go, and that someone acts as a facilitator to help the meeting run smoothly.

The consensus process may begin with encouraging everyone present to share their ideas, thoughts, hopes and concerns about the issue under consideration, or it may begin with someone offering a proposal for an action.

The facilitator and others in the group pay attention to what's being said, and when common threads and areas of agreement begin to appear, they try to summarise them and form proposals. For example, "it seems like we're all thinking an that open garden day sometime in June would be a good idea – I propose that we decide to work towards having an open garden day one weekend in June, and form a working group to make it happen".

Once a proposal has been put to the group, the facilitator asks for any clarifying questions about the proposal, and then for any concerns or reservations about the proposal.

If people raise concerns about the original proposal, their ideas are taken into account, there is more discussion, and if possible, a new proposal is made, and consensus is tested again.

If no one raises any other issues, the group has achieved a consensus and can move on to the next issue at hand. In some groups, facilitators formally test for consensus by asking if anyone wishes to block or stand aside from the proposal. For some groups, an option to formally 'stand aside' from a decision enables people to express their opposition to a proposal and to note that they may not participate in enacting the decision whilst accepting the decision of others in the group. In formal consensus process, it is possible for any participant in a meeting to block or veto a decision. In many groups, the only grounds that a person may use to block is if they feel a decision violates the core principles or aims of the group or would cause harm to the group or its members. Some groups set time limits for particular decisions, and if consensus is not reached, they may put a decision aside to the next meeting, perhaps asking people to bring additional information that may help the group to reach a decision.

Consensus decision making processes may be used for some or all decisions made by a group. Many find that better decisions are made through consensus, and that people are more committed to carrying out decisions they have agreed to.

## Resources

### Consensus Decision Making

Introduction to consensus, including why use consensus, what's required, key guidelines and variations. [http://www.uhc.org.uk/webpages/toolbox/meetings\\_and\\_organisation/consensus\\_short.htm](http://www.uhc.org.uk/webpages/toolbox/meetings_and_organisation/consensus_short.htm)

### *On Conflict and Consensus: A Handbook on Formal Consensus Decisionmaking*, C.T. Butler and Amy

Rothstein Portland: Food Not Bombs 1987

A comprehensive guide to consensus decision making, including structures, dealing with conflict, roles, and techniques. Available at the Consensus Project, <http://www.consensus.net/>

## Effective meetings

Good meetings encourage people to remain involved, committed and positive. They can even be fun. No matter the decision making process you decide on, the following suggestions will help create effective meetings that not only make good decisions, but ensure they are put into practice efficiently.

### Agree on a place and time

Decide on regular meetings at the same place and time so people can plan to be there. Meet only as often as necessary – don't meet weekly if you could meet monthly and organise by another means in between (eg via smaller working groups).

If you don't have a garden site suitable for meetings, look for a free meeting space at a library, community centre, university, church or school. Or meet in a café – talk to the managers and book a table at a time when it's convenient for people to take up table space for an extended period. A perceived expectation that they will be expected to buy something at an expensive café may deter some people from attending. Avoid meeting in people's houses as this can make meetings feel cliquy or exclusive to new members.

Value people's time and punctuality by starting and finishing on time.

### Prepare an agenda beforehand

An agenda sets a clear purpose for your meeting and enables people to prepare and think about items before the meeting.

Distribute the agenda before the meeting, perhaps via email. Make sure you include the place and time if this varies. Some groups allocate a time for each agenda item (eg. Open day planning update: 5 minutes).

At times, it may be useful to circulate background information before the meeting as well.

If you have different people coming to each meeting, allow time for a brief round of introductions. Introductions are helpful for remembering names, and if you ask people to share something about themselves (eg. something good that happened to you this week) they can help to build your group's sense of community. You may want to include time at the end to evaluate the meeting process – new people can be particularly good judges.

### Roles

Every person in a meeting has the responsibility and the capacity to make a difference to the way that meeting works. Each meeting should have people taking particular responsibility for facilitation and for minute taking. Some groups also assign other roles, such as time keeping, co-facilitating, and 'jargon busting' (keeping an eye out for acronyms or language that may be confusing to some participants). Roles may be fulfilled by one person, or rotate at each meeting. Sharing minute taking and facilitation skills within the group can help everyone participate more effectively in meetings.

During a meeting, the facilitator's role is to attend to both 'task' (keeping to the agenda, recording decisions



SA Community Gardening Network meeting, Fern Avenue Community Garden. Photo: Annemarie Brookman

made) and 'maintenance' (ensuring everyone has an opportunity to speak, looking for common ground) goals.

### **Outcomes**

Meeting minutes are an important way of making sure all topics raised have been dealt with.

- Any decisions made in a meeting should be included in the minutes.
- Any tasks identified should have a person (or people) responsible, a date for completion, and possibly a person to provide advice or to report to inbetween meetings.
- Any tasks identified or ideas proposed that were not decided on should be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

At the end of a meeting everyone should know:


- When and where the next meeting is
- What they are supposed to do
- How to get in touch with people if they want to help/ get involved/ ask a question
- Who will facilitate and prepare an agenda for the next meeting, and how to contact them.

Distribute minutes as soon as possible after the meeting.

### **Training**

Consider holding a facilitation workshop at your garden, or attending training courses held for community organisations by local councils and community organisations.

### **Resources**

 There is a Facilitation Workshop outline on page 77 of this booklet, which includes handouts

#### **Meetings: A guide for facilitators and A User's guide to meetings**

Both of these factsheets can be downloaded from the Growing Community website, [www.cahn.asn.au/community\\_gardening](http://www.cahn.asn.au/community_gardening)

#### **Facilitating Meetings Effectively**

[http://www.uhc.org.uk/webpages/toolbox/meetings\\_and\\_organisation/facilitating\\_meetings\\_effectively.htm](http://www.uhc.org.uk/webpages/toolbox/meetings_and_organisation/facilitating_meetings_effectively.htm)

#### **Taking minutes**

[http://www.uhc.org.uk/webpages/toolbox/meetings\\_and\\_organisation/taking\\_meeting\\_minutes.htm](http://www.uhc.org.uk/webpages/toolbox/meetings_and_organisation/taking_meeting_minutes.htm)

The background of the entire page is a dense, repeating pattern of green leaves, likely basil, rendered in a lighter shade of green against a darker green background. The leaves are detailed with visible veins and are arranged in a natural, overlapping manner.

# **Adminis- tration and management systems**

# Administration and management systems

✱ You can use the sample volunteer application form on page 99 as a starting point for developing your own information collecting systems

Having clear guidelines and policies, capable administrative processes, and effective management systems in place will allow your garden to function smoothly and to grow to its full potential.

This section includes information on developing rules and policies, including plot allocation and use, establishing administrative systems, managing money, evaluating projects, garden safety and health and insurance. It includes volunteer registration forms that can also be downloaded from <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx> and adapted for use at your garden.

## Rules and guidelines

Community gardens require strategies and systems for managing participation, development, maintenance, administration, safety, and security. Developing these systems takes time, but your project will not reach its full potential unless you put the time into this area. Clearly document and make available your management approach and expectations to gardeners to prevent misunderstanding and conflict

New volunteers, plot-holders and others involved should have this information explained to them and provided in written form before they start – this leaves no room for misunderstanding of what you 'are' and 'are not' allowed to do. Ensure that you cater to the language groups of your gardeners – provide translations of all documents where required. ✱

Following are examples of community gardens' rules/guidelines for gardeners from Collingwood Children's farm, Melbourne which is composed of individual plots, and Kurruru Pingyarendi, Gilles Plains SA, who are a shared garden. Feel free to draw from or adapt them to use for your own garden. ✱

## Set up capable administrative systems

Think about the information required to manage the garden and to how to store it. When people apply for a garden plot, for example, collect information that will help with the allocation process and later administrative tasks. ✱ When people inquire about volunteering, collect information about what their interests are, when

they're available, and so on ✱. A database may be the best way to store information such as waiting list and plot holder details, volunteers' details, interests and skills, emergency contacts, members' subscriptions, etc. If you have plots that are leased to people, an annual billing system is useful – deal with billing for one month of the year not twelve!

It can be useful to develop systems to collect information to support funding and other applications, such as the number of visitors and volunteers participating, numbers on plot waiting lists, and possibly information demographics of people involved if you are seeking funding from sources with particular focuses (youth involvement, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, etc).

## Managing money<sup>9</sup>

Find out what financial skills and experience you have in your group. Do you need help or training? A number of agencies have community accountancy projects that offer direct services, training and advice. Check with your local council or library. Ask other established community groups how they organise their finances, who independently checks (audits) their books, and who gives them financial advice.

### Money handling basics

These rules are essential, and apply whether you are spending \$10 or \$10,000

- Always issue a receipt when money is received
- Include your ABN on all receipts
- Always obtain a receipt for money paid out and sign for any money received
- Ensure that receipts are written in ink not pencil
- Don't keep more money than is necessary in the treasurer's home or the garden's premises. Make sure your insurance covers you for small amounts of cash
- Put money in the bank as soon as possible
- Never pay expenses from cash just received – draw cash from the bank or write cheques for expenditure
- Keep as many records and notes of transactions as your garden needs.

<sup>9</sup> This section was adapted from *Cultivating Community's Good Practice Guide for Community Gardens*

✱ There is a volunteer induction workshop outline on page 76

✱ Additional examples, including *Cultivating Community's comprehensive 'Community Garden Rules and Guidelines'* are available for download from <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx>

There are also suggestions of issues to consider in the plots section of this booklet, page 23

✱ See page 101 for a sample plot application form to adapt for use at your garden

## Examples of community garden rules

### Collingwood Children's Farm gardener responsibilities – what we expect from gardeners

Collingwood Children's Farm St Heliers St (PO Box 80)  
Abbotsford Victoria 3067

Email: info@farm.org.au Phone & Fax: 94175806

Before beginning to work a plot eligible gardeners are required to read the "Rules and Guidelines" and sign a "Community Garden" contract. Community Gardeners at the Collingwood Children's Farm are required to:

#### 1. Pay an annual fee

The Annual Membership Fee is \$50 (full) \$25 (conc) for a 6m x 4m plot (the old double sized plots are \$100 (full) \$50 (conc)). Collingwood Children's Farm collects the fee that is used for water, garden supplies, and garden maintenance. Payment can be made by cheque, through the post or directly to our reception – open from 9am to 5pm every day of the year.

#### 2. Help look after the garden's communal facilities by:

Attending three working bees a year: Monthly working bees on the third Saturday of every month (1pm – 4pm) enable gardeners to take responsibility for the care, maintenance and development of the communal areas within the Community Gardens and provide opportunities for sharing culture, knowledge and skills.

#### 3. Support the Farm by:

Contributing to two farm fundraising events a year. The Farm runs a regular program of fundraising events that include monthly family days, night music events in the barn, seasonal events such as the winter solstice bonfire and the Country Fair. We rely on the support of volunteers to run these events successfully. Contributions can include helping with food preparation and serving, staffing stalls, washing dishes, cooking cakes and salads, helping set up and pack up etc.

Becoming a farm member: Gardeners are encouraged to take out a Farm membership – this is currently \$15 a year. It supports the Farm and you will receive our seasonal newsletter that has excellent information on gardening and general Farm events.

#### 4. Abide by the rules and guidelines

Use your plot intensively over the whole year. There is a very long waiting list!

- Maintain weed-free pathways of one metre in width around your garden plot.
- Take all your rubbish home – if you carry it in you can carry it out!
- If you move house or are going to be absent for a period of longer than three months, the community garden worker must be notified.
- Minimise water use by watering less frequently and more deeply and by mulching over summer.
- Avoid using any chemicals or pesticides – strictly organic practices apply.
- Keep the gate locked at all times before 9am and after 5.30pm

### Kurruru Pingyarendi Community Gardener Guidelines

Please sign in the book in the shed when you start work and sign out when you finish.

We encourage community gardeners to work safely, and to take reasonable care to protect their own health and safety by:

- Working within their own personal limitations to avoid injury to themselves and others;
- Keeping the garden area tidy;
- Wearing sun hats, sunscreen, gloves, and protective footwear as required.
- Following guidelines on handling potting mix and compost – ie wear gloves and keep products moist (to avoid breathing dusts, and particles when handling). Wash hands immediately after use.

We encourage gardeners to ensure that their tetanus vaccinations are up to date.

This is a great place for children but they need to be supervised by parents or caregivers. Again because of the risks of breathing in dust and particles, kids need to wear shoes and not use the soil for play.

A First Aid Kit and an approved sharps disposal container, are kept in the reception area of the Health Service, and are available for use by Community Gardeners.

Hand washing facilities are available in the Health Service Toilet area. Please don't use the kitchen sink for hand washing.

Don't hesitate to call an ambulance on 000 if you think it is necessary.

### **Goods and Services Tax (GST)**

If your garden's annual turnover is less than \$50,000, registering for the GST is your choice. You need to decide whether the time involved in registering and accounting for GST is worth it.

Field officers from the Australian Taxation Office are available to visit and assist community-based organisations to deal with the implications of tax. You can submit questions to [replyin5@ato.gov.au](mailto:replyin5@ato.gov.au) and a range of downloadable resources is available from [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au).

The Our Community website [www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au) provides an excellent free list of on-line publications. Look for 'registering for Goods and Services Tax (GST)', or email [service@ourcommunity.com.au](mailto:service@ourcommunity.com.au). Our Community can also be contacted on (03) 9320 6800.

### **Australian Business Number (ABN)**

Your garden (or its auspicer) will require an ABN to engage with other businesses and organisations (that is, in order to spend and receive money for goods and services). You will need to include your ABN on any receipts issued, as all receipts are considered Tax Invoices for taxation purposes.

You can register for an ABN electronically through the Business Entry Point of the ATO website – [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au) (14 day turnaround) through the mail (28 day turnaround) or a tax agent. More information is available from the ATO by phoning 13 24 78. Brochures on ABN and related tax issues are widely available at post offices and newsagents.

### **Budgeting**

A budget is a financial plan for a specific period, usually a financial year or the duration of a specific project. It is a tool to help you in managing and controlling the finances of your group.

A budget will enable you to predict cash flow difficulties. Making a useful budget needs a thorough understanding of the garden's finances. This is easily developed over time; however you may need outside help in preparing initial budgets. This expertise may exist within your group. Find out!

Preparing budgets follows a set of logical steps. Each provides information for the next step.

Look closely at your current financial situation and make an Opening Balance. This is a snapshot of the finances of your garden on a specific date. To do this you need to tally up all monies held in cash, in the bank and any

monies owed to you. Deduct from this total all the monies you owe and you have your opening balance. Discuss developments planned for the coming year – or better still when you have a 3-5 year Development Plan. Use this information to help predict costs.

If your garden has a significant trading income (i.e. greater than \$10,000) then you probably need independent professional financial advice.

Prepare an Income and Expenditure Budget – this details what monies you expect to receive and spend during the year. Think carefully about how you categorise income and expenditure – well thought-out categories will assist future review, evaluation and improvement.

Prepare a Cash Flow Budget – this is your income and expenditure broken down into months. This helps you identify any cash flow deficits.

At the end of the financial year, prepare an Annual Balance Sheet for the end of the financial period. This gives you the opening balance for the next year.

### **Resources**

The **Our Community** website provides an excellent free list of on-line publications. Look under the organisational management and development section for preparing a budget. [www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au).

*Managing Money – A guide to understanding finances for community management* Victorian Council of Social Services Melbourne: VCOSS 1995

This handbook explains basic financial management for not for profit organisations – covers budgeting, monitoring and reporting and is aimed at staff and committee members of community organisations.



## Insurance

### What cover is needed

To operate a community garden you must have public liability insurance to cover any person on your site for personal injury. If you are going to employ people you will need Employers' Liability insurance. In addition, it is sensible to have site insurance that cover theft, vandalism, fire, etc. It is good practice to display a copy of your public liability certificate on your public notice board.

### Types of insurance

Public liability – to indemnify you against being held responsible for injury, disability or death of people visiting or taking part in your activities.

Employers' liability and group personal accident – to indemnify you against being held responsible for accidents causing injury, disability or death of employees and volunteers.

All risks policy – to cover the community garden property, such as equipment and money, against fire, flood, theft and any other specified risk. Many policies have a minimum claim level and an excess - an amount you have to contribute towards a claim.

Other insurances – to cover you against any other risks considered important, depending on the activities the garden plans to undertake, e.g. community garden work or activities that takes place away from the garden site.

### Basic steps to getting insurance cover for your garden

Check with other community gardens and voluntary organisations. What type of insurance and level of cover do they have? What does it cost them? Was the company helpful? Seek up-to-date advice from organisations supporting the voluntary sector, such as SACOSS and Volunteering SA.

Check all your legal and funding agreements to see whether they require specific insurance cover. For example your lease may require a minimum public liability cover.

Where possible, piggy-back onto existing policies where possible. Community gardens are often situated on council, state, community centre or school land, and may be covered through existing policies – be sure to confirm the coverage. Some gardening organisations (including Garden Clubs of Australia and the Royal Horticultural Society of Victoria) provide insurance coverage for their member groups, at rates which depend on the size of your organisation.

If an existing policy that meets your needs is not available, go to an insurance broker to get quotations. Ask them to explain to you in everyday language what is covered and in what circumstances. Premiums may be based on a number of factors: property size, number of sites, number of gardeners, type and intensity of activity, etc. Many organisations offer specific insurance packages for volunteer and not-for-profit groups, but community gardeners should make sure these policies address their specific needs.

Investigate joining together with other community gardens in your local area. Due to minimum premium requirements, it can be cheaper to purchase an umbrella policy covering multiple sites rather than for individual sites to purchase their own policies.

Review your insurance every year and when you make major changes like employing another staff member, buying equipment or investing in buildings – inadequate cover could make your policy almost useless.

### Contacts

**Garden Clubs of Australia** [www.gardenclubs.org.au](http://www.gardenclubs.org.au), email [membership@gardenclubs.org.au](mailto:membership@gardenclubs.org.au)

**The Royal Horticultural Society of Victoria** (Australia wide) <http://rhsv.org.au/rhsv-members/for-clubs/club-insurance/> or contact the RHSV Insurance Officer at [insurance@rhsv.org.au](mailto:insurance@rhsv.org.au) phone 03 5367 6363.

## Evaluating garden projects <sup>10</sup>

Evaluations are often required by funding agencies and other support bodies. Evaluation involves making judgments about something's worth. This is done by asking questions and reflecting on the answers you come up with. Remember to keep the emphasis on what has been achieved.

### Why evaluate?

To see how we are going – participants, volunteers and workers need the satisfaction of being able to identify progress and results.

Evidence that your garden is providing a good and necessary service can help you win public support.

To improve what you do – i.e. help you manage the garden's development and change. You might want to emphasize unmet needs.

To justify what you do – funders want to ensure your group is doing what it is supposed to, is meeting genuine needs and is giving good value for money.

<sup>10</sup> Reproduced from *Cultivating Community's Good Practice Guide for Community Gardens*

To advocate for more community gardens – gathering information helps to promote the broader community garden movement.

Put differently:

- What gets measured gets done
- If you don't measure results you won't fully recognise your achievements
- If you can't see achievement you can't reward it or learn from it
- If you can't recognise failure you can't address it
- If you can't demonstrate achievement you won't win public support.

### Steps towards implementing evaluation

- Decide what you are using your evaluation for.
- Identify and remove barriers (such as resistance due to evaluation not being seen as "real" work)
- Ensure you know what your group is trying to do
- Decide on your outcome, impact and process measures
- Decide how you will collect, analyse and use your data
- Clarify responsibility – who is going to do what by when?

### An evaluation question checklist

- What are we trying to do here?
- Does it work?
- Is this what we set out to achieve?
- What is its value?
- What has this achieved?
- Has this been successful?
- Why does it work?
- Why doesn't it work?
- What can we do to make it work better?
- What has been the short to medium term impact of our work?
- What has been the longer-term outcome of our work?

### Resources

#### *Everyday Evaluation on the Run*

Yoland Wadsworth Allen & Unwin 1997

## Health and safety in the garden "

It is important that your group develops a means of identifying risks or dangers and acts to eliminate or minimise them.

The general duties of employers in ensuring health, safety and welfare of their employees are outlined below. We strongly recommend that your garden, regardless of whether you have paid employees, apply procedures arising from these duties to everybody – volunteers, management members, garden members and visitors.

### Your obligations – keeping it safe

Develop a health and safety policy – and form a working group that writes, implements, checks and revises your policies regularly. If you employ staff make sure they are part of the working group.

Make the environment safe – how often do you inspect and check the garden and its facilities? What have you identified in these checks and what have you done about it?

Provide information, instruction, training and supervision – what safety information is provided on the garden and can it be easily understood by all users? What health and safety training do you provide? For example, how many of your volunteers (and staff) know how to dig or lift safely?

Provide appropriate first aid – how many of your volunteers, staff and members are qualified first aiders? When are they on site? What information do you provide to users? Does the garden display a clear notice showing where a first aid kit is available? For very small gardens without facilities you should at the very least provide clear details of where to find the nearest phone.

Provide facilities – have you got clean and accessible toilets and washing facilities? If there are no toilets on-site, can you negotiate for the use of nearby facilities? Is there a comfortable and warm place where staff, volunteers and members can eat lunch and relax?

Record and investigate accidents – you should keep an accident book that is easily accessible to all. It should contain clear instructions about what to do, what needs to be recorded and who to contact. This should include accident and incident report forms. If an accident occurs - the details should be recorded as accurately as possible and subsequently investigated.

Safety procedures for chemicals – the best policy is to minimise or ban chemical use. Otherwise you need to state a clear policy and set of procedures for the storage and use of chemicals.

Provide insurance – you need it! 🌱

### Five steps for a safer space

- Look for hazards
- Determine who might be harmed and how
- Assess risks arising from the hazards and decide whether existing precautions are adequate
- Record your findings and take actions where necessary
- Review your assessment at least annually or when major changes take place.

### Good practice ideas

Protective gear – inform gardeners of the importance of appropriate clothing and equipment and make it available: hats, sunscreen, boots, gloves, etc.

Poisonous plants – if you don't have sufficient knowledge, then seek advice from the botanic gardens, an established gardening club, or local horticulturalist. Pathways and walkways – keep them clear of obstacles. Use of wheelbarrows – don't overload them. Only move what you can easily manage.

Use of garden tools – a major source of accidents, for example rakes and forks left lying face up on the ground, strain from improper use. Proper storage of tools, and safe use demonstrations in volunteer inductions help reduce accidents. 🌱

Power and electrical tools – some power tools require the user to be qualified to use them (eg. chainsaws). The necessary health and safety equipment must be worn.

Compost heaps – a well-managed compost heap will not attract vermin.

Dogs – many community gardens are dog free zones (with the exception of guide dogs). Dog faeces can pose a particular set of health problems, particularly for young children.

Dangerous materials – some materials (such as barbed wire) pose a particular injury risk. Ensure such materials are banned from the garden.

Poisons and pesticides – use good organic management practices so that you do not require these at your garden.

### Resources

'Thinking about safety in our community garden', Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network. A two page brochure available for download from [www.communitygarden.org.au](http://www.communitygarden.org.au)

### Safe Work Australia

See website at <http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/>

### Risk Assessment Handbook for Community Groups in Natural Resource Management,

Conservation Volunteers Australia.

Designed for community groups carrying out environmental projects. Available for free download from <http://www.conservationvolunteers.com.au/assisting-projects/RAWorkshops-survey.htm>.

CVA also offer a health and safety manual and training package called 'In Safe Hands' <http://www.conservationvolunteers.com.au/assisting-projects/in-safe-hands-toolkit.htm>.

🌱 See page 65 for information on insurance

🌱 There is a Volunteer induction workshop outline on page 76



# Learning, education and training



# Learning, education and training

Community gardens are hubs of learning: places where people develop new skills, share information, and pass on local and traditional knowledge. They are sometimes venues for undertaking more formal training too.

Most community gardens find that skill and information sharing happen naturally everyday in the garden. People learn as they garden, share ideas, and pass on their experience. Take some time to observe the ways informal learning occurs in your garden and find ways to support and promote it – simple things like encouraging people to take morning tea breaks together can make a big difference. Actively encourage mentoring so that people with skills have opportunities to share them and others have the opportunity to learn. Having books, leaflets, and other resources available for gardeners to refer to also supports informal and self-directed learning.

Many community gardens take the next step, and offer their own workshops or training programs, or make connections with established training providers. This section includes ideas for finding and creating learning opportunities for your own gardeners and offering training to the wider community. It has information about linking with programs in universities, TAFE colleges, and other training organisations, the essentials for designing a training program, how to conduct workshops at your garden, and outlines for workshops on inducting volunteers, garden safety, facilitating effective meetings, garden design, cooking with unusual plants, and dealing with pests and weeds organically.

## Using training to develop your organisation

A range of education and training programs delivered by TAFEs, universities, and other training organisations are relevant to community gardeners. These programs can provide training for staff and volunteers, helping to build the skill base of your garden.

### Accredited Training

Accredited training leads to formal qualifications in vocational areas. It is available through Registered Training Organisations and TAFE colleges. Some courses that may be relevant to community gardeners include:

- 'Train small groups' and other modules of the certificates in **Workplace Training and Assessment**.

These courses are run by TAFEs, private training organisations, and community organisations such as Volunteering SA, Conservation Volunteers, and permaculture organisations.

- Accredited **Permaculture Training** – in 2004, the permaculture community registered certificates I – 4 and Diploma within the national accreditation framework. Includes units on a wide variety of areas relevant to community gardeners [www.permacultureinternational.org](http://www.permacultureinternational.org)
- **Horticulture** certificates I – IV, Diploma and Advanced Diploma, with specialisations like nursery, landscape, parks and gardens, and arboriculture.
- The Community Arts Network, SA runs a Graduate Diploma in **Community Cultural Development** [www.cansa.net.au](http://www.cansa.net.au)
- TAFEs offer a range of **Community Services** and **Community Development** courses
- **Disability studies** (TAFE)
- **Conservation and Land management** (TAFE)
- **Youth work** (TAFE)
- **Volunteer management** certificates are offered by Volunteering SA and Conservation Volunteers.

### Non-Accredited Training

A number of other organisations provide workshops and training programs that could add to the skill and knowledge base of your garden:

- SA Council of Social Service offer training workshops and seminars on topics including effective communication, financial planning, negotiating skills, and risk management.
- Volunteering SA offers training workshops to voluntary organisations, including OSH&W, working in teams, working with volunteers, effective communication, food safety, and working with specific groups, such as Indigenous people and people with disabilities.
- Greening Australia provides training in occupational health and safety, community capacity building, plant propagation, plant identification, seed collection and surveying, with an emphasis on native plants.
- Trees for Life also offers training in seed collection and bush management.
- Permaculture Design Courses and Introduction to Permaculture Courses can provide an excellent grounding for the diversity of skills required

 Up to date contact details and further information available at <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx>

 See <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx> for up to date contact details for organisations offering accredited training

in community gardening – from site design to community development. Course information can be found in the Permaculture Association of SA's newsletters and website.

- Community Arts Network, SA offers a range of training workshops, including project management, funding, and cross-cultural communication. They also hold regular peer learning sessions.

## Linking with established programs

Making connections with established education and training providers can be a way of involving more people and organisations in your garden, and may lead to ways to generate funding.

There are many opportunities for community gardens to contribute to other organisation's educational programs:

- hosting interns and students doing workplace and community service placements
- as sites for field trips for students at all levels
- as sites for practical projects or hands-on demonstrations
- providing guest presenters/ trainers
- as venues/ subjects for students doing research.

## Universities

Community gardens have formed relationships with a wide range of university departments and courses. Use universities' websites to find courses that your garden could link with, and look at the particular interests of staff members to decide who to make contact with.

Relevant courses might include:

- Social work
- Community development
- Occupational therapy
- Disability studies
- Public health
- Teaching
- Agriculture
- Natural resource management
- Environmental studies
- Urban design
- Architecture.

## Designing a training program

In addition to the ongoing informal learning that takes place, community gardens have run or hosted workshops on a great variety of topics – from organic gardening to green cleaners. Some community gardens offer accredited training programs in areas like horticulture and permaculture (see the lists of training programs above for other possibilities). Sign up to local and national community garden email lists to keep in touch with workshops other gardens are offering.

## Why run educational programs at your garden?

- Increase the capacity of your project by building the skills and knowledge of people involved
- Enable the garden to embark on new projects or extend activities you'd like to do more of
- Directly address the needs and interests of your garden participants
- An incentive for volunteering, and a way to 'give back' to volunteers
- A reason for new people to come to the garden and get involved
- An opportunity for people to share their skills and knowledges
- An opportunity to promote your garden through new channels
- A way to generate funds for your garden.

Permaculture students visit the Goody patch Community Garden, SA



## Steps to designing an education program for your garden



✿ See funding section, page 48

✿ There are references to other training packages and programs that might be relevant on page 70 and at <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx>

Whether you are considering an hour-long workshop about meeting facilitation, or a six month accredited horticulture certificate program, these steps may be useful in planning your education program.

### Assess the need for training

What skills and experience already exist among the people involved with the garden?

What are people in your garden interested in learning more about?

What are they interested in sharing with others?  
What new skills, information and knowledge would benefit the garden as a whole or enable it to move in new directions?

Do people need training for particular roles in the garden (eg occupational health and safety, being a committee member; managing a budget).

What are the gaps?

Is a workshop or training program the best way to develop the skills people in your garden need and want? Alternatives may include self-education possibilities (for example using books, online courses, workbooks), on-the-job mentoring, or creating a study group.

Resources for making a needs assessment include:

- Skills mapping ✿
- Volunteer registration forms ✿
- A survey of volunteers ✿

- Informal conversations or a workshop with volunteers about what they'd like to learn
- Feedback from committee members and project co-ordinators

### Get funding

If the needs analysis indicates that a major training program would benefit the garden and gardeners, having a person employed to focus on co-ordinating, (and perhaps delivering) the training can make a big difference. ✿

### Research existing programs

- Are any other community gardens offering similar training?
- Are there any other groups offering similar training?
- What training packages exist?
- Are there any TAFE or university courses covering similar areas?
- What is the potential for collaboration?

See the lists of accredited and non-accredited training above. ✿

### Design your program

Use the workshop resources in this booklet and information from existing programs that you have identified. Talk to Volunteering SA and other gardens that have run training programs. Leave space for the people participating in the program to shape the content of sessions they attend. Continually incorporate feedback from participants.

### Administration and logistics

Will the course be accredited?

Where will the workshop be held?

What costs will you need to budget for (include morning teas, venue hire, facilitators' fees, materials, Registered Training Organisation fees)?

What will the cost to participants be?

How will registrations be administered?

### Promote the training program ✿

You may decide to offer the training only to current volunteers, or to give them the first opportunity to register. Some gardens offer free training to people who have completed a certain number of hours of volunteer work, and charge others.

If you are producing a leaflet about the workshop or training program, include a form for people to fill in, with their name, address, phone, email, emergency contact, special needs, previous experience, as well as an outline of course and any fees or deposit required. You may like to offer an 'early bird' discount to encourage people to enrol promptly.

✿ See promotion section, page 44 for ideas about promoting events

✿ see page 28 for information on skills mapping

✿ see page 99 for a sample volunteer registration form

✿ see page 102 for a sample training needs survey



## Case study: Ridley Grove Community Garden

Although its official opening was little over a year ago, Ridley Grove Community Garden has hosted a great variety of educational activities, from garden festivals involving several hundred people and all-day programs of talks, to small, hands-on workshops. Topics have included permaculture, composting, worm farms, creating frog-friendly and butterfly-attracting gardens, setting up a home veggie patch, native plants, bokashi, and making mini salad gardens in foam boxes for people living in units. The garden also hosts weekly visits from children from a neighbouring primary school and occasional university students on social work placements.

For Ridley Grove Community Garden, workshops are an opportunity to share skills, promote the garden in the wider community, and attract new people to become involved.

All workshops so far have been free to participants, though in the future they may charge a gold coin. The garden raises some money through sale of plants to workshop participants. It has also received funding to run workshops, including Adult Learners Week and local council grants, which have covered materials and organisers' and presenters' time.



Workshops have been presented by a range of outside facilitators and by the garden co-ordinator. Presenters have either been paid from grant funding or volunteered their time. For large workshops and fairs, the garden has invited other community groups, such as Rotary, to provide food, such as a sausage sizzle or Devonshire teas, for an extra fee to participants. This helps other community groups to raise funds, relieves gardeners from catering duties, and fosters mutual relationships between organisations.

Smaller workshops take place under Ridley Grove's pergola and the church next door makes its hall and other facilities available for large workshops and events.

Ridley Grove organisers have found that smaller workshops, with 20 – 30 participants, fill quickly with minimal promotion: a flyer on the notice board on the garden's fence, emails to local permaculture and community garden lists, and word of mouth.

For larger events, such as composting demonstration days which involve up to 200 participants, Ridley Grove gardeners have used a wider range of promotional strategies, including stories in local newspapers, announcements on radio gardening shows, writing articles for church and school newsletters, placing flyers in local shops and libraries, notices on internet gardening sites, and letterbox drops to neighbouring houses.

They have found that community development officers in local councils are particularly helpful in passing on email notices through their networks. Ridley Grove has received sponsorship to produce banners and coreflute signs promoting major garden events, which also provide an opportunity to acknowledge supporters.

✿ For training involving children and young people, see the resources section in the Gardening with Children and in Schools section page 32

## Resources ✿

### Relevant training packages

***New Farmers Manual*** Tash Morton and Dick Copeman  
Brisbane: Northey Street City Farm 2004

An invaluable training manual for volunteers, volunteer trainers and volunteer co-ordinators at community gardens and city farms. Extensive training program covering all aspects of community gardens, including occupational health and safety, gardening, volunteering, and designing training programs.

### ***Growing Communities: How to Build Community Through Community Gardening***

Jeanette Abi-Nader, David Buckley, Kendall Dunnigan and Kristen Markley  
American Community Gardening Association 2001.

A curriculum for the ACGA's 'From the roots up' mentorship program. Includes community building, leadership, planning, fundraising, and much more. Available from [www.communitygarden.org](http://www.communitygarden.org).

### ***Improving Nutrition through Home Gardening***

UN Food and Agriculture Organisation Italy: FAO 1994.

Training package for people using gardening to improve health and nutrition, with teacher's notes and reproducible info sheets. Designed for development workers. Can be downloaded from <http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/003/X3996E/x3996e00.htm>

## Other resources

### **National Volunteer Skills Centre**

Many useful resources and materials for community gardens offering workshops and training programs, including a Guide for Training Volunteers and a toolkit for evaluating training programs. Follow links from [www.volunteeringaustralia.org](http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org)

### **Partnering with Registered Training Organisations**

A fact sheet for volunteer organisations considering partnering with an RTO in order to provide accredited training. Available from [http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/files/XVGZE0PGC4/RTO\\_Quick\\_Guide\\_Partnering\\_with\\_RTO\\_Final.pdf](http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/files/XVGZE0PGC4/RTO_Quick_Guide_Partnering_with_RTO_Final.pdf)

## Running training sessions

Once you have determined the areas your garden will offer training in, it's time to plan, run and review your training sessions.

### **Planning workshop sessions**

This booklet includes outlines for several workshops, which you can adapt to suit your needs. Each workshop is designed to meet specific outcomes, such as people learning a particular new skill. They generally follow the pattern of

- a welcome
- an introduction to the facilitator
- a brief outline of the session
- information about toilets, tea breaks, etc.
- agreements about smoking, listening to others, keeping to time, and so on
- a warm up exercise or icebreaker
- a process to draw out the existing knowledge with in the group and what people hope to learn
- the specific content of the workshop
- a distinct ending with a review and brief evaluation.

Handouts and references to further information can be valuable – it is often best to distribute these at the end of the session.

### **The venue**

A welcoming, comfortable, and attractive space is important to create an effective learning environment. This might be an undercover area in your garden, a room at a local community centre, a church hall, etc

Workshop venue check list:

- tea and coffee making facilities
- pinboards/ walls to stick up posters, butchers' paper, etc
- good light
- air flow
- comfortable temperature
- low noise and privacy from other groups nearby
- shelter from sun, wind and rain if using outdoor spaces
- appropriate furniture – chairs, cushions, tables, etc
- toilets
- location of power points
- proximity to public transport
- wheelchair access
- access to gardens or outdoor spaces for practical exercises.

## Equipment

The equipment you will require will depend on your workshop. Some things to consider..

- paper, pens, butchers' paper, black/ white board, markers, chalk, etc
- pins, blutak
- overhead projector; data projector; laptop, video, slide projector etc – make sure you allow time to test them out in the venue before the workshop starts!
- plenty of drinking water
- urn, tea, herbal tea, coffee, fruit. Refrigerator?
- cleaning equipment (brooms, vacuum, cloths, washing up gear, etc)
- equipment specific to your topic – eg garden tools, oven, extra hats, etc.

## On the day...

Get to the workshop venue early to give yourself plenty of time to set up the space, organise your materials, deal with any problems (no toilet paper; overhead bulb needs changing), and to have a moment to relax before people start arriving.

Be proactive in rearranging the space to suit your purposes – you may want to arrange chairs in a circle, etc.

Be prepared for people to arrive – have the urn hot, make sure you have records of bookings, money owed, etc.

Welcome people as they arrive.  
Relax and enjoy learning with people!

## Resources

### *The Manual For Teaching Permaculture Creatively*

Robin Clayfield and Skye Queensland: Earthcare Education 1995

Excellent introduction to using creative processes to facilitate learning about a range of topics. Permaculture focused, but applicable to any community garden training.

 See <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx> for ideas for introductions, icebreakers, and energisers

## Workshop outline: Volunteer induction

All new volunteers should participate in an induction and orientation session before they start working on site. This can be done one person at a time, but it is preferable to hold inductions with small groups of new volunteers.

It is recommended that this session be followed by a Garden Safety session. \*

### Time

2hrs 15mins (plus 40 mins Garden Safety)

### Outcomes

New volunteers:

- Know their way around the garden
- Have a basic understanding of the aims and activities of the garden
- Have met some of the other garden volunteers/workers
- Know about what volunteer activities they can participate in and when and where they can start.

### Materials

Butchers paper/ blackboard

Pens/ chalk

Extra sun hats and/or sunscreen

Morning tea, water

Optional handouts: leaflets about the garden, volunteer policy documents, OHS procedures, volunteer handbook.

You might put them together as a new volunteers' kit. \*

### Participants' requirements

A hat, water bottle

shoes suitable for site tour

### Introductions/ prior knowledge

- Invite each person in the group to say their name, one of their reasons for volunteering at the garden, and something they know about the garden. Ask people to be brief in their answers. Tell people you will write the things they say about the garden on butcher's paper.
- Outline the program for the morning, make sure people know where toilets and water are, allow opportunity for questions.

### Icebreaker: have you ever...? (optional)

Arrange chairs (or cushions) in a circle so there is one for each participant, excluding the facilitator. The facilitator

stands in the centre of the circle and completes the question 'Have you ever...?' Everyone who has must get up and switch chairs. They cannot return to the chair they left or the ones next to it. The person left without a chair must ask the question again. You might choose a specific focus for the questions (eg gardening: have you ever made compost in the rain, have you ever planted broccoli) or to leave it open to whatever people want to know about each other. . .

### Site Tour

Plan a trail around the garden that will enable you to talk about various garden features and activities that take place. Design your route so that you do most of your talking in shady areas.

Before beginning, offer spare hats and/ or sunscreen. Ask what people are particularly interested in seeing or finding out more about the garden, and if possible tailor the tour to address these.

Show people where tools, etc they may need to use are kept, and any protocols for cleaning and putting away tools.

Invite and be prepared to answer questions as you go.

### Introduce the garden and volunteering opportunities

Share stories of the garden, drawing on what was written on the butcher's paper during introductions. You might include the garden's history, organisational structure, aims and values, what happens there, where it's headed, and how people can become members and become involved in decision making.

Outline the ways in which people can get involved, the range of volunteer activities available, regular working times, training opportunities – if appropriate have time-tables and signup sheets for particular projects or working groups. Ensure everyone has filled in a volunteer registration form. \*

Allow time for questions.

### Morning tea

Share morning tea with other volunteers, supervisors, and workers at the garden. Personally introduce new volunteers to people they will be supervised by or working closely with.

You may have leaflets or other appropriate materials to hand out at the end of this session.

\* See next page for a Garden safety workshop outline

\* You could also include a set of Basic Gardening Leaflets from page 84

\* There is a sample volunteer registration form on page 99

## Workshop outline: Garden safety

This workshop should be tailored to address the particular hazards of your garden and to cover the activities people are likely to undertake.

### Time

40 minutes if following a Volunteer Induction, 1 hour if standalone session.

### Outcomes:

- Participants understand potential garden hazards and how to reduce risk
- Understand their responsibility for garden safety
- Are familiar with garden protocols and can identify contact persons

### Materials/equipment:

Handouts: You could use the Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network's 'Thinking About Safety' fact sheet from [www.communitygarden.org.au](http://www.communitygarden.org.au) and your garden's Occupational Health and Safety policy or guidelines (or examples from other garden/s). \*

### Introduction

Introduce the facilitator, venue, and session. Introduction/ icebreaker if running as a standalone session.

Introduce the garden's protocols and contact people, such as first aid officer; accident reporting, location and use of first aid box.

### Safety brainstorm

Invite people to share their understanding of what makes a safe garden. Emphasise that everyone is responsible for their own safety and the safety of others.

### Hazard assessment

If you have just been on a site tour, ask participants to identify potential hazards that they saw. If you are not following an induction session, take a brief tour of the garden, identifying potential hazards as you go. Discuss ways to minimise the risk of each hazard.

### Tool safety

Introduce tools frequently used at the garden (wheelbarrows, shovels, saws, hoses and so on).

Discuss potential hazards of use/ misuse for each. Ask a participant to demonstrate what they see as the safest ways to use each tool, including carrying, using, putting down temporarily while using, and storing. Discuss.

### Conclusion

Distribute handouts  
Ask for feedback on session.

\* Two community garden safety handouts are available from <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx>

## Workshop outline: Meeting facilitation <sup>12</sup>

It is preferable for this workshop to be run by a team of two facilitators. \*

### Time

Approximately 3 hours, depending on number of participants involved.

### Outcomes

- Participants can identify their preferred supports and resources for meeting facilitation
- A basic understanding of facilitation techniques and strategies
- A basic understanding of potential difficulties faced by facilitators and ways of working with them.

### Materials

Paper; whiteboard, blackboard, markers, etc

Role play cards (see below)

A watch or timer

Handouts \*

### Introduction

Introduce the facilitator/s, the outline of the session, the venue, etc.

Ask each participant to say their name and something they're hoping to gain from this workshop.

<sup>12</sup> Thankyou to Jeremy Urquhart and Mary Heath for ideas in this workshop

\* The Decision Making and Meetings page 59 and Learning, Education and Training page 74 sections of this booklet could be useful for planning the content of this workshop.

\* Several handouts ('Facilitation: A 10 Point Checklist', 'Facilitation: 10 Useful Ideas', 'Meetings: A Guide for Facilitators' and 'A User's Guide to Meetings') can be downloaded from <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx>, and/ or develop your own – you might like to add a list of your favourite facilitation books or websites

## Discussion

Invite people to share some of their experiences of meetings – things that have gone well, difficulties, concerns, ideas. This could be mapped on a white board under headings of 'positives', 'minuses' and 'interestings'. Introduce and/ or draw out ideas from this discussion, for example the need for everyone in a meeting to contribute to the meeting going well, having support for the facilitator; co-facilitation, possible roles in meetings (minute taker, speaking list keeper, time monitor, etc), and so on as appropriate.

## Paired sharing

This exercise is to help people consider what support they would like when facilitating a meeting.

Introduce the idea of 'attentive listening' as essential to good facilitation as well as this exercise: invite a volunteer from the group to assist you by sitting next to you and talking to you (you might suggest a topic like what's happening in your garden at the moment). As the person is talking, model as many kinds of non-attentive listening as you can – look away, check your watch, wave to someone across the room, say "that reminds me of the time when I...". People soon get the idea!

Introduce the exercise, perhaps suggesting some things people might like to consider, such as assistance from meeting participants, the venue, support from a co-facilitator; particular techniques, etc. Invite people to form pairs, preferably with someone they may have the opportunity to work with ongoingly or who they think could be a good supporter/ buddy. Let people know that you will use a timer to allow the first member of the pair 5 minutes to talk about their ideas, then call for a swap for the second person to have 5 minutes to talk. After discussion in pairs, briefly feedback ideas to the larger group by asking people to share one thing they would find helpful.

## Role play

Introduce the role play as an opportunity to try out facilitation, experiment with ideas, and draw on the thinking of the group.

One person nominates himself or herself as the first facilitator:

Other people take a card with a description of their role in the meeting. Your cards might include the following: "You're interested in what's being discussed, and keen to help the meeting go well"

"You are more interested in chatting to the person next to you than participating in the meeting"

"No matter what the topic under discussion is, you constantly want to discuss food co-ops"

"You're passionately interested in what's being discussed, and interrupt and talk over others"

"You have decided that all meetings are bad and don't want to be there – you're distracted and fidgety"

"You're engaged with what's being discussed, and have ideas to contribute but find it intimidating to speak up"

The group chooses a topic for the meeting (for example planning a community garden open day). The person role playing the meeting facilitator may stop the role play at any time to ask for assistance or suggestions from the group or the leader, and the workshop facilitators may stop the role play to draw out issues that arise. Allow at least two or three people to take a turn as facilitator.

When the role plays are finished, discuss issues and ideas that arise – making sure to emphasise that this was a very worst case scenario!

## Conclusion

Give out handouts. Briefly brainstorm sources of further information – eg people in your community, books, websites, etc.

Ask each person to share one thing they will do to ensure their next meeting goes well.

## Workshop outline: Harvesting and preparing unusual food plants

This workshop could be adapted for use with a range of foods – focusing on Australian bushfood species, weeds or wild herbs, or plants from a particular country's cuisine. This workshop is for a cooking demonstration. If you have the facilities, you may decide to run a participatory workshop where everyone cooks together, or small groups each prepare a dish.

All cooking workshops require particular attention to equipment, appropriate venue, and good food safety practices.

Ask people who book for cooking demonstrations if they have any food intolerances or allergies, and make sure there are some things that will be good for them to eat.

### Time

Depends on menu planned – allow time to eat together afterwards.

### Outcomes:

Participants

- have an opportunity to try new foods or cooking techniques
- understand uses of some unusual food plants in the garden
- can identify some unusual edible plant species.

### Materials/equipment:

This will depend on the recipe you choose...

All ingredients required for the recipe – pre-prepared if appropriate (eg onions chopped, flour measured)

Baskets, knives, etc for harvesting

Knives, chopping boards, mixing bowls, utensils, cooking equipment, etc as needed

Apron

Hand washing basin

Stove top, cob oven, BBQ, etc

Plates and cutlery for tasting and/or a shared meal

Washing up facilities

Handouts with recipes and plant identification information

### Introduction

Invite people to share their names and a favourite garden food.

Outline the program for the day, ask if people were hoping for particular outcomes or to learn specific things.

Ask about people's experience cooking with wild plants/ Vietnamese vegetables/ bushfoods/ etc as appropriate.

### Plant Identification and Harvesting

Although most of your ingredients should be ready to use, take the group out to the garden to harvest some of each plant to be used in the recipe.

Encourage people to notice size, texture, smell, and growth patterns of each plant.

Discuss ways to tell if the plant is ready to be picked, and how to harvest the edible parts.

If there are any similar looking plants which are not good to eat, make sure people can also identify these, and point out differences to look for.

If you are using 'weed' species, emphasise the importance of not harvesting from potentially sprayed or contaminated sites, and not harvesting from road sides.

Briefly outline the cultivation of the plants – propagation, preferred growing environments, growing time, etc.

### Cooking Demonstration

Plan your demonstration, taking into account time available. You may decide to pre-prepare some ingredients – washing, chopping and measuring before hand so they're ready to add. You may also decide to pre-cook the food to be eaten, and to prepare only a small portion in your demonstration. Make sure you are familiar with the kitchen, and any equipment and techniques to be used.

Describe what you're doing as you go, and if appropriate, why, for example frying spices to bring out flavour, or adding pectin to jam to thicken.

Invite questions and discussion from workshop participants – would they do things differently?

### Use good food preparation practices<sup>13</sup>

- Wash hands well
- Wear an apron
- Wear clothing that is clean, simple (no long flowing sleeves)
- Minimal jewelry
- Long hair should be tied back or up

<sup>13</sup> From Jennifer Savenake (2003) Community Nutrition and Food Security Training package for use by dietitians and nutritionists Women's and Children's Hospital, Adelaide p.45

- Keep work surface clean and uncluttered – to assist this have equipment and ingredients on trays and remove once used
- Have a saucer or spoon rest on which to place a stirring spoon/fork
- Lift the lid from hot pans away from yourself and place lid upside down on the bench
- Turn pot handles away from front of stove
- Stand to one side when opening stove
- Use potholders or folded dry tea towels to pull out oven racks or to lift hot dishes. (Do not use wet tea towels or dish cloths).
- Use pans appropriate to size of hot plate or burner
- Turn off equipment or burner once finished.

### Share the Food Together...

## Workshop outline: Garden design

### Time

3 hours

### Outcomes

Participants have a basic understanding of garden design strategies, such as needs and functions analyses, random assemblage, and the impact of design on users.

### Materials

Make a set of cards, one for each workshop participant, with one element of the garden on each. You could choose from this list, or develop your own as appropriate to your community garden site. A set of cards could include: Tall persimmon tree, seating area, BBQ, chickens, office building, native regeneration, bush tucker, compost area, lawnclipping drop off bay, nursery, individual garden plot, shared vegetable garden, and wheelchair accessible raised bed. 🌱

### Welcome and introduction to the workshop

Outline of day, introduction to venue and facilitator

### Introduction game: postcards

Spread out postcards or other pictures of gardens and ask people to pick one, that expresses something about what garden design means to them. Each person briefly tells the group why they chose their picture.

### Brainstorm

Where do you learn about garden design? Where do you find garden design advice and resources?

### Role Play

Introduce the idea of allowing every element (plant, animal, structure, etc) to live out most of its natural preferences, behaviours, and nature, and the benefits of

designing to take advantage of rather than control them. Each participant chooses one of the design element cards you have made. Each person discusses the needs, products, behaviours, and intrinsic characteristics of the element on their card.

As a group, discuss the potential beneficial connections among the elements – are there places where the products of one element match with the needs of another? Are there places where compatible needs can be met together?

Gather the cards together and mix them up. Describe the workshop space as if it were a place for a garden to be designed – higher ground by the door, a pond by the tea table, a road along the windows, etc. Ask people to move around the space, perhaps with music, and to stop in a random position.

Walk around the room and give each person one of the cards. Tell people that 'random assemblage' of elements can sometimes lead to creative new possibilities. Without deciding whether the placement of elements is 'good' or 'bad', discuss the potential effects of situating elements in these places.

Allow people to move around the room again, and create a design from their elements, taking into account the relationships explored in the previous processes. When the group has decided on a useful placement of elements, transfer the design onto a large sheet of butchers' paper; or use chalk to mark it out on the floor. Imagine different people using the garden you've designed: a child, a person in wheelchair, a person coming for first time... If possible, walk through the design imagining how it might effect different people's experience.

### Ending

On butchers' paper, map some of the things people have learnt during the workshop.

🌱 You could adapt the Design section of this booklet to make handouts



## Workshop outline: Organic management of pests

### Time


2 hours

### Outcomes

- Participants can identify some causes of pest-damage to plants
- Have a basic understanding of organic pest management principles and strategies

### Materials

A garden with examples of pest presence and management strategies

Cards with an example of a pest and a management strategy on each – see below 

### Introduction

Introduce facilitator, outline of workshop, venue, etc.  
Invite participants to share their name and one of their reasons for coming to the workshop

### Discussion of principles of organic pest management

Starting with soil to encourage healthy plant growth  
Creating balanced garden ecosystems  
Encouraging predator species  
Not seeking to 'control' or eliminate all pests and weeds

### Garden walk

Hand out a card to each person with a description of the presence of one pest species and one pest management strategy. People walk around the garden and find examples the things listed on their card. Encourage people to assist each other in their search, the facilitator may also help people identify examples.

The cards need to be specific to what's happening in the garden, and detailed enough in their descriptions so that people can identify examples from the information provided. Evidence of pests might include slug 'hotels' (places which shelter slugs and snails in the day time), caterpillar damage, eggs or larvae of specific pest species, etc. Strategies may include flowering plants to attract predator species, trap crops, fruit fly or slug traps, interplanting, etc.

When everyone has located the things on their card, each person shows the group what they have found. Encourage discussion about what insect or pest caused the damage, and the reasons for that species' proliferation and the plants' susceptibility to attack.


### Brainstorm: Dealing with pests organically

Invite people to share ideas for organic pest management, including things that have and haven't worked well in their gardens. De-emphasise 'quick fix' solutions such as 'organic' sprays. Encourage people to look beyond individual plants and garden beds, and to look at their whole garden and neighbourhood.

### Conclusion

Distribute handouts and discuss sources of information about organic pest management.

Ask people to share something they will try from the workshop.

 You could use the "Organic Pest Control" leaflet from the Gardening Basics section page 87 as handout

## Workshop outline: Organic management of weeds

### Time


2 hours

### Outcomes

- Participants can identify common weed species
- Have a basic understanding of organic weed management principles and strategies.

### Materials

Materials for practical exercise – assemble all required tools and materials as required ready for each group to use.

Basic instructions for each practical exercise 

### Introduction

Introduce facilitator; outline workshop, venue, etc.  
Invite participants to share their name and one of their reasons for coming to the workshop

### Discussion of principles of organic pest management

Starting with soil to encourage healthy plant growth  
Not seeking to 'control' or eliminate all pests and weeds  
Weeds as soil type indicators and dynamic accumulators of soil nutrients, as food and medicinal uses.

### Garden walk

As a group, walk around the garden and identify some common weed species. For each, discuss potential benefits and uses, potential disadvantages of their presence, and their method/s of reproduction (eg tubers, seeds, layering, etc). Encourage discussion.

### Practical exercises


Depending on the size of the group, you may divide participants into small groups to practice a different weed management strategy, such as sheet-mulching, solarisation, and cultivation. Set up spaces for each exercise, with all required materials and tools, and an instruction sheet for the group to follow. These exercises may take place in actual garden beds, or could be simulated on a tarpaulin or similar.

When each group is finished their exercise, they talk through what they've done with the rest of the group.

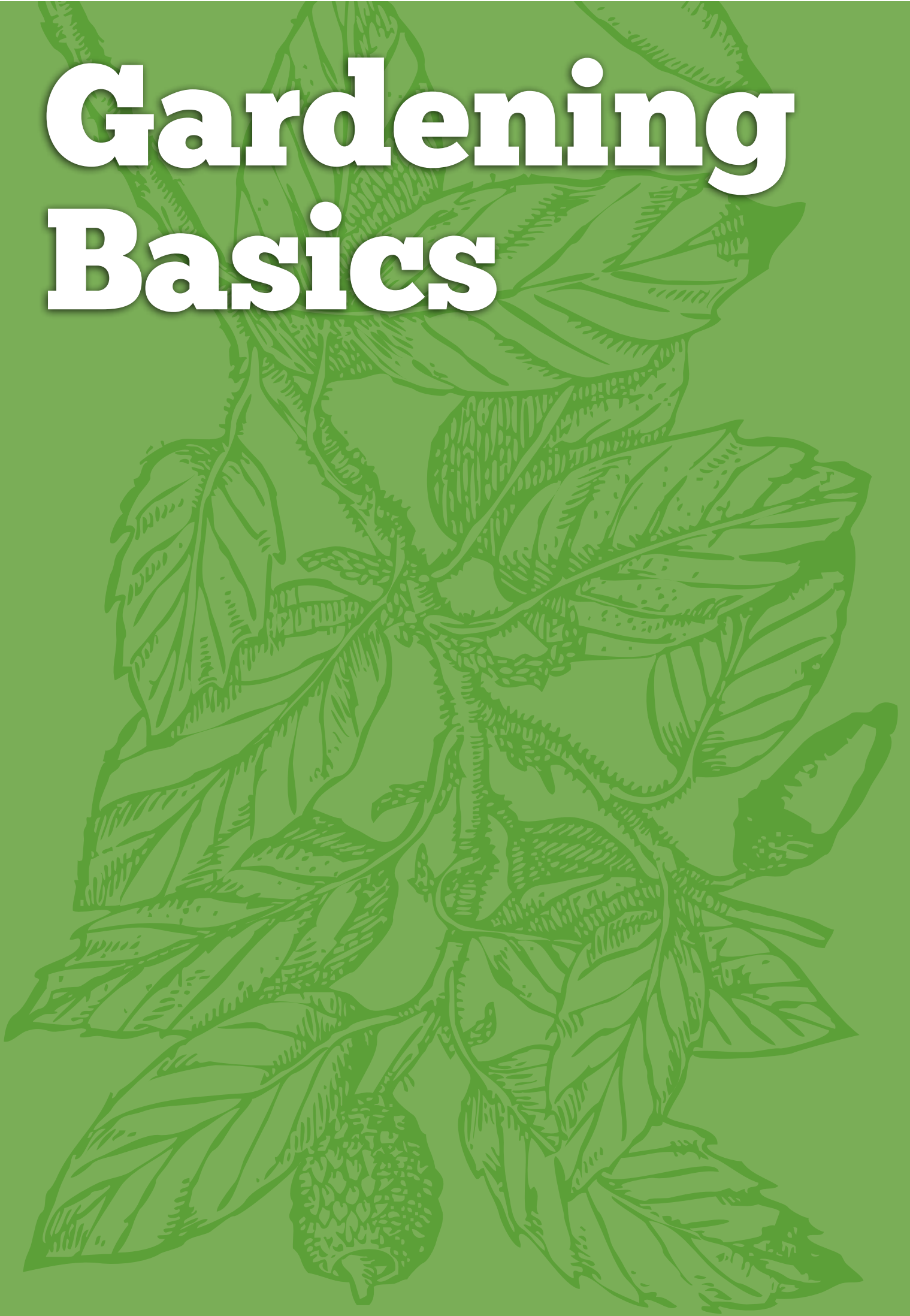
### Conclusion

Distribute handouts and discuss sources of information about organic weed management.

Ask people to share something they will try from the workshop.

 You could use the "Organic Weed Control" leaflet from the Gardening Basics section page 88 as a handout

# Gardening Basics



# Gardening basics

People come to community gardens with very different gardening experiences – some are expert green thumbs with knowledge to share, others get involved to begin learning about helping things grow.

✿ These leaflets can also be downloaded in pdf format from <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx>

Also see *Sustainable Landscapes* brochure “Making Community Gardens More Sustainable” This brochure includes information on minimising water use, selecting herbs, vegies and fruit trees, and growing bush tucker plants. Available for download from <http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/botanicgardens/programs/landscapes.html> or phone 08 82229311.

Some of the best ways to share gardening knowledge at community gardens are through hands-on experience, informal mentoring, and occasional workshops. However, having basic gardening information available can be of great assistance to new and experienced gardeners. Many community gardens have a collection of books for people to refer to. Magazines and videos can also be useful, as can ‘what to plant when’ guides and posters. The majority of community gardens use organic practices, and seek to minimise use of water and other resources. Gardeners who are used to ‘conventional’ gardening methods will need resources to introduce your garden’s practices.

In this section, there are ten basic gardening leaflets, which may be used as part of a starter or induction pack for new gardeners, as handouts for gardening workshops, or however else they’re useful to your community garden. ✿



Bare soil rarely occurs in nature. Soils are covered by a thin layer of debris comprising dead leaves and twigs, with small amounts of various manures. This surface layer protects and nourishes the soil beneath. Gardeners may add a layer of mulch to the surface of the garden to achieve the same purpose. To be effective, mulches should be 5cm or more deep, with coarser materials needing to be applied at a greater thickness than finer ones. A no-dig garden uses a deep mulch, 15cm or more, as a growing medium.

### Benefits of mulch

- Reduces water evaporation resulting from protection from wind and sun
- Adds organic matter and nutrients, improving fertility, structure and water retention
- Increases biological activity within the soil
- Maintains soil surface condition, eliminating problems of crusting and non-wetting
- Eliminates dirt splash and associated disease attack
- Preserves soil structure
- Reduces weeds by smothering and limiting germination
- Harbours beneficial predators such as spiders and centipedes
- Reduces erosion by slowing the movement of surface water
- Buffers extremes of soil temperature, particularly in the hot summer weather:

### Disadvantages of mulch

- Harbours pests such as slugs, snails, earwigs
- Some types of grassy weeds grow in mulch
- Soil warming is slower in spring.

### Some mulch materials

**Straw and hay:** Any straw or hay is suitable. Avoid material with seeds. Shake the hay before adding it to the garden if you suspect it contains seeds. Lucerne hay is the best mulch material as it contains a range of essential elements. Pea straw has reasonable nitrogen content, but is very light and breaks down quickly.

**Bark/woodchip/sawdust:** These woody materials form a long-term attractive colour, especially suitable for landscaping and ornamental gardens. Sawdust is good on pathways.

**Leaves:** Fresh leaves should be shredded or mixed with other materials before being used as mulch or they will form a matted waterproof layer. Some leaves, such as eucalypt, walnut, and pine (acidic) have an adverse affect on soil life. Leaf mould, made by allowing a pile of leaves to completely decompose, is a good mulch.

**Shredded mulch:** An excellent coarse mixture of wood chip and leaf. Home shredders can turn prunings into mulch. Large quantities may be purchased from garden supply depots. Avoid eucalypt, olive (which may contain seeds), or pine-based shredded mulch.

**Newspaper:** Use under other materials to smother weeds. Wet well before use. Do not leave paper uncovered or it will get blown about and create a mess. Glossy coloured paper is toxic and must not be used.

**Seagrass:** Long lasting cover that breaks down very slowly. Collect after rain to avoid salt, or water it down before applying.

**Lawn clippings:** Do not apply lawn clippings too thickly or they will go slimy. They tend not to last long and break down quickly. They may contain couch or kikuyu pieces, which can regrow. The properties of a lawn clipping mulch depend upon the type of lawn. Clover provides a higher nitrogen content, whereas kikuyu is fibrous with a higher proportion of carbon. Lawn clippings are best used on top of other, more open, mulch materials.

**Weeds:** Provided they are harvested before seeds set, non-invasive weeds make an excellent mulch.

**Poultry litter:** Any of the above materials may be left in a chook yard for a while before using as mulch. Chooks will clean out any weed seeds and add manure to the mulch.

**Manure:** Do not apply raw manures directly to the soil unless they are mixed with and covered by a large bulk of other materials. Failure to follow this rule will result in an unhealthy and smelly garden environment. Manures that have aged or been composted can be used directly.

**Living mulches:** Ground covering plants can be grown beneath other crops as 'living mulches'.

**Non-organic mulches:** The use of plastic as mulch is not recommended. Plastic will not break down and will become a nuisance later. Although plastic, used with other materials, provides an effective weed smother, many invasive and persistent weeds grow through the plastic, which obstructs the gardener when trying to clear these weeds. Gravel makes an attractive mulch, which contributes many of the advantages of an organic mulch, without the benefits of adding organic matter. Scoria is popular with landscape gardeners. It can be tricky using garden tools to weed through gravel.

Design the planting of your garden according to the plants' water requirements - plants that need lots of water can be grouped together so water isn't wasted on plants that can flourish with less. Drought tolerant plants in appropriate positions can shelter more fragile plants from sun and winds.

Observe, create and utilise microclimates in your garden – plant water-loving species in areas which tend to stay damp – such as in swales, at the bottom of slopes, around ponds or in rainwater runoff areas – and use more drought tolerant species in drier areas.

Choose plants which are most appropriate to the climate you live in – local species are a good place to start.

Don't let rainwater leave your garden! Install rainwater tanks to harvest roof runoff and direct overflow into swales or ponds. Maximise the infiltration of water which falls on the earth – mulch helps to reduce evaporation as well as feeding the soil and making plants more resilient. Basins or mounds built around shrubs and trees also limit runoff. Minimise impermeable surfaces such as driveways and cement paving. Lay pavers so water can soak through.

Minimise lawn. Accept that lawns will become dormant for part of the summer – most will recover when rains return. Mow less and allow grass to grow longer for a deeper root system.

Prune your fruit trees from the bottom – the fewer leaves, the less water leaves the plant and the less it requires. Pruning from the bottom also creates beautiful shady canopies.

Take notice of weather conditions – turn off automatic systems if it is raining! The best time of day to water varies. In Adelaide's hot, dry summers, evenings after sunset are a good time – that way water has a chance to infiltrate before hot days evaporate it. In cooler conditions, early mornings are preferable. Never water in the sunshine or wind.

Water less often and more slowly and deeply. This will encourage deeper root development for greater drought tolerance.

The aim of organic pest control is to reduce damage to an acceptable minimum. It is neither possible nor desirable to eliminate all pests completely from the garden.

#### Natural balance

If the right conditions are created in the garden, a host of useful predators and parasites can be encouraged to move into the garden and do the pest control for you. These conditions are habitat (somewhere to live) and food (pests or other food used during different times of the predators' life-cycle). The best way to maintain the conditions required for a range of useful organisms in the garden is to grow a diversity of plants and to avoid the temptation to try to eliminate all pests.

Some commonly found useful garden predators and parasites are birds, lizards, frogs, spiders, ladybirds, hover flies, lacewings, dragonflies, praying mantis, centipedes, parasitic wasps, and predator mites. Small children with instructions to collect snails can be useful too.

#### Soil conditions

Improving soil quality can reduce the occurrence and impact of pest and disease in the garden. Plants grown in good healthy soil will be healthy and healthy plants are disease resistant. Fungi and moulds in healthy soil produce natural antibiotics, cleansing the soil and aiding plants' disease resistance. Unhealthy plants, including plants raised on artificial fertilisers, attract pests. Healthy plants will resist pest attack and outgrow pest damage.

#### Organic sprays and dusts

Materials with natural insecticidal properties, which quickly break down and do not cause contamination may be used to kill garden pests. They will also kill many useful organisms so only use as a last resort.

**Pyrethrum** - The dried flower heads of the pyrethrum daisy are used to make an insecticide spray. Though non-residual, the spray is quite strong and should be used with caution.

**Neem** - Oil extracted from the Neem tree has insecticidal, fungicidal and antiseptic properties.

**Quassia** - The wood and bark of the Quassia tree, from South America, is a mild insecticide. Quassia chips can be kept in long term storage with little loss of potency.

**Bacillus thuringiensis** - A micro-organism that acts as a stomach poison for caterpillars. Sold under the name "Dipel".

**Sulphur** - A yellow mineral used as a powder. Fungicide and miticide. May damage tender plants.

**White oil** - Mineral oil used to control scale. Acceptable for occasional use.

#### Repellent sprays

Home-made repellent sprays are prepared as per herb tea then sprayed to protect vulnerable plants. Some have mild insecticidal properties. They include garlic, rhubarb, cloves, aniseed, sage, camphor; chillies, chives, onion, feverfew, wormwood, tansy. Mixing soap with a spray improves its wetting ability and increases the insecticidal effect.

Weeds are plants in the wrong place. They are survivors, being vigorous in growth and/or prolific in seeds. Weeds cause problems for gardeners by reducing productivity and affecting the appearance of the garden. Although weeds are often a problem, they may also have some benefits.

### Methods of weed control

Organic weed control can be time consuming and hard work. It is important to practise good garden management to create conditions that reduce and prevent weed growth to minimise the amount of time needed for weeding. A number of methods may be used to achieve this, and to remove existing weeds:

1. Cultivation – digging out with a fork or machinery. Excessive cultivation damages the soil
2. Chipping - using a sharp hoe or spade to remove the weeds at or just below ground level with minimal soil disturbance
3. Smothering – covering with mulch, newspaper or other suitable material
4. Solarisation – cooking the weeds under plastic in hot weather
5. Barrier – solid or growing barriers contain the spread of invasive plants
6. Slashing – cutting the leafy growth after flowering and before seed set
7. Improving soil conditions – maintain good soil structure, fertility and mulch coverage to help prevent weed infestation
8. Crowding - dense plantings and green manures give weeds nowhere to grow
9. Hand pulling - the best method for getting weeds that are in amongst the plants you want to keep
10. Heat - flame or steam weeders kill by cooking the leafy top growth. You can also pour boiling water on them
11. Persistence - there are no instant fixes.

### Invasive weeds

These are plants that spread by means of specialised underground stems. Includes couch, kikuyu, bamboo, mint etc. Control with methods 1,3,4,5,7 & 11.

### Bulbs and persistent perennials

These are plants that die back (or can be cut back) and regrow. Includes oxalis (sour sob), onion weed, nut grass, dock, convolvulus. Control with methods 1,3,4,7,8 & 11.

### Weeds as soil indicators

As weeds will grow wherever they are best able to, the types of weeds growing in a particular place may be an indication of soil condition.

Soil Type	Indicator weed
Poorly drained & acidic	Dock, Sorrel
Waterlogged	Bulrush
Overgrazed & compacted	Salvation Jane, Horehound
Saline	Saltbush
Sandy	Primrose, Coastal Galenia
Infertile, dry & compact	Caltrop, Wireweed
Rich fertile loam	Nettle, Sow Thistle, Chickweed

### Annual weeds

These are plants that grow, set seed, then die within one year. Includes a wide range of common garden weeds. Control with methods 1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9,10 & 11.

### Recycling Weeds

Weeds are a valuable source of organic material. Their efficient root systems bring up nutrients from the soil, which, once returned to the garden bed, improve soil fertility.

### Mulch

Provided the weeds cannot grow back, they may be spread over the garden as mulch. This is easily done over the soil from which they were removed. The weeds will grow back if they are invasive, gone to seed or have sufficient soil on their roots.

### Compost

A well-made compost heap is a good means of disposal for any weed. The heat generated by compost as it breaks down will kill weeds and most seeds. An exception is seed of the Burr Medic (Bindi) which survives hot composting.

### Drowning

Drowning is effective for recycling the nutrients from invasive, seedy and bulb weeds. Place the weeds in a container such as a rubbish bin, cover with water and leave to brew for a month or so. Have a close fitting lid over the container to keep the smell in. The resulting "weed tea" can be applied to the garden as a liquid manure.

### Roots

The roots of some non-persistent or non-invasive plants may be left in the soil after their tops have been removed. The remaining root systems improve the soil by holding the soil structure together and providing nutrient/ water/ air channels as they decompose.

### Healing Weeds

Herbalists and healers have used many wild plants, which are generally regarded as weeds, for centuries as traditional medicinal remedies. A few of the more common ones are listed below. Some healing plants are potent and should not be used without consultation.

Weed	Traditional Medicinal Use
Cleavers	Cancer; urinary disorders, blood cleanser; tonic
St Johns Wort	Lung, bladder; nervous problems, tumors
Scarlet Pimpernel	Mental disorders, liver; spleen, bladder stones, consumption
Horehound	Coughs and colds
Dandelion	Urinary, kidney and liver
Fumitory	Skin blemishes, tonic
Plantain	Externally – cuts, sores, ulcers, burns, skin irritations
Chickweed	Externally – skin problems, internally – inflammations
Wild Lettuce	Nervous disorders
Nettle	Asthma, blood cleanser; Externally - rheumatism and hair tonic
Willow Weed	Prostrate cancer
Marshmallow	Inflamations of alimentary, urinary and respiratory systems.

Common edible weeds include nettle, sow thistle, dandelion, chickweed, marshmallow and purslane.



It is not normal for any living thing to grow in isolation, or in contact with only others of the same kind. Diversity and interconnection are basic ecological principles. Companion planting creates a diversity of species within the garden. Carefully arranged plants assist each other's growth by reducing pest numbers and creating favorable growing conditions.

### Scent

Strongly scented herbs mask the scent of other plants, confusing pests, which identify their targets by smell. Example: broccoli and cabbage will suffer less damage from the caterpillars of the cabbage white butterfly when planted among sage, rosemary or dill.

### Attracting Predators

Providing food and habitat for insects that are predators or parasites of insects that damage plants can reduce pest numbers. Example: parsnip flowers are a food for parasitic wasps.

### Repelling or killing pests

Some plants are toxic to pests. Example: French marigolds will kill off some harmful nematode species.

### Altering appearance

Flying pests often identify their food supply by its shape. Growing different plants closely together means that there are no distinctive outlines for pests to identify. Example: weeds grown amongst mung beans keep down beanfly numbers.

### Shelter

A carefully placed stand of taller plants creates a sheltered spot by providing shade and alleviating wind. Example: plant corn near pumpkins.

### Support

The stalks and branches of a large sturdy plant can support a climber. Example: sweet peas climbing through the low-lying branches of an orange tree.

### Nitrogen fixing

Leguminous plants host bacteria in their roots. These bacteria fix nitrogen, supplying this nutrient to their hosts and indirectly, to neighbouring plants. Example: clover grown around cauliflower.

### Allelopathy

Substances released from plants into the soil can affect the growth of neighbouring plants. Many plants inhibit the growth of others, but a few enhance it. Example: plants promoting the growth of others nearby include nettle, calendula, yarrow and (planted sparingly) chamomile.

### Minerals

Deep-rooted plants draw up minerals from the subsoil, returning them to the topsoil. Example: comfrey draws up potassium, which is released into the soil as the leaves die off in late autumn.

### Bad Companions

Plants to avoid planting near others include large trees, (particularly conifers, eucalypts and walnuts), strongly bitter herbs (wormwood, southernwood, tansy, rue) and heavy feeders which may also release growth inhibitors (brassicas, sweet corn, sunflowers).

### Intercropping

Save space by growing small, quick growing vegetables between larger slower growing ones. The small vegetables can be harvested before the larger ones claim their growing space.

### Guilds

A small number of plants which all grow well together is called a guild. A common three-plant combination is sweet corn, pumpkin and climbing bean. A common four-plant combination is tomato, basil, marigold, and lettuce.

Other factors to consider when deciding what to plant with what include: size, growth rate, root depth and type, nutritional needs, soil conditions, soil type and watering needs.

**When to plant**

Seedlings can be planted out into the garden when they are about four centimetres tall and have developed their second set of leaves (following the first 'cotyledons' that emerge from the seed). They should be full and strong, rather than 'leggy'. Some gardeners prefer to keep seedlings in the nursery, where it may be easier to protect them from pests and keep them watered, until they're bigger and stronger.

Avoid planting out at hot and windy times of day, as the plants will dry out quickly. Dawn or dusk of an overcast day when rain looks likely is ideal.

Biodynamic gardeners use the cycles of the moon to help decide when the best time to plant is. According to this method, seedlings are best planted out in the week following new moon.

Some people who are on speaking terms with their plants like to give them 24 hours notice before they plant them out, or even ask if it's ok first..

**Hardening off**

The plants you propagate (or buy) are usually grown in a sheltered, protected environment. They will need to be hardened off so they will suffer less of a shock when they go into the ground. Before they are planted in the garden, leave them for two to three days in a place with similar conditions to where they will be planted.

**Planting the seedlings out in the garden**

Push aside any mulch and make a hole one and a half times the depth of the pot with a hand fork or trowel. Fill in the bottom of the hole with compost and mix in with a little of the surrounding soil.

Squeeze the pot gently to loosen soil, then tip on its side so the plant slides out. If your seedlings are in egg cartons, newspaper cups, or other pots that will break down, they can be put straight in the hole without removing their containers.

It's generally best not to disturb the roots of the plant. However, if the roots have become 'pot bound' and are circling the pot, you may want to loosen them, either by 'tickling' gently or – if very tightly bound – by using a knife to make centimetre deep cuts from top to bottom at intervals around the root ball.

Place the plant in the hole and fill in with soil – make sure the soil level remains about the same as it was in the pot. Firm in gently.

Water your seedlings in well with a watering can or hose with a rose fitting. Always water newly transplanted plants, even if the soil's already moist. Keep your plants well watered for their first few days in their new home.

South Australia has wonderful conditions for temperate to subtropical fruit production. Our dry summers and lack of fruit fly are the envy of many in the eastern states. We can grow anything from apples to avocados in most areas. Community gardens are ideal places to demonstrate techniques for growing fruit trees in urban spaces, and to preserve delicious heritage varieties.

### Selecting and planting fruit trees

Autumn is the time to prepare for deciduous fruit species. These include Mediterranean fruit trees such as apricots, figs, grapes, loquats, mulberries, persimmons, pomegranates and quinces.

Temperate species like apples, cherries, peaches, pears, plums and nectarines should also be on your list. A little homework first will pay dividends, as not all varieties will grow in all areas.

Some temperate fruit species require cold winter temperatures. Low-chill varieties such as

Sundowner, Pink Lady, Lady Williams, Granny Smith or Golden Delicious will ensure success with apples on the Adelaide plains.

Some varieties require cross-pollination, others are self-fertile. Selecting early, mid and late season varieties will extend the fruit-picking season. Your local nursery should be able to help you here, if not try the local library or the internet.

### Site requirements

Your site should have full sun for at least half the day and some protection from wind, especially if using dwarfing rootstock. Soil needs to be free draining, as fruit trees do not like wet feet. If your garden is on clay soil, add gypsum and organic matter, or consider sub-surface drainage if drainage is very poor. Soil preparation can start in advance of planting, with a green manure crop sown to be turned in before planting or an application of compost.

### How many can we fit?

The number of trees will depend on species, dwarfing characteristics and training techniques you choose. Dwarfing fruit trees are easily maintained for size but may not be as hardy or productive as semi-dwarfing varieties, which can be close planted and trained to limit their size. Training needs to start early, at planting time. Keeping your fruit trees to a moderate size allows for easier picking, pruning and netting, as birds will surely attack your best fruit just before they ripen.

For maximum utilisation of space especially on a wall or fence, fruit trees can be trained on a flat plane as an espalier. Examples of espaliered quince, citrus and plum can be seen at the Adelaide Botanic Gardens. Free-standing trees can be trained to a central leader to limit size. The open vase shape requires more space but is especially suited to apricots.

### Finding out more

Visit your local nursery, library or orchard to get ideas and find out what's available. Notice what fruit trees are growing in older houses in your neighbourhood.

Visit the Rare Fruit Society of S.A. website at [www.rarefruit-sa.org.au](http://www.rarefruit-sa.org.au)

Borrow or add to your library a copy of Louis Glowinski's 1997 book, *The Complete Book of Fruit Growing in Australia* Lothian 382pp.

**Where do you find seeds?**

- In seed heads – lettuce, parsley, basil, carrot, parsnip, silverbeet, beetroot, dill, fennel
- In pods – peas, beans, cabbages, broccoli, bok choy, mustard
- In fruits – tomatoes, capsicums, chillies, cucumbers, pumpkin

What's flowering or going to seed in your garden now?

**How to save seeds**

Start with good seeds when you start your garden.

- Choose local seeds because they are adapted to local conditions.
- Choose non-hybrid seeds because you can rely on them producing true-to-type seeds.

**Take seeds from your own garden** - start with tomatoes, beans and lettuces as they are the easiest.

**Select the best plants to save seed from** – let the most healthy, productive plants to go to seed. You need to keep more than one plant of some types of plants, like cabbage, corn and silverbeet. Label them as off limits to anyone harvesting the garden!

**Collect the mature seeds.** Seeds must be left on the plant until they are fully mature- this is critical for good viable seed. Pick them in dry weather.

**Dry the seeds.** Put the seeds in a closely woven basket, into a paper bag or onto a canvas. Dry away from the sun for between one and three weeks depending on size and weather.

**Clean the seeds.** Separate the seeds from their receptacles - shell the pods, shake the seed heads and squeeze out fleshy fruits. Winnow the seeds from the chaff and put them into a paper bag for further drying if necessary. Wash the flesh of fruits from the seeds and set them out to dry on paper, or a plate.

**Store them safely.** On a dry day store the seed in an airtight container with bay leaves to discourage insect attack. Keep them in a cool, dry and dark place.

**Sowing seed**

Sow in season.

There are two main planting seasons, spring and autumn; many plants can be planted in only one of those seasons.

Some, however, can be planted all year round.

Sow with care.

Sow large seeds directly in beds. Small seeds can be sown in punnets of fine sandy soil and compost, or may be direct sown if the soil is fine enough.

Sow each seed two to five times as deep as its diameter; depending on the texture of the soil -- deeper for sandier soil, shallower for clayey soil. Press the soil down over the seed gently. Water once a week.... unless it rains, of course.

Growing new plants from pieces of a parent plant will give you plants that are genetically identical, that is, clones.

### Cuttings

Pieces of a plant stem are cut and placed the right way up in a striking mix. If possible, don't use pieces longer than 10cm or thicker than 1cm. The softer/greener the stem, the smaller the cutting. Always use healthy pieces of stem.

### Taking stem cuttings

Make a clean level cut through a node at the base of the cutting. Cut the top of the piece at an angle 1cm above a node, or with a tip cutting, leave the tip of the stem intact. Carefully remove all leaves from the lower 3/5 of the cutting without stripping any bark. For large leaved plants, trim back and shorten the leaves that remain on the top of the cutting.

Fill a box or pot with striking mix and make holes in it with a stick to a depth of about half the length of the cuttings. Slot the cuttings into the holes, press them in gently then water with a soft shower.

### Root Cuttings

Some plants can be grown from pieces of root placed in a cutting mix. Cut the pieces 5cm long. Bury them vertically in the striking mix, the right way up. To remember which way is up, cut the upper part of the root cutting flat and the lower part on an angle. If uncertain about which way is up, place them horizontally in the mix. Keep the mix damp. Take the cuttings at a time when the plant is dormant, for most plants this is during winter.

### Shade and moisture

Cuttings are more successful if they are kept as moist as is practical without stopping the circulation of air. You may install misters in the propagating area or loosely place a plastic bag over each pot. All cuttings should be placed out of the sun.

### Potting on

When the cuttings are growing new roots and/or leaves, remove them from the container of striking mix without damaging their roots, and put them in a pot with potting mix. Water immediately then regularly.

### Division

Plants that form large clumps at the crown may be dug up in winter, broken into smaller pieces and replanted. Some plants need to be lifted and divided regularly to keep them in good condition. Cut back most of the leaf and root growth before tearing the clump apart. Ensure that each new leaf has a leaf, or an "eye" from which a new leaf may grow, and a portion of roots.

### Layering

Sometimes, when a branch or stem lies on the ground, it will grow roots. Once a good root system is established, the branch may be cut from the main plant and relocated as a new plant. You can layer plants by pegging lower branches to the ground, covering them lightly with soil. A couple of longitudinal scratches on the underside of the branch should encourage root growth.

Organic matter for recycling tends to present itself irregularly. One minute you have a few veggie scraps, the next a pile of weeds and clippings from the garden. Worm farms are one of the easiest and most productive ways of dealing with the ebbs and flows of organic waste generated by a household or community garden.

It is a matter of setting up a system that suits you and the amount of organic waste that you have. Then you can start producing a constant supply of high quality fertiliser with little effort.

### Compost worms

Compost worms are different to the earthworms that till the soil. They are active worms that thrive on organic matter, eating through their bodyweight daily. In the process they produce a high quality fertiliser, rich in humates and beneficial microbes. Humates help build soil, holding nutrients and moisture in the soil rather than letting them leach out, and making them available to plant roots and soil microbes. Most pathogenic microbes are destroyed in a worm's gut, including the common human pathogens. Any plant material infected by viruses, eg tomatoes and other solanums, should not go into a worm farm. Weed seeds will also survive in a worm farm – indeed worm castings are the ideal germinating medium for seeds.

### Kinds of compost worms

The common species used in worm farms are the red, tiger and blue wriggler. All are subtropical worms which prefer a temperature range in the twenties (Celsius). They require moisture, without being saturated, and protection from direct sunlight.

### What do they eat?

Any organic matter, other than citrus peel, onion and garlic, is suitable. Make sure that pesticide residues are minimal and that manures contain no worming agents. Powdered dolomite is the other ingredient you can sprinkle on as you add matter to the worm farm or if the contents go sour.

### A home for your wriggly friends

A worm farm needs to confine the worms and hold organic matter. It should hold moisture yet drain, be vermin proof, and allow easy access. The depth need only be 25-30 cm. Surface area (and feeding) will determine worm numbers and size. There are a number of commercially available worm farms, including "worm factory" and "can o worms". These have a number of compartments that stack vertically and allow ease of worm management and harvest of the castings. The liquid that drains from worm farms is valuable for fertilising plants. There are other commercial systems that rely on the worms moving horizontally to manage them and harvest castings. Both systems are easy to make from a variety of containers.

Styrofoam containers can be readily adapted for a stacking system. Baths are useful for a horizontal system. I use two halves of a drum (cut lengthwise) mounted on a metal frame, one above the other. The top one drains into the bottom, which drains into collecting vessels. The harvested "worm wee" is used constantly to fertilise pot plants and the garden. Flywire screens cover the tops protecting the worms from vermin. This is important if you are adding any meat, eggs or milk as rats, mice and flies will follow if not excluded. Shade is important, particularly in summer. Mine are housed under a grapevine with shade cloth over the screens.

### Setting up your worm farm

First put a bedding layer down. This can be compost or partly broken down organic matter and must drain freely. I usually use a 10 cm layer of semi-composted prunings then another 10 cm of compost. This is not spread evenly as the scraps go in the undulations. Water well, allowing a few hours for draining, then add worms.

### Harvesting castings

Harvest castings by hand (squishy on fingers). To concentrate the worms in one part of the farm, feed and add water in one corner only for a week or so. The worms will head for this corner and the rest of the farm can be dug out and piled into a cone shape on a flat tray. The worms, being not liking sunshine, will congregate at the bottom centre of the cone after an hour or so and the castings can be "skimmed off".

### Resources

Further reading or other research before starting is recommended. Books you may find at your local library include

- Allan Windust (1998) *Worms Downunder*, Allscape
- Allan Windust (1997) *Worms Garden For You*, Allscape (out of print but check your local library)
- Allan Windust (1997) *Worm Farming Made Simple-For The Professional*, Allscape
- David Murphy (1993) *Earthworms In Australia*, Hyland House
- Eric Wilson (2000) *Worm Farm Management: Practices, Principles, Procedures*, Kangaroo Press
- Amy Brown (1994) *Earthworms Unlimited*, Kangaroo Press

"Worm Digest" at [www.wormdigest.org/](http://www.wormdigest.org/) has loads of information on vermicomposting, including two page introductions for adults and for kids

# Sample forms and documents



# Sample forms and documents

These forms can be adapted for use in your community garden. They can be downloaded from the Growing Community website, <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx> and adapted to meet your needs.



# Community Garden Site Assessment Checklist

## Community mapping

What community and business groups and facilities are nearby?

- Churches, mosques, etc
- Schools
- Kindergartens
- Childcare centres
- Community and neighbourhood houses and centres
- Aged care facilities
- Neighbourhood watch groups
- Local environment groups
- Other community organisations.....
- Restaurants
- Business councils
- Garden stores
- Other businesses

## Who lives nearby?

- What are the age groups of people?
  - What are employment and unemployment levels?
  - Is housing public, community, private rental, owned?
  - What are people's cultural and linguistic backgrounds?
  - What is the crime rate in the area?
  - What are other special characteristics of the people in the area?
- Tip: Use local councils and Census data.

## Safety and security

- Is the site near community facilities (school, community centre, etc)?
- Is the site in view of houses, roads, shopping areas, etc?
- Is there graffiti or vandalism visible?
- Is there any lighting?
- Is there a neighbourhood watch group in the area?
- Is the site fenced?

## Landuse

What are the main landuses surrounding the garden site?

- Businesses (what?);.....
- Industry
- Parkland
- Major roads
- High density housing
- Medium density housing
- Low density housing
- Car parking
- What is the history of the land?

## Current land use

- Who currently uses the land?
- Do people walk through or use it as a shortcut?
- Rubbish dumped
- Illegal activities
- Children's play
- Sleep
- Other uses

## Plant knowledge

- What plants grow well in the area?
- Who are the experienced gardeners and seed savers in the neighbourhood?

## Things to look for at the garden site

### Size

- How big is the land?
- How much of the land is suitable for gardens?

### Land tenure

- Who owns the land?
- How is it owned?
- Are there zoning regulations in place? What do they allow and restrict?
- What are/ would be the leasing agreements, how long, cost etc?

### Sun, wind, soil

- What's the current ground cover? (grass, gravel...)
- What is the slope of the land?
- What plants (including weeds and trees) are already on site?
- What is the soil type?
- How many hours of sun does the land get in a day?
- Are there any large trees, buildings, etc blocking solar access?
- Is there a water source on site? (bore, tap...)
- How does water move through the site?
- What direction does wind come from?
- What do you notice about the wind? (strong etc)

Tip: Visit the site during or just after heavy rain to observe how water moves through the site, where it gathers, and how quickly it soaks into the soil.

### Structures

- Are there any buildings on site?
- Seating
- Shedding
- Walls
- Fences
- Paved areas
- Other structures

### Gardens

- What gardens, etc are already established?

### Services

- Is there electricity on site or easy to access?
- Phone
- Sewers, stormwater drains
- Is there public transport nearby?
- Is a place for bicycle parking
- Car parking space
- Are there major roads nearby?
- Are there barriers to pollution from traffic?

## What other features does the site have?

From *Growing Community: Starting and Nurturing Community Gardens*. May be reproduced freely for use in community gardens. May be downloaded from <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx>.

## Sample volunteer wanted notice

### Volunteer position available

**Role description: (name of position)**

Responsibilities/ tasks:

- 
- 
- 

**Skills or experience required or desirable:**

(skills, training, qualifications, experience, knowledge)

- 
- 
- 

Personal attributes required:

- 
- 
- 
- 

**Special requirements:**

(eg drivers licence, police check if working with children)

**Time frame and attendance requirements:**

- 
- 
- 

**Location of work:**

- 
- 
- 

**Travel involved:**

- 
- 
- 
- 

**Supervision of the position:**

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

**What benefits will the volunteer gain from this position?**

- 
- 
- 
- 
-

# Community Garden Volunteer Registration Form

All information will be kept confidential.

## Personal details

Name.....Gender.....Today's Date...../...../.....Address.....  
 ..... post code.....  
 Home phone.....Work/ mobile phone.....  
 Email address.....Date of birth...../...../.....  
 Relevant health or physical information (eg pre-existing injuries)?.....  
 .....  
 In case of emergency, please notify..... Phone..... Relationship to you.....

### What days and times are you available?

	Times
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	

### How often do you want to participate?

- Once or more a week
- Once a fortnight
- Once a month
- Special projects/events

### What activities would you like to be involved with at the Community Garden?

- Gardening
- Nursery
- Chickens
- Compost/ worm farm
- School groups
- Garden tours
- Facilitating workshops
- Administration/ officework
- Writing articles for newsletter
- Mail outs
- Promotion/ publicity/ media
- Stalls/ displays at events
- Organising events
- Research
- Arts projects
- Others .....

What are your reasons for volunteering?.....  
 .....

What do you want to gain from volunteering at the community garden? .....

What skills, knowledge, and experience could you contribute through volunteering? .....

Volunteers are encouraged to become members of the garden. Membership supports the garden and allows you to be part of the gardens decision making processes.

Membership costs \$\_\_\_ year for unwaged people, \$\_\_\_\_\_ waged. Would you like to join?

- Yes  No  Maybe later

From *Growing Community: Starting and Nurturing Community Gardens*, adapted from Northey Street City Farm's volunteer registration form. May be reproduced freely for use in community gardens. This form can be downloaded as a word document or pdf file from <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx> and adapted for use at your garden.

# Booking Form for School Group Visits to \_\_\_\_\_ Community Garden

Please complete form and post to \_\_\_\_\_ Community Garden, 16 Garden St, Adelaide 5000 or Fax to 8 \_\_\_\_\_ ; Phone (08) 8 \_\_\_\_\_ with any queries)

Date of Enquiry: ...../...../.....

Preferred Dates for Visit: ...../...../..... or ...../...../.....

School or Group Name: .....

Contact Person: ..... Position: .....

Phone: ..... Mobile..... Fax: .....

E-mail: .....

Postal Address: .....

..... postcode .....

Number of persons visiting: ..... Grade / Ages .....

Please note: Maximum total numbers in any one group visit is \_\_\_\_\_.

Time of arrival: ..... Time of departure .....

Subject of study / interest .....

Topic (please tick – see brochure for details):

Living Farm Life: Worms, Chooks, Herbs and Vegies .....

Fun at the Farm.....

Aboriginal Bushfood, Medicine and Culture.....

The Cycles of Life.....

Food, Diversity and Health.....

Feeding the World's People.....

Basic City Farm Tour.....

Other (please specify).....

## Office Use only

- Diary entry
- Confirmation letter, course material and maps sent  
...../...../.....(attach copy of letter)
- Price agreed (\$.....per person)
- Send invoice for .....Students @ .....each
- Include GST Yes / No
- Invoice sent ..... / ..... / .....
- Payment received ..... / ..... / .....
- Timetable for visit

From *Growing Community: Starting and Nurturing Community Gardens*. May be reproduced freely and adapted for use in community gardens.  
Available for download from <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx>.

## Community Garden Plot Application Form

There can only be one garden plot for each household. Priority may be given to applicants who live closest to the Garden, or who have the least alternative opportunity to garden. This application form must be completed in English, and returned to \_\_\_\_\_ Community Garden.

Before you apply make sure you satisfy the following criteria:

Live in \_\_\_\_\_ Local Council Area

Be prepared to pay an annual fee and contribute to communal upkeep of the gardens

Be prepared to make the most of a plot (there is a long waiting list of keen gardeners)

Given Names ..... Family Names .....

Address .....

..... Postcode .....

Telephone numbers:

home phone number ..... work phone number .....

mobile ..... email .....

Emergency contact:

Name ..... Relationship..... Phone number .....

Are you a pensioner or health care card holder?  Yes  No

First or preferred language..... Second preferred language? .....

What is your date of birth? ...../...../.....

How much space do you have to garden at home ? ..... metres, e.g. 6m x 4m

Do you have any prior gardening experience? .....

Do you have any special physical needs for your garden plot?  No  Yes - please provide details.....

When would you be able to attend garden working bees / meetings?

morning.....  afternoon .....  evening .....

Monday - Friday.....  Saturday .....  Sunday .....

I state that I live within the City of ..... area described above. There is no other community garden plot allocated to my household.

Signature ..... Date .....

From *Growing Community: Starting and Nurturing Community Gardens*, adapted from Collingwood Children's Farm Community Garden Application Form. May be reproduced freely for use in community gardens. Copies can be downloaded and adapted for use in your garden from <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx>.

# Community Garden Training Survey

## What would you like to learn more about?

Please tick 5 topics you'd like to receive training in

- Basic organic gardening
- Seed saving
- Propagating plants
- Dealing with pests and weeds
- Grafting
- Fruit trees
- Cooking with unusual herbs and vegies
- Permaculture
- Biodynamics
- Composting
- Worm farms
- Facilitating meetings
- Using power tools
- Supervising volunteers
- Leading garden tours
- Gardening with schools, children
- Mosaics, garden sculpture
- Basic carpentry
- Others (please list).....

## What do you already know?

<i>Please tick relevant boxes</i>	Some experience/ knowledge	Confident	Could lead or co-lead training
Basic organic gardening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seed saving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Propagating plants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing with pests and weeds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grafting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fruit trees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cooking with unusual herbs and vegies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Permaculture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Biodynamics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Composting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worm farms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facilitating meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using power tools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supervising volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leading garden tours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gardening with schools, children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mosaics, garden sculpture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Basic carpentry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others (please list on back of page)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Notes







## **Growing Community**

**Thinking about starting a community garden?**

**Wondering how you can use community gardening as part of your health, education or community development work?**

**Helping to keep a community garden growing?**

This booklet, and its companion website, were created to encourage the establishment of new community gardens, and to support existing community gardens. They have been designed to be relevant to community groups considering starting a community garden, professionals considering using community gardening as part of their programs, people who are asked to support community garden projects, and groups already running community gardens.

Additional resources, downloads and up-to-date links, as well as an electronic version of this booklet, are available at <http://www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx/>

## **Why Community Gardens?**

Community gardens:

- allow people to grow their own vegetables, fruit, herbs and flowers
- contribute to the creation of ecologically viable and socially just food systems
- are a convivial way of getting fresh air and exercise with no gym fees!
- foster community engagement and a culture of generosity, reciprocity and community self-reliance
- are great places to learn about gardening and share local and traditional knowledge
- preserve and improve the precious green spaces in urban environments
- develop innovative ways of living sustainably in the city
- provide a venue for community gatherings, cultural events, art projects, celebrations, workshops, and much more
- provide opportunities for cultural exchange and learning
- and some community gardens produce enough food to share surpluses and/or develop community enterprises.