



PENRITH

COMMUNITY GARDENS GUIDELINES

AUGUST 2015

PENRITH
CITY COUNCIL



SUSTAINABLE
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CONTACT: Penrith City Council's Sustainability Team on 02 4732 7983 or visit penrithcity.nsw.gov.au

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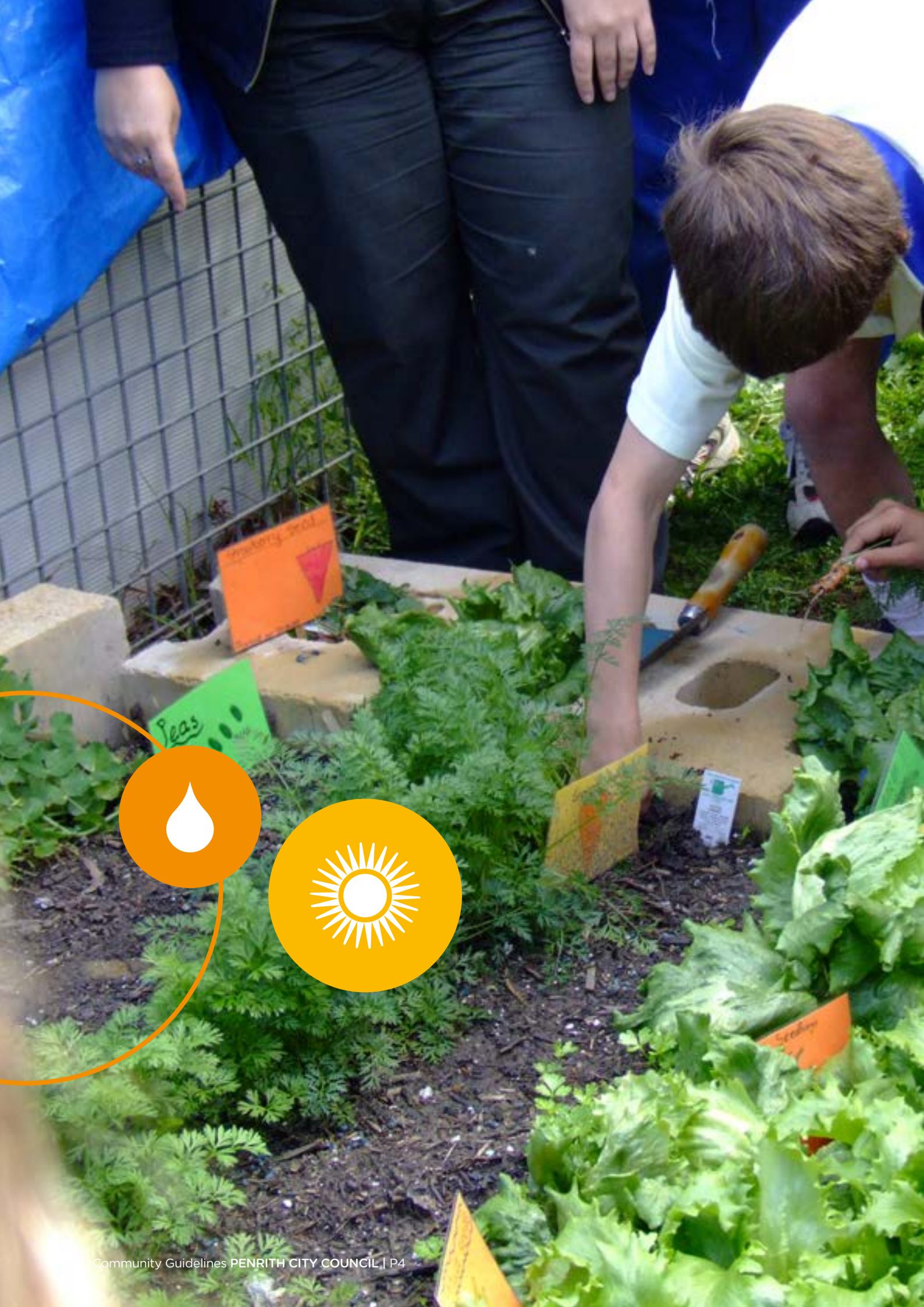
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: These guidelines draw heavily upon the 'Getting Started in Community Gardening' document developed by Faith Thomas and the Council of the City of Sydney.



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WELCOME



These Guidelines have been developed to support Penrith City Council's Community Gardens Policy. The Guidelines aim to assist community groups plan, design and establish a community garden on Council owned or managed land as well as provide suggestions on how to manage and maintain it in the long term. It is not intended to be prescriptive, but instead outlines the broad range of considerations that will contribute to the long term viability of your community garden.

GETTING STARTED

Developing a community garden is a big task; there is a lot of planning, design and approval work involved prior to implementation. It is important that you are aware of the process and timeframe from the outset to ensure your group can sustain their interest in seeing the project fully evolve (as the garden work will be ongoing).

Before you start, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is there enough interest and energy within the group to sustain the project in the long term?
- Is a community garden the most effective way to address the community's needs eg. social opportunities, health promotion, environmental improvement, food security or learning for sustainability?
- Would helping out with another garden or joining a gardening organisation be a better way to achieve your aims, while also strengthening and enhancing that garden or organisation?
- Would another form of 'gardening community' be more appropriate eg. gardening collectively in backyards or working with a bushcare group?

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

This first step towards creating a successful community garden is to undertake adequate research. This will help further your understanding of the concept of community gardening and provide an insight into the level of involvement that will be required from you and the group.

EXISTING COMMUNITY GARDENS

One of the best ways for you to learn how to develop a successful community garden is to research existing community gardens, see how they are run and borrow their good ideas to get your group off and running.

You may like to review plans for an established community garden, visit the garden to see the layout and make contact with organisers to discuss ideas. It's a good idea to keep a file of notes and photos of your research for the group's reference.

COMMUNITY DEMAND

Your group may think the community needs a community garden but what do the community think? Community gardens will only work in places where they are supported by the local community.

Ask yourselves, does our area really need this garden or are there other opportunities available? There may be existing community gardens located nearby that you could join. Visit Council's website at www.penrithcity.nsw.gov.au for a list of local community gardens.

Establish what existing recreation and community facilities are located in the area and if demand exists for further community based activities. Are there unmet needs that exist in your community such as bushcare, food security, social opportunities, health promotion, environmental improvement, or training, where you can assist?

For more information contact Council's Sustainability Team.

ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY GARDEN GROUP

Community gardens are hard work and demand time, energy and commitment. Establishing a community garden is a big task and a sense of community is crucial to the success of a community garden. To bring your community garden to life you will need the enthusiasm and commitment of a group of people working towards a common goal.

PLANNING

Your preparation up to this point has most likely brought about excitement within your group. It is important that you harness that buzz and energy as you go into the planning phase.

Establishment of community gardens on non-Council owned or managed land

Penrith Council supports the establishment of community gardens on community lands such as church grounds, schools and seniors housing. Garden groups are encouraged to contact Council during the planning of their garden to discuss their proposal as requirements can vary significantly depending on the location and zoning of the subject land. This will help to ensure that the group is aware of any requirements early in the process and that relevant advice and assistance can be provided.

Establishment of community gardens on Council owned or managed land

Council is there to help, and the earlier your group starts talking to Council the better. Ongoing discussions with Council will assist your group, and Council, to choose the most appropriate site for your community garden.

Initially, you might wish to make contact with Council's Sustainability Team to discuss potential site/s and introduce your group. Council will need to consult with other departments to find out whether there are any problems with the potential site/s and will advise the group of the result. If the group is happy with the potential site they can fill in the Expression of Interest Form (refer to appendix) with details of their group and detail of a basic site assessment (See page 9 for Council's process).



COUNCIL PROCESS

Process for starting a new
garden on Council owned
or managed land



COUNCIL CONSIDERATIONS

Council must consider many factors when determining the right site for your garden project, these may include but are not limited to: The category of the land in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*; consistency of the land use with the objectives of the adopted plan of management for the site; available services and functions; compatibility with surrounding land uses; and community demand.

COMMUNITY GARDEN GROUPS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The community garden must be managed and operated in a way that doesn't have a negative impact on the amenity, health or safety of the surrounding community or the natural environment.

Community garden groups will be responsible for maintaining the garden so that the health and safety of the surrounding community is not adversely impacted. Community garden groups are responsible for ensuring that:

- They cooperate and manage effective relationships with the surrounding neighbourhood, partnering organisations and other gardeners.
 - Visitors are welcomed to the garden.
- Decision making is democratic, transparent and inclusive.
 - They have an operating Code of Conduct which all members must agree to abide by, including conflict resolution procedures.
- There are appropriate work health and safety plans and systems in place, including;
 - Lawn areas are regularly mowed and garden beds kept tidy.
 - Any water leaving the garden is not contaminated by sediment, fertiliser, manure or excessive organic matter that might pollute waterways.
 - Noise levels within the garden are maintained at a level that is not disturbing to neighbours.
 - Compost, worm farming systems and fertilisers are maintained so as not to attract vermin or produce unpleasant odours.
 - Rainwater harvesting systems are maintained to ensure water is of a high quality and doesn't create mosquito problems.
 - Any materials delivered to or stored at the garden are maintained so as not to create an unpleasant environment for other residents and the community.
 - Pesticide and fungicide chemicals are not to be used on plant materials, particularly those grown for human consumption.
- There is a nominated person to act as a liaison with Council.
 - They provide a copy of the minutes, including financial report from the Group's Annual General Meeting.

Council may revoke the licence agreement for the use of the land where these responsibilities and other requirements of the Policy and Guidelines are not deemed to be satisfactorily met.

RIGHTS OF COMMUNITY GARDEN GROUPS

Community garden groups have the right to be consulted with regard to any decision that may affect the project and to be advised by Council in a timely manner of any policy changes that impact on them; be treated with respect by other gardeners and partnering organisations; and also be able to negotiate a secure and reasonable agreement with Council.

SITE ASSESSMENT

In assessing the suitability of your site for a new community garden the following points should be taken into consideration:

INTEREST LEVELS: Community garden groups will require a minimum of 8 people, aged 18 and over, in order to ensure that the garden is sustainable and will be maintained to an appropriate standard.

LOCATION: Sites classified as 'Community Land' under the *Local Government Act 1993* are most likely to be appropriate. These sites are usually established for community use such as parks, open spaces, and community centres. Priority will be given to sites located in high density areas.

SAFETY: Sites should have no major safety or health concerns and have good passive surveillance (eg. be easily seen from nearby houses or retail areas).

ACCESSIBILITY: Sites should be accessible for a range of user groups. Sites should be located close to public transport where possible, allow access for people with disabilities, have vehicle access (eg. for delivery of mulch and soil) and accommodate groups wanting to visit the garden through on-street parking.

SOLAR ACCESS: Sites need to be suitable for growing plant materials and receive full sunlight, ideally for at least 5-6 hours per day.

SIZE: Sites which are large enough to accommodate garden beds (including communal beds), composting systems, rainwater tanks and seating areas.

WATER: Sites with easy access to a water supply or buildings nearby from which rainwater can be collected.

SOIL CONTAMINATION: Sites will need to be assessed for soil contamination. If contamination is an issue then advice will need to be sought from experts on whether the site is suitable for the intended purpose.

FENCING: Sites may need to be adequately fenced to protect the garden and equipment from vandalism and theft.

STORAGE FACILITIES: Sites should have adequate storage provisions for equipment storage or have the capacity to install adequate secure storage.



PARTNERSHIPS AND PROMOTION

At this point it's a good idea to encourage broader community interest in your project. This will increase community involvement and group membership. The earlier the community becomes involved in the project, the more ownership they will have over the garden which increases the potential for the garden's ongoing success.

COMMUNITY GARDEN GROUP'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

You can secure neighbourhood support by consulting with neighbours and those you think may be affected by the proposed garden by door knocking, distributing letters to local residents or organising an information session.

You can use the information session to introduce your group's ideas to the community. You could report on what you have achieved so far; what direction you are looking to proceed in; communicate your vision for the project; and show examples of established gardens to give people an idea of what you are trying to achieve.

You can also publicise your project through flyers, posters, through social media and local media such as the radio or newspaper or by contacting other community groups directly to discuss your ideas and plans.

Throughout this process get names and contact details of everyone who wants to be involved. This will enable you to keep everyone with an interest in your project informed of the group's progress. Ongoing collaboration and communication between your community garden group, the broader community and Council will be vital throughout the process to ensure support.

Keep in mind that some members of the community may have concerns about your community garden. Remember that a community garden is a place for the community, and their ideas need to be heard and considered. In the long term you will need the support of everyone in the community in order to get the best possible outcomes.

As part of this process you may like to approach local community groups to form partnerships to assist your project such as:

- Volunteer organisations to gain more workers and provide community activities for disadvantaged sectors of the community;
- Education establishments to help with training, education and workshops;
- Established community gardens that can provide knowledge, experience and advice.

DEVELOPING YOUR PROPOSAL

If the Expression Of Interest (EOI) is supported by Council, the group will meet with Council to discuss the application process as well as requirements including public liability insurance, incorporation and licencing. The Community Garden Application requires a substantial amount of information on creating your community garden such as a site plan and management plan, which will take planning and time to complete. This may seem like a lot of work, however, the most successful community garden projects are those where the initiating group takes the time to undertake thorough planning and design. Remember that Council is there for ongoing advice during your application development so keep in touch.



DESIGNING YOUR COMMUNITY GARDEN

It's a good idea to actively involve as many people as possible in the garden design process. This will ensure that everyone's ideas are heard and the resulting plan will be something everyone can 'own' and relate to. The final plan will need to be submitted to Council as part of your application.

If required, get some professional assistance in the production of the final design. An accurate and attractive site plan is inspiring to new members and helps the community see your group's vision. Remember that the garden design will continue to evolve as you implement the project. Be flexible to this and allow input from new group members who may not have been part of the initial design process.

GARDEN LAYOUT

The design should be a reflection of the people who will use the garden. It's a good idea to use the information you gathered during your site assessment to inform your garden layout. Things to be considered when designing your garden may include:

SOCIABILITY: Your garden is a community space, and as such should be inviting to all kinds of social interaction. Think about incorporating places to sit and chat or have a cup of tea; or sheltered areas for morning tea and/or lunch breaks.

ENGAGEMENT OF THE SENSES: Think about how you can make your garden an engaging place. Consider using scented plants and bright colours. A garden designed to engage the senses will be a garden people want to spend time in. It will also enable your garden to involve a wider cross section of the community including children and sight impaired.

LEARNING: Education is an important component of a community garden. Think about how this can be accommodated. Design outdoor learning areas and paths with nodes that allow a group to pause for discussion and create opportunities for demonstrations.

SAFETY: It's important that visitors and users of your community garden feel and are safe. Think about sight lines, avoid creating enclosed or hidden spaces and incorporate seating to encourage people to spend time in the garden.

BUILDING AND STRUCTURES

Think about what structures you will require in your garden. You may want a shelter with seating where people can sit and be protected from the elements and where you can hold meetings and workshops. Other structures which may be considered include: tool shed, educational signage, rainwater tank and wind breaks.

Certain structures are exempt development under *State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007*, which means your group won't need development approval. However, you will need Council approval through your licence agreement and as such, the size, location and number of these structures are required to be shown on the site plan and will form part of the licence conditions.

DESIGNING YOUR COMMUNITY GARDEN CONTINUED

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Your community garden promotes sustainable living and as such it's important that you design sustainability into your project at this early stage. There are many things that you can do to make your garden more sustainable including:

WATER MANAGEMENT: Maximise opportunities for water harvesting eg. rainwater tank and drip irrigation, while reducing run-off to the stormwater system. On sloped sites, use swales, terraces or beds that run along the contour of the slope to catch water.

SOLAR ACCESS: Plantings and the positioning of buildings should not block northerly and easterly sun. To achieve maximum benefit from the sun, place the shortest elements on the eastern side and the tallest elements on the western.

WINDBREAKS: Plantings of native (or exotics adapted to dry conditions) trees and shrubs on the southern and western edges will protect the garden and reduce evaporation of soil moisture.

SOIL FERTILITY: Design for crop rotation. This involves moving different types of plants through the garden beds in sequence so as not to exhaust the soil of nutrients and to help in the management of plant diseases. Consider growing organic material, such as legume species, you need for mulch and composting on-site. Legumes produce biomass and fix nitrogen in the soil for other plants to use.

MATERIALS: Gardeners are encouraged to use environmentally friendly, recycled materials.

WASTE: Maximise the opportunities for on-site management of organic waste generated by the garden, specifically compost and worm farming systems.

CONTROL OF GARDEN PESTS: No toxic chemicals for pests and weeds are to be used in community gardens. Gardeners should consider using safe environmentally friendly products such as garlic or rhubarb sprays.

COMPANION PLANTING: Companion planting creates a diversity of species within the garden. Carefully arranged plants assist each other's growth by reducing pest numbers and creating favourable growing conditions.

ACCESSIBLE DESIGN

There are a number of ways in which gardening can be made more accessible for people with mobility difficulties. Where possible, pathways should be wide enough for wheelchairs and prams and if raised beds are incorporated they should be made narrow enough for gardeners to reach the centre without strain. You may also like to consider vertical gardening which is normally designed using a wall or could involve hanging structures.

ANIMALS

Animals are not permitted on-site. Assistance animals should only be present on-site where there is adequate supervision to ensure the welfare of the animal and reduce any nuisance they may cause to other garden users and neighbours. All assistance animal dogs should be on a lead at all times. Proof that the animal is an 'assistance animal' may be required eg. it is registered. All animal droppings must be picked up immediately and disposed of appropriately off-site and not in compost bins on-site.

COMMUNITY GARDEN MANAGEMENT PLAN

The development of systems for the management of each aspect of your project is essential. These systems include the development of policies and procedures for the management of community participation, maintenance, administration, ongoing infrastructure development and garden safety. Although this takes time, it can be the foundation upon which the success or failure of your project hinges.

As part of your application your group will be required to prepare a Community Garden Management Plan. A management plan template that can be used by the group as a thinking tool or guide in writing your management plan and assist in the effective management of the community garden and is available on our website. The following points provide more information on points raised in the template.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

A community garden without well-developed systems of internal organisation may not last long, because without clearly defined structures, responsibility tends to rest unduly on the shoulders of a few people who quickly burn out and become discouraged. The first step in developing a management structure is to formalise your group.

FORMING A COMMITTEE: A core group, ideally with a range of skills and experience, should be gathered to form the garden management committee. This group, of at least 8 people, work collaboratively to keep the project on track and ensure that responsibility does not rest unduly upon the shoulders of one or two people. Be strategic and invite people to sit on your committee who have the leadership skills to take the project forward.

Effective committees:

- Work in support of the garden's aims, objectives, and vision;
- Include representation from a range of stakeholders;
- Are well informed about the workings and goings-on of the garden;
- Have good support from the community garden as a whole;
- Target key people with key interests, skills and networks to fill roles;

- Rely on agreed meeting and decision-making procedures;
- Have friendly, efficient, well facilitated meetings;
- Provide training and/or mentoring for committee members; and
- Have effective communication between committee and gardeners.

Adapted from the Community Gardening in South Australia Resource Kit

INCORPORATION OR AUSPICING OF

THE GARDEN GROUP: As part of the licence agreement, garden groups utilising Council owned or managed land are required to apply to the NSW Office of Fair Trading to become incorporated associations. This arrangement provides the group with flexibility in the management of funds and enables them to open a bank account, obtain public liability insurance cover and apply for government grants.

The group may arrange to be auspiced by an already incorporated body such as a non-government organisation, to ensure that it meets all legal, financial and insurance requirements eg. public liability insurance. More information on auspicing can be found on the *Not-for-profit law information hub*.

INSURANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT: It's a good idea to talk to other community garden groups about insurance cover: what level of cover do they have, how much does it cost, and what level of service do they receive? Community gardens are a unique land use that don't fit easily into established insurance categories. This can lead to significant variations in the cost of premiums, so shop around. There are some insurance companies that specialise in coverage for community groups such as the *Council of Social Service of New South Wales (NCOSS)*.

It is essential that community garden groups are aware of the risks associated with undertaking a publicly accessible community garden project. Each group has a duty of care to the community who access the garden areas and must take out adequate public liability insurance cover of at least \$10 million. Public liability insurance covers legal liability in the case of a person injuring themselves in the garden and seeking damages in court. It is recognised that public liability insurance has an associated cost, and may not be easily accessible to small community groups. Options for obtaining insurance cover include:

- The group may be auspiced by another organisation or agency and as a project of that organisation may be covered by their insurance.
- The group collect fees from its members to cover the cost of insurance.
- The group becomes affiliated with Garden Clubs of Australia Inc which may allow them to access the Club's Master Insurance Scheme at a competitive rate.

POLICY: Effective management of your community garden is crucial to its success. There are some important issues you may like to consider regarding management of the garden at this early stage such as:

- Code of conduct and conflict resolution: A code of conduct defines what is, and is not, acceptable behaviour within the community garden. In some gardens the code of conduct has been an important tool for resolving conflict where one or more members are causing difficulty due to their differing objectives. Honestly and openly address the potential for conflict as a group and discuss what you will do when it arises. Your conflict resolution process should look at:
 - Ensuring respectful communication between those involved;
 - Who, both internally and externally, will mediate serious conflict? and
 - What will be the process for addressing personal grievances?

A code of conduct is prescriptive, so keep it brief and avoid creating too many rules and regulations. Check with other gardening groups to get an idea of what should be included.

- Constitution: In contrast to a code of conduct, a constitution is a longer and more formal document with legal status. It's a requirement for community gardens that become incorporated associations and is also useful for any garden group that has begun to develop more complex projects and procedures, as it formalises the fundamental principles and tenants that the group abide by.
- Decision making process: Clear guidelines may be set for how the group will make decisions. This may include where the group meets, whether a quorum is needed and voting arrangements. This is also known as terms of reference.
- Communication: Members of the community garden and the broader community will want to stay informed on decisions and activities occurring. You may wish to detail how the group will communicate with internal and external stakeholders.

COMMUNITY GARDEN MANAGEMENT PLAN CONTINUED

BUDGETING AND FUNDING

Community gardens cost money to construct and maintain. The amount required varies dramatically across gardens according to their size, scale of activities and the skill base and volunteer time of their members. Good financial planning will help to provide more stability and security for your garden. It will be necessary to open a bank account in order to manage the group's funds. When drawing up the budget for your project, consider all associated design and construction costs, set up costs and ongoing maintenance costs, which may include but is not limited to:

- Fees to become an incorporated entity
- Public liability insurance
- Construction materials and fencing
- Plants and mulch
- Services eg. water
- Tools and equipment.

At some point you will need to consider how to raise the funds required to get your garden up and running and to keep it thriving. There are a number of options you can use for funding a community garden including:

MEMBERSHIP FEES: You may want to charge membership fees to help fund your garden. It's a good idea to set your fees in relation to your garden costs. Set yourselves a goal for the proportion of the gardening running costs that your membership fees will meet. It's recommended that you set your

membership fees at a realistic level so you get some income from those who are prepared and able to pay, and offer assistance to those in real hardship. Some alternatives to fixed fees are:

- Offering a range of ways to pay, eg. a monthly rate
- Offering discounts if members provide volunteering services
- Have different rates for families, individuals and pensioners.

SPONSORSHIP OR DONATIONS: Consider negotiating ongoing discounts with local businesses such as garden suppliers, hardware stores and nurseries. It's important to adequately promote sponsors to encourage ongoing support.

GRANTS: Attracting grant funding for your garden can be another useful way of covering costs, particularly those associated with the initial construction of the garden. Community gardens provide a diverse range of social and environmental benefits which make them eligible for a wide variety of local, state and federal grants. Grants are usually available via a competitive application process and are generally provided as one-off, time-limited funding tied to the delivery of specific activities and outcomes. Council recommends that the group enters into their licence agreement with Council prior to applying for grants.

For further information on obtaining grants visit:

- Our Community Group
- Penrith City Council - penrithcity.nsw.gov.au
- Community Builders

ONGOING MANAGEMENT

Effective management of the community garden is crucial to its success. Important issues to consider regarding management of the garden include maintenance, health and safety, and amenity.

MAINTENANCE: Maintaining the garden in an attractive, safe and functional manner is an important aspect of managing a community garden. It will also make the garden appealing to visitors, which may attract new members. Ideas to ensure all tasks are taken care of in the garden include:

- Roster for specific tasks;
- Log book for recording tasks undertaken – this shows clearly who is doing the work;
- Allocation of specific roles and responsibilities;
- Work groups for specific tasks; and
- Regular work days accompanied by social activities such as a BBQ.

AMENITY: The garden must not adversely affect the community and should take measures to reduce amenity issues to neighbours. To reduce possible amenity issues to neighbours the following should be considered:

- **Appearance:** Try to make sure your garden is visually attractive. This will be of benefit to the group when trying to attract new members. Locate messy parts of the garden such as the tool shed or composting areas away from visually prominent areas.
- **Odour:** Locate any substance such as compost and manure, which may cause odours, away from public areas or neighbouring properties.
- **Noise:** Try to minimise the effect noise has on the amenity of neighbours. It's a good idea to restrict operation of tools that emit noise to days and times when they have least impact on neighbours.

HEALTH AND SAFETY: Don't underestimate the potential for serious injury in a community garden. By anticipating problems before they occur, and implementing systems to avoid or minimise them, you will protect both the community from injury and your project from costly and potentially damaging allegations of negligence.

Conduct a thorough risk assessment which considers anything that has the potential to cause injury, and how you can eliminate or minimise the risk of this occurring. Some common hazards that might be included are:

- Poisonous or potentially allergy causing plants;
- Dangerous materials eg. barbed wire;
- Poisons and pesticides;
- Use of sharp or dangerous tools;
- Trip hazards;
- Manual handling and heavy loads including the use of wheelbarrows;
- Sharp or dangerous edges;
- Use of soils and manure;
- Exposure to the elements eg. sun protection;
- The impact you may have on the environment; and
- Any other issue that may cause harm to users.

Once you have identified how you intend to eliminate or reduce the risk it's a good idea to document any procedures or methods so that other garden users can be adequately informed. In particular, training in the use of tools, materials and chemicals will need to occur. There are examples of fact sheets addressing these issues available from the *Australian City Farm and Community Garden Network*.

Visitors and members will need to understand the procedures you have in place in relation to risk management. It is advised that you have an induction process which includes a health and safety training session. First aid kits should be easily located within the site and a log should be kept of all accidents and incidents that occur.

LICENCE AGREEMENT & APPLICATION

LICENCE AGREEMENT

You have finished planning the physical, organisational and social components of your garden and are ready to submit your application, which includes the group's Community Gardens Management Plan and site plan, to Council for assessment. This is the final step in the application process.

A licence agreement must be signed between Penrith City Council and the community gardens group for the purpose of establishing, operating and maintaining a community garden on Council owned or managed land. The licence agreement will also contain conditions for the use of the site.

At the initial set up of a new garden, a licence will be granted for 12 months with an option of a four year agreement after this period. All community gardens must operate on a not-for-profit basis.

A licence with the group could be revoked or not renewed if:

- The group disbands or ceases to function;
- The garden is not maintained or becomes unsafe for public access; and
- Appropriate insurance cover is not maintained.

Every year the group will be required to supply Council with a copy of their minutes, including financial report, from their Annual General Meeting.

SUBMIT APPLICATION

It is recommended that you contact Council's Sustainability Team to arrange a pre-lodgement meeting prior to submitting your application. At this meeting Council staff will review your application including your Community Gardens Management Plan and site plan, and determine whether your application is complete and ready for assessment. This meeting assists in ensuring application processing times are as fast as possible. Following this meeting you can make any amendments or improvements, if necessary and submit your completed application.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Now you can take a much deserved rest while Council assesses your application. Your application will be assessed by a review panel containing representatives from a range of Council departments. Council will use the Community Gardens Policy and Guidelines to assist in assessing your Community Gardens Management Plan and site plan to determine whether the application is supported.

If the application is supported, a report will go to Council asking them to endorse the proposed licence agreement. After endorsement, the licence is required by the *Local Government Act 1993* to be advertised for 28 days. During this time Council is required to:

- Give public notice of the proposal;
- Place a notice of the proposal on the land;
- Notify owners adjoining the land; and
- Notify persons living in the vicinity of the land if the Council believes that the land "is the primary focus of the person's enjoyment of community land" (eg by letterbox drop).

Unfortunately, if submissions are received in response to the advertisement, Council is required to report the submissions to Council for their determination, which will add time to the approval process.

ISSUING OF LICENCE AGREEMENT

Once Council has considered any feedback, the application will be determined. If successful, Council staff will meet with the group to develop a licence agreement. In the first instance the licence will be granted for 12 months with an option of a 4 year agreement after this period. The licence agreement will include conditions relevant to:

- Public liability insurance;
- Incorporation or auspicing under another organisation;
- Minimising negative effects on neighbours;
- Ensuring no contamination of water;
- Ensuring no vermin are on-site;
- Maintaining control of noxious and garden weeds and pests;
- Maintaining the appearance of the site;
- Ensuring sustainable practices are employed;
- Ensuring ongoing health and safety measures to minimise any risks; and
- Decommissioning the garden in the event of the group's disbandment.



IMPLEMENTATION

Congratulations! After all your hard work you can put down your pen and pick up your shovel! This stage will see your community garden come to life.

CONSTRUCTION

The construction phase is a great way to establish a sense of belonging to the site and attracting new members to the community garden group. During this phase you can publicise the garden through appropriate media sources, don't forget to contact Council to see how we can assist. Take on manageable tasks with sustainable outcomes, such as planting fruit trees and constructing compost bays, these will survive periods of inactivity. Celebrate your successes and maintain enthusiasm during this initial stage of hard work and occasional setback. Be patient. Persevere. Build social capital.

PUBLIC ACCESS

The garden should be easily accessed by the public when open. Make visitors feel welcome by having clear signs, information sheets and explanatory displays so they can easily navigate the garden. Continue to publicise your garden and hold regular events and maintain contact with local media outlets to encourage new members.

USE OF THE GARDEN AS A DEMONSTRATION SITE

Council's aim is to promote the development of community gardens as demonstration sites for sustainable living, that can be utilised for educational and community activities. Where community gardens are established on land owned by Council, Council retains the right to use the garden as a demonstration site for community education activities such as tours and workshops. Council will work cooperatively with the group to ensure that organised activities do not conflict with other garden use, such as regular working bees.



SOCIAL & ORGANISATIONAL SYSTEMS

Unfortunately, community garden projects aren't just about gardening. There are a few crucial administrative matters that will need to be attended to.

KEEPING RECORDS

Documentation of the project is very important, both to promote the garden's progress and to obtain and keep funding. Maintain records of member numbers, volunteer hours and the demographics of those involved. Regularly take photographs of the project's progress and significant events for use in promotional material and grant applications.

HANDLING MONEY

Keep careful records of all income and expenditure to avoid confusion later on. Always obtain a receipt for anything you purchase. This is especially important if you are spending money from a grant that will need to be reported on to a funding body.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

Developing effective systems of communication within the garden group is essential to maintain a spirit of inclusiveness and ensure that everyone's voice is heard. Some of the methods that other gardens have developed for communicating amongst themselves may prove useful to your project:

- Newsletters and/or an email discussion list;
- Noticeboards or blackboards for listing events, news and task lists;
- Social media eg. Facebook;
- A logbook or garden diary that volunteers fill in when they visit, noting what they did and anything else out of the ordinary that they observed; and
- Regular meetings.

Internal communication will be vastly improved if a little effort is put into developing a sense of community within the group. Community building can be facilitated by organising a range of events that involve:

- Socialising together – any opportunity to get to know each other, share ideas, chat and build friendships;
- Celebrating together – seasonal festivals, birthdays or simply the group's achievements so far;
- Cooking and eating together – BBQs, shared picnics, morning teas, harvest feasts, shared produce; and
- Working together – regular working bees as well as one-off projects.

Remember that a community is made up of a variety of unique individuals who do not always agree or hold the same values. This can be frustrating at times but also provides a wealth of opportunities for sharing skills, experience and knowledge. If you value equally the needs of all members and provide a framework where everyone's voice can be heard, you will find that diversity is a great asset, enriching the community garden and everyone who is involved.

ATTRACTING NEW MEMBERS

In order to maintain the long-term interest of a visitor to your garden, you need to make them feel welcome and ensure they understand what the project is about. Take the time to sit down and chat. Answer any questions they might have and explain how they can get involved.

Have a brochure explaining the garden's aims and objectives available to give to visitors and, as the garden develops, erect attractive project and interpretive signage that makes your vision clear to visitors from all walks of life. Graphical signage is important for children as well as those who don't read much English.

If you have a clear calendar of work days and events, this gives you a reason to invite people to come back. It also helps to have a clearly defined structure of roles and responsibilities, or work groups, that you can invite the visitor to participate in. For example, over coffee you might discover that a visitor works in marketing, a skill that perfectly fits the needs of the garden promotions team.

Let visitors know that the garden is owned by the community and is open to ideas and feedback from everyone. Illustrate this by providing a box for visitor comments and take these comments seriously.

ORIENTATING AND EDUCATING NEW MEMBERS:

If you want people to stick around you need to develop a process for including them, familiarising them with your project and making them feel they are a valuable member of the group. Conducting a volunteer induction process is therefore essential, ensuring that all new volunteers are aware of:

- Their rights and responsibilities;
- Worker health and safety;
- Training opportunities; and
- Garden policies and procedures.

Retaining volunteers is about matching their skills with a role that makes them feel valued and where they are achieving their own aims and objectives. This means taking the time to get to know the volunteer and finding out what they have to offer, and in what way they can best share their skills and experience.

Ask the volunteer what they hope to achieve by participating in the project. A volunteer application form can be used to ascertain the skills, experience and interest each volunteer brings to the project and what they hope to achieve. See volunteer involvement as a fair exchange, acknowledge and support volunteers, and ensure they are getting something of value from the experience.

Appointing someone with good interpersonal skills as a volunteer co-ordinator is a very good strategy for maintaining volunteer involvement in the long-term.

WRITTEN GUIDELINES FOR NEW MEMBERS: An information package containing fact-sheets, important policies and procedures, contact telephone numbers, the garden code of conduct and other details is an important aspect of engaging new volunteers. It ensures they are able to fully participate in the activities of the garden, makes them feel included and informed and prevents misunderstanding and conflict that might otherwise crop up at a later date.

SOCIAL & ORGANISATIONAL SYSTEMS CONTINUED

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING:

Because people come to community gardens with a wide range of skills and experience, they are the perfect environment for informal peer-based learning to occur. Being aware of this process and facilitating it can be as simple as providing opportunities for gardeners to chat and socialise together. Other ideas and strategies are outlined below.

PRINTED AND VIDEO RESOURCES: Fact-sheets outlining basic organic gardening are an easy way to introduce new gardeners to a range of skills. To supplement this, a small library of well-chosen books, DVDs and magazines is also useful, as are planting guides and posters.

MENTORING: Encourage leadership and enhance learning by providing opportunities for skilled gardeners to mentor new ones. As these mentors become more skilled they may expand their focus to become educators within the wider community.

WORKSHOPS: Hosting skill-sharing workshops at the garden is another way of facilitating learning. Workshops can be presented by skilled garden members or you can bring in an expert to build capacity within the group. Make sure all group members have a say in what skills they feel need to be developed. Opening up workshops to the community can raise funds, attract new membership and spread the good word on sustainable living.

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Once you have established your community garden it is a good idea to evaluate your project annually in accordance with your Community Gardens Management Plan to understand the success and failures of your garden and see if you are still on track. If necessary, you can then undertake a review of any existing policies or make improvements.

PROJECT EVALUATION: Now and then it is important to sit down as a group and look at your project to assess whether or not you are achieving what you set out to achieve. Evaluation helps you see how far you've come, can show you where potential sources of conflict lie and is also useful as a means of leveraging funding and publicity for your project.

- What are we trying to do here? Does it work?
- Is this what we set out to achieve?
- What is its value?
- What has it 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?

Adapted from the Community Gardening in South Australia Resource Kit

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

A community is a network, a social ecology, and community gardens are very good at building this network through the development of collaborative and mutually beneficial partnerships.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: There are many ways to let the community know about and get involved in your project. Some promotional activities to try include:

- On-site signage – clear, welcoming and attractive, explaining what the garden is about, when it's open and contact details;
- A brochure – detailing the project vision and how people can get involved. Ensure it's distributed widely within your local area;
- T-shirts or hats – to wear in the garden and at events;
- Community events and celebrations – these can give you coverage in the local media and showcase the success of your project;
- A website – website space is available to promote your community garden and tell people about how it works at the Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network. You should also list your garden at the Community Foods Organisation and Council's Community Directory;
- An information stall – for community festivals and market days; and
- A publicity officer – someone with publicity or marketing skills is ideal.

VANDALISM: Encouraging involvement and a sense of ownership within the local community will minimise problems of vandalism. Welcome and engage those who might be potential vandals and actively avoid excluding anyone; even non-gardeners can still enjoy the space for relaxation or social interaction. The following hints may also prove useful:

- Provide supportive neighbours with phone numbers they can call if they see something suspicious;
- Ensure garden signage lets people know that the garden has been developed for and by the community;
- Liaise with schools and youth groups to develop activities in the garden that children and young people will enjoy; and
- Use spiky plants and vines on walls and fences that might otherwise invite graffiti.

Adapted from the Community Gardening in South Australia Resource Kit



B/ROOT
\$ 3 —
allots
1.50

D/CARROT
3 for 1
\$ 5 —

Rhubarb
\$ 3
Silverbeet
\$ 2 —

Fresh is best
CELERY
HYDRO VAC

GLOSSARY

AUSPICING: To auspice means to provide support, sponsorship or guidance. An auspice agreement is an agreement where one organisation agrees to enter into an agreement on behalf of a second group. This is often a funding agreement, but can be a lease or insurance.

BIOMASS: Organic material, both living and no longer living, in a specific environment.

BUSHCARE: Is a community based volunteer program where bushcare volunteers help regenerate and preserve bushland.

CODE OF CONDUCT: A document designed to guide the behaviour of an organisation's members.

COMMUNITY GARDEN: Not-for-profit, community managed spaces that provide an opportunity for food production and other gardening activities, in an inclusive community based setting, for the benefit of members in the local community.

CONSTITUTION: An official document setting out the rules and principles governing management of an organisation. It is required of all organisations seeking to become incorporated associations.

CONTOUR: An imaginary line on the surface of the earth, or drawn on a topographic map, connecting points of the same elevation above sea level.

FOOD SECURITY: Exists when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.

INCORPORATED ASSOCIATION: A legal entity with certain rights and responsibilities under Australian law. It allows an organisation to do such things as obtain insurance without risk to individual members.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: An elected group comprising president, vice president, treasurer, secretary and public officer, as well as several ordinary members. Establishment of a management committee is required of organisations seeking to become incorporated associations.

MANAGEMENT PLAN: A detailed document outlining exactly what the group hopes to achieve and how it intends to do so.

PLAN OF MANAGEMENT: A plan of management adopted by a council under Division 2 of Part 2 of Chapter 6 of the *Local Government Act 1993* and in force in relation to an area of public land.

PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE: Insurance to cover the cost of accidental injury or property damage to garden visitors. It protects the organisation if a member of the public sues them for negligence.

QUOROM: The minimum number of a group or organisation that must be present at any of its meetings to make the proceedings of the meet valid.

SWALE: In this context a man-made depression along the contour designed to prevent rainwater running off the site. It is useful to increase passive irrigation and to avoid stormwater pollution.

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