Sydney2030/Green/Global/Connected

CITY OF SYDNEY

Community Garden Guidelines

A guide to assist groups to develop, implement and maintain a successful community garden

February 2016

city of villages

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01 Lord Mayor's message

Community and verge gardens are part of our Sustainable Sydney 2030 program to reduce our city's ecological footprint. The gardens are managed by residents and they contribute to the health and wellbeing of whole neighbourhoods – by growing organic flowers, fruit and vegetables, teaching the community and fostering friendships.

In 2010 Council adopted the Community Garden Policy to help the community create local community gardens. Since developing the policy the City has established eight new gardens across the local government area.

The *Community Garden Guidelines* (*Getting Started* guidelines) provide gardening groups with everything they need to know about setting up and running a community garden in the City of Sydney.

"It is fantastic that local residents are embracing sustainable living in the heart of the city and sharing the experience with others. Our city's community gardens are a great way for people to work together to green our city and grow their own produce."

Clover Moore.

Lord Mayor Clover Moore

02 Welcome

Community gardening is becoming more popular worldwide with the growing awareness of food security and climate change, and as a way to encourage a healthier lifestyle within the local community.

These guidelines contain everything you need to know about setting up and running a community garden within the City of Sydney. They are based on the City's knowledge of the practices of successful community gardens throughout the city.

Community gardens in the city

Community gardens are a unique form of open space that is self-managed by the community primarily for the production of food, and to contribute to a sustainable urban environment. There are currently 23 gardens across the City of Sydney Local Government Area: 19 community gardens, three footpath verge gardens and one community composting site. By supporting community gardens the City of Sydney promotes environmental education and sustainable production of food, and provides opportunities for social and community development.

Five components of a successful community garden

There are five essential components for a successful community garden, which are summarised below and explained in more detail throughout the guidelines.

People. Your group will need people with a range of skills in gardening, administration and communication. You will need the support of neighbours and the local community to ensure success and minimise vandalism.

Site. Your site will need to be large enough for garden beds, composting systems, and a tool shed. It should have good sunlight, available water, and easy access for pedestrians and deliveries.

Style. The size of the site will determine the style of garden. The City encourages groups to have a communal garden to allow more people to participate.

Structure. A sound management plan will provide structure for all group members by outlining responsibilities, rosters, maintenance and record keeping.

Promotion. Promoting your garden through open days or social media will encourage more people to get involved and support your garden.

03 Getting started

Consulting your local community

You should inform as many people as possible that you are planning to establish a community garden in the neighbourhood. This includes local businesses and cafes as well as local residents, community centres, schools and church groups. A great way to generate awareness of the project is by holding a community meeting, on the site if possible. This will allow you to get a sense of local support (or concerns), and recruit members to your group.

Promoting the proposal

Promote the proposal or meeting by:

– Creating a flyer for a letterbox drop in the community;

– Doorknocking residents and visiting businesses and cafes with the flyer; and

– Putting the flyer up on noticeboards in shops, libraries and community centres.

The community meeting

Ask people to provide their contact details and get everyone to introduce themselves.

If possible, have a skilled facilitator run the meetings, someone who is able to draw out ideas from the group; and ensure the ideas (and any objections) are recorded.

Make sure that everyone has the opportunity to provide their view, even if they oppose the project.

Take note of any issues and try to work through objections. You will need the support of everyone in the community in order to get the best possible outcome. Take the time to work with people who are concerned about the project, rather than assuming the problems will go away.

Let interested people know how they can become members of the group.

Establishing your community garden group

A community garden needs a working group of committed people with a range of skills and experience. The size of the group will depend on the size of the project. However, all gardens, whatever their size, require similar structures for managing the garden and the members.

Once you have established your group, organise regular meetings to discuss the development of the garden.

Researching your garden project

One of the best ways to find out about community gardens is to visit an existing garden group to hear about the group's experiences and also make connections that could be useful as your project progresses.

You could ask about their organisational structure, decision-making and record-keeping processes, or practical aspects such as sources for soil, mulch, seed, insurance or funding.

When talking to a garden group or visiting a site, take notes and photos to assist with your garden plans.

Setting up a committee

The City recommends a core group with a range of skills and experience should form the garden management committee. This group should comprise at least six people to ensure that responsibility is shared.

Assessing the proposed site

A new garden group should undertake a detailed assessment of the proposed site to ensure the location is suitable for the needs of the garden project.

When assessing the site you should consider the following:

– Who owns the land? Is it Council's community land? Privately owned? Managed by a department?

– What community groups and businesses are nearby that might support or partner (or object to) the project?

– Is the land near other community facilities? Can it be seen from nearby houses or shopping areas? Is there any graffiti or vandalism in the area? Is lighting available?

– What other land use surrounds the site?

– What is the land currently used for? For example, it may be used as a shortcut by local residents, a place to dump rubbish or for illegal activities, a children's play or sport area, or an off-leash area for dogs. Will the project conflict with these uses?

– What plants are already on the site? Is it infested with weeds? Are there trees that will shade the garden?

– How much space do you require in overall area and how much for garden beds?

– What is the land use zoning category? What does this zoning allow or restrict?

– How does water move through the site? Does it soak in quickly or cause waterlogging? Does it flood? Are there existing water taps on site?

– Does the site have underground services: electricity, water, telephone or sewerage?

– What is the current surface cover? Is it grass, gravel, paving or compacted earth?

– What is the soil type and condition? What is the history of the site? Is there a risk of soil contamination? Is there any asbestos on site?

– How much sun does the site get? Does it receive more than six hours of sunlight a day? Do any buildings or trees block the sun?

– What is the prevailing wind direction? Is the wind likely to affect plant growth? Do nearby buildings or walls create wind turbulence?

– What structures are already on the site? Consider buildings, seating, sheds, walls, fences, paving and existing gardens.

– Are there major roads nearby? If so, are there barriers to pollution and noise from traffic?

Size of the space

The space available will determine the type of garden and the number of people that can be involved. Community gardens can range in size from small footpath verges involving around 15 people to large gardens containing garden beds, composting systems, native bees, pathways and a tool shed, with 25 or more people involved.

A guide to various size options based on growing space and minimum number of members is provided below.

Recommended garden types by size of land and group

	Large	Medium	Small
Size	1,000m^2 or more	Around 400m^2	Up to 100m^2
Type of garden	Community	Community	Community or footpath verge
No. of members	40 or more	25 or more	15 or more
Herbs, flowers, vegetables	✓	✓	✓
Miniature fruit trees	✓	✓	
Accessible paths for wheelbarrows, prams, wheelchairs	✓	✓	✓
Composting system	✓	✓	✓
Communal garden bed – forage for herbs	✓	✓	✓
Bushtucker or biodiversity garden	✓	✓	✓
Tool shed	16m^2	7m^2	2m^2
Other	Chickens, ducks, native bees and frog pond	Native bees and frog ponds	

Choosing the garden type and model

There are several types of community gardens throughout the city. Consider which of these is best suited to the size of your project.

Types of community gardens

Community gardens on City of Sydney community land are self-managed by the community to grow fresh produce, flowers and native plants.

Community gardens on other land may consist of a mixture of plots and common areas. They are open to residents of public housing or private strata developments, or in areas not managed by the City of Sydney. Examples of such gardens are those supported by the Botanic Gardens Trust and Housing NSW Community Greening programs.

Footpath verge gardens are garden beds established on the nature strip adjoining the road and managed collectively by a group of local residents. See Footpath Gardening Policy.

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/150051/6687_FA2_Footpath-Gardening-Update.pdf

School kitchen garden projects are defined as a community garden when local residents from outside the school community can participate in the garden. The garden may combine individual plots for residents with communal garden beds that the school manages and uses for lessons on cooking, nutrition and the environment, and to provide produce for the school canteen.

School kitchen gardens are not always set up as community gardens due to perceived problems of security. Groups can specify different opening hours for access by the public outside school hours, or members can undergo a working with children check.

Rooftop gardens are established on buildings and structures. These areas usually have less vandalism but may be open to strong winds which can affect plant growth. For additional information:

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/200242/Green-Roofs-and-Walls-Policy-Implementation-Plan-Adopted.pdf

Community composting systems consist of a minimum of three compost bins and a worm farm, located in an existing community garden or in a park as a stand-alone project, to reduce waste going to landfill and encourage recycling of food and garden scraps. For additional information:

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/206791/7848_Community-Composting-guidelines_DE4.pdf

St Helens Community Garden – garden beds 450mm or higher.

Organisation models

There are several organisational models operating within these community gardens. Consider which of these is most suited to your project.

Communal

This model can incorporate a large number of people and assist members with limited knowledge or skills in gardening. The garden is managed collectively, with members deciding crops and rosters for garden maintenance. The group meets on harvest days to share the produce and sometimes shares with the community. Examples of communal gardens are the Ultimo garden and James St Community Garden Reserve.

Combination communal and allotment

This combination of two models allows members to grow their own produce or learn from each other in the communal garden.

Allotment

Each member has a garden bed or section for growing their own crops. The size of the area varies by garden but is at least one square metre. Where agreed the crops can be shared on harvest days.

Shared

This model builds capacity within the community. A small number of members grow crops in planter boxes for their own use and for the community to harvest. An example of this is the Green Square Growers in Zetland.

Community garden bed

The City recommends that all community gardens have at least one garden bed planted with herbs for the community to harvest. This encourages participation of the local community and reduces vandalism.

Choosing gardening methods and design

Gardening methods

Consider the skill level of the group and the possible reaction from the public when choosing a gardening method.

Raised soil garden beds are at least 450mm above ground to assist with accessibility and inhibit soil contamination. They are filled with organic soil and enriched with manures.

Wicking garden beds use a wicking system to draw water from a reservoir below the growing medium, allowing plant roots to access moisture when required.

Permaculture promotes consciously designed landscapes that mimic the relationships found in nature, while yielding a food and energy for local needs.

Permaculture food forest employs the features of the forest to form an edible, resilient and perennial food system with layers that include: canopy, sub-canopy, shrub, herbaceous, groundcover, underground, vertical, aquatic and soil fungi.

Aquaponics combines aquaculture (raising fish) and hydroponics (the soil-less growing of plants) to grow fish and plants together in an integrated system.

No-dig garden uses layers of newspaper, compost, straw, lucerne hay or manure above the ground as a bed for plants, rather than planting them in soil.

Biodynamics works with the organisms in the soil to provide healthy and balanced nutrition in plants and food.

Garden design

The City recommends involving a professional landscape architect in the design stage of a proposed community garden. This person can lead the discussion in meetings to ensure that everyone's ideas are heard and the resulting plan will be something that everyone can 'own'. A professional design will be invaluable when the group is trying to explain the garden or ask for support, and will inspire members and the community.

Consider the characteristics below to help your group develop design ideas for your garden.

Aesthetics

Think about how the broader community will see the garden. The overall look of the garden is important, not only for attracting new members but for ensuring good relations with your neighbours and the landowner.

Services

Ensure existing services are shown on the design (electrical cables, water pipes, water taps and sewer) for construction and future use.

Low-waste

Maximise the opportunities on the site to recycle organic waste by composting and worm-farming systems.

Integrated soil fertility management

Aim to grow the biomass (organic material) or green manures you need for mulch, and incorporate legume species that both produce biomass and fix nitrogen (an essential plant nutrient) in the soil for other plants to utilise. Incorporate crop rotation so as not to exhaust the soil nutrients and to help manage plant diseases.

Sustainability

Use recycled and local materials. Grow a variety of plants for biodiversity and grow heirloom seed varieties so you can collect the seeds from one year to produce plants the following season.

Water management

Ensure there is access to water taps on the site and the opportunity for water harvesting through rain water tanks.

Organic pest management and biodiversity

Consider a range of plants that provide habitat for small birds, frogs, lizards and predatory insects. Include sources of water such as ponds and bird baths. Consider small hives for native stingless bees to improve pollination of produce crops and native plants.

The senses

Think about a garden that engages the senses, which will enable your garden to 'speak' to a wider cross-section of the community. Sensory features could include the scent of lavender, the sound of gravel underfoot, the soft touch of lamb's ear and the taste of fresh beans off the vine.

Accessibility

Think about those with limited mobility. Incorporate raised beds where possible and pathways wide enough for people, wheelbarrows, prams and wheelchairs to pass. Garden beds should be narrow enough for gardeners to reach the centre without strain or over reaching.

Safety

Maintain clear lines of sight and avoid creating enclosed or hidden spaces. With safety in mind, spaces can still be created for people seeking solitude, or to create a sense of intrigue as the garden unfolds along a twisting path. Incorporate seating to encourage people to spend time in the garden. Provide public surveillance by reducing the height or thinning out fruit trees or produce crops. For footpath verge gardens it is preferable to plant crops less than one metre in height to maintain visibility near traffic.

Examples of community gardens

James St Reserve Community Garden is an example of a communal garden where the entire garden is managed collectively.

Joanna O'Dea Community Garden is an example of a garden with allotments and some shared areas.

Bourke St Community Garden is an example of combined communal and allotment gardens.

Newtown Community Garden is an example of allotment gardens.

Sustainable Chippendale footpath is an example of a footpath verge garden.

Green Growers Garden Zetlands is an example of a shared garden planter box.

Checklist for a new community garden project

This checklist will assist your group to define the type of garden you would like to have in your community.

What is the purpose of the community garden?

- ❑ to grow fresh produce crops
- ❑ to supplement the food supply
- ❑ to socialise with your community
- ❑ to learn new skills
- ❑ to foster food security
- ❑ to reduce food miles

Proposed site considerations

- ❑ located in a high density area
- ❑ safety and passive surveillance
- ❑ accessibility for all users
- ❑ sunlight up to 6 hours a day
- ❑ size of the space to accommodate needs
- ❑ water on site
- ❑ soil contamination
- ❑ multiple uses by the broader community

Size of area for a garden

- ❑ under 100m^2
- ❑ between 100 and 200m^2
- ❑ between 180 and 400m^2
- ❑ over 400m^2

How many gardeners can participate in this project?

- ❑ 15 or more
- ❑ 25 or more
- ❑ 35 or more
- ❑ 45 or more

What type of garden

- ❑ community garden on Council land
- ❑ community garden on other land
- ❑ footpath verge garden
- ❑ school kitchen garden project
- ❑ rooftop garden
- ❑ community composting system

Style of garden

- ❑ communal
- ❑ combination of communal and allotment
- ❑ allotment
- ❑ shared
- ❑ community garden bed

Landowner

- ❑ apply for approval

What features will the garden have?

- ❑ garden beds
- ❑ accessible pathways
- ❑ tool shed
- ❑ water taps
- ❑ compost and worm farm system
- ❑ wheelchair access/garden bed
- ❑ community garden bed
- ❑ seating nearby
- ❑ biodiversity habitat
- ❑ frog pond
- ❑ native bees
- ❑ other

What types of plants will we grow?

- ❑ herbs
- ❑ flowers
- ❑ vegetables
- ❑ bush tucker
- ❑ dwarf fruit trees
- ❑ water plants
- ❑ medicinal plants
- ❑ native bird habitat
- ❑ other

What skills and training does our group require?

- ❑ soils
- ❑ making compost
- ❑ worm farming
- ❑ crop rotation
- ❑ organic gardening
- ❑ planting seasonal crops
- ❑ fruit trees
- ❑ native bees
- ❑ biodiversity
- ❑ grants and sponsorship
- ❑ health and safety
- ❑ team building
- ❑ conflict resolution
- ❑ group coordination
- ❑ other

How will we promote/educate/communicate with the local community?

- ❑ demonstration and open days
- ❑ signage
- ❑ flyers
- ❑ social media

Creating your management plan and garden layout

Once you have selected a site and completed the consultation, research and design phases you are ready to create a formal plan for your community garden project. The management plan defines the overall vision and objectives for the garden, describes the roles and responsibilities of the group members, and how the group will work together. The plan demonstrates to the landowner and funding bodies that you have undertaken an appropriate level of planning and research.

The garden layout shows the main features of the garden such as the placement of garden beds, access ways, tool shed and composting systems. A detailed template for developing a management plan is provided in the appendix. You may not be able to fund the whole garden at once but you can stage the project over time as in the example provided below.

Staging your garden project

Ensure you have enough in your budget to fund the basics of Stage 1, which includes garden beds, paving, tools, soil and plants.

Stage 1

– Review the relevant City policies and guidelines.

– Find a suitable site.

– Consult with the community.

– Talk to other community garden groups and contact a mentor.

– Establish a committed group.

– Develop a management plan and garden layout plan.

– Apply and receive approval of your proposal from the landowner.

– Apply and receive approval for grant funding.

– Attend training courses and workshops.

Stage 2

– Construct garden and develop the garden group.

– Introduce garden members to the site.

– Form a committee within the group.

– Grow basic herbs and vegetables.

– Develop a roster system for watering and composting.

– Organise monthly working bees and meetings.

Stage 3

– Install rainwater tanks and pumps.

– Install signage in the garden to educate the community.

– Implement organic pest control and companion planting.

– Review management plan and design layout.

Stage 4

– Monitor the garden and crops.

– Report on the group's success.

– Promote the group through a web page, blog or social media page to recruit more members.

– Organise an Open Day and a demonstration site for the community and participate in the bus tour.

– Review management plan and design layout.

Stage 5

– Develop and network with a local business to assist with funding and sponsorship.

– Provide guided tours for school children and other gardens.

– Introduce bush tucker, native bees or a frog pond.

– Grow advanced crops and incorporate dwarf fruit trees.

– Review management plan and design layout.

James St Community Garden concept design

Getting funding

To complete your management plan you will need to develop a budget and consider where you will obtain the necessary financial resources.

The requirements for each garden will vary but most new gardens may require to pay for the following:

– Costs of involving the community (e.g. promotional material, mail-outs, local advertising, venues for meetings);

– Public liability insurance;

– Construction materials for garden beds, paving, water taps, tool shed;

– Tools and equipment, e.g. hand tools, wheelbarrows, watering cans and hoses;

– Materials such as soil, manures, plants and mulch;

– Combination lock for tool shed;

– Vandal-proof fittings for water taps;

– Rainwater tanks, including costs of fittings and professional installation and solar water pump;

– Engaging a professional landscape design consultant; and

– Engaging professional trades to construct the garden.

Plan your fundraising efforts carefully, ensuring that the money raised is worth the time and energy expended. Community gardens can raise funds through:

– Annual membership fees, which can be a consistent income stream;

– Raffles, with prizes donated by local businesses;

– Sponsorship, by local businesses of a section of the garden;

– Grants, from the City or other bodies; and

– Donations, from local business for materials, plants, soil or a tool shed.

Applying for grants and sponsorship

The City encourages groups to apply for grants or sponsorship to assist with start-up costs, construction or ongoing costs of new or existing gardens. Contact the Community Gardens and Volunteer Coordinator prior to applying for grants or sponsorship. The City can provide advice on the process and suggestions for garden materials and costing of items.

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/grants-and-sponsorships

The City's role

The City has adopted a community development approach to community gardens where gardening groups manage the gardens themselves with the support of the City and other partnering organisations. The City intends to develop strong partnerships with garden groups and sponsoring agencies.

Supporting community gardens to be self-managed helps the City achieve the Sydney 2030 Action 10.2.1: 'to maintain and extend roles in decision-making and in current consultation, engagement, education and information procedures'.

Principles for a community garden

To be supported by the City of Sydney community gardens should embrace the following principles:

– The garden must be open to the general community and allow the community to participate in the garden;

– The group should be incorporated or be covered by public liability insurance;

– The group must have interested local residents participating, and support from neighbours in the local community;

– Group members must have the skills to organise, manage and maintain a community garden group, or have a mentor from an existing group to assist in their garden management;

– The group must demonstrate the capacity to fund the garden and the ongoing maintenance requirements of the garden, which includes mulching, pest and weed management;

– The group must have approval by the landowner to develop and construct the community garden on their land and develop a management plan and design layout of the garden; and

– The project must be a long-term community initiative. The group must have at least 25 people for a community garden and 15 for a footpath verge or community composting group.

Assistance

The City will provide services to support community garden groups such as:

Advice and materials

The City will:

– Provide advice, support and ongoing communication with garden coordinators and members;

– Help new and established community gardens to develop garden management plans and design layouts, and obtain grants and resources; and

– Provide support to establish community composting systems and worm farms.

The City may be able to donate a limited supply of materials such as mulch and manures when available.

Education and training

The City will:

– Deliver workshops and training on an as-needs basis;

– Provide online resources through the City's website; and

– Provide an annual bus tour for gardeners to network and learn from other gardeners throughout the city.

A number of educational workshops are offered by the City. Gardeners are encouraged to attend workshops provided by the City's Green Villages and the Green Living Centre.

Support

The City will:

– Connect local gardens and gardeners to each other to help build relationships and encourage sharing of information and experiences;

– Liaise with Sydney Community Gardens Network, the Australian City Farms, Community Gardens Network and the Sydney Food Fairness Alliance;

– Promote community gardens through the City's website, media releases, publications and events; and

– Facilitate garden meetings when needed and community engagement processes.

Ada Place community composting – example of signs.

04
Creating a self-managed garden

Constructing the garden

Once you have approval, landscape design and funding you can commence construction of the garden. You will need to employ qualified tradespeople for this. Be prepared for this phase to take time and require discussion of construction details, quotes and timeframes. Community gardeners are covered under the City's community engagement insurance policy but are not covered to use power tools or machinery.

The City encourages recycling and use of sustainable products where possible.

Take photos through this phase to document the progress of your garden. This is a great time to organise a meeting with the group members to discuss the next steps of soil, planting crops and mulching, and to finalise details of how your group will function such as:

– Devising rosters for specific tasks, e.g. watering the garden or turning compost;

– Starting a garden diary or logbook for recording member activities and hours;

– Allocating specific roles and responsibilities, e.g. composting coordinator;

– Creating working groups for specific tasks, e.g. promotion or events; and

– Planning regular working bees and social activities.

Maintaining the garden

Once the garden has been planted and crops are starting to grow you need to maintain it in an attractive, safe and functional state. A well-maintained and well-presented garden promotes the community gardens network and reduces the risk of vandalism and damage. Your garden must be kept clean and tidy, regularly weeded and free of damage to facilities.

Some gardens may appear unkempt due to the garden methodology, such as permaculture which is a self-sustaining ecosystem garden. These gardens still require weeding, maintenance and safety for all those using them.

Maintenance should consider the look of the garden to ensure:

– Overhanging plants do not grow across the pathways;

– Plants do not decrease the width of the pathways;

– Rubbish and litter is removed by garden members;

– Tools and materials are stored safely;

– Produce plants are trimmed to allow access and remove disease; and

– Garden beds are maintained with pest and weed management.

Community gardens must not be used for storage of personal items such as garden furniture, pot plants or BBQs.

If planning any changes or modifications within the garden you should seek the approval of the landowner. Any unapproved facilities or gardens that are not maintained to the required standard may be removed at the City's discretion.

Organic gardening

The City encourages community gardens to be organic and chemical free. We recommend a combination of cultural practices such as growing seasonal crops, crop rotation and other techniques. To reduce pest and disease problems from occurring before using organic sprays on the pest or plant.

Natural pesticides, such as pyrethrum or tea tree oil extracts, are subject to the same control as synthetic pesticides. Gardeners using eco oils should read the safety data sheet and sign a record of gardeners using the spray.

Approved organic sprays and the requirements for using these sprays are listed under the City's public liability insurance. Community gardeners are required to print out the safety data sheet, and sign a form confirming they have read the information and will use the organic spray safely. The signed form showing the users of the organic sprays should be forwarded to the City. The garden members must be 18 years and over to use the sprays. Using these sprays should also coincide with the pesticide spray application schedule plan for your area.

Organic sprays include:

– Eco oil;

– Pyrethrum;

– Garlic and chilli sprays;

– Vinegar spray;

– Eco fungicide; and

– Beat-A-Bug.

Gardeners need to be aware of the City's pesticide use notification plan which enables residents to avoid or minimise contact with the organic sprays.

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/council/our-responsibilities/permits-and-notifications/pesticide-notification-plan

Community garden groups can register their garden to be on the Pesticide Notification Plan: Sensitive Site and Hotspot Register. The City will contact its staff and approved contractors will then be advised to avoid spraying on the footpath directly in front of the garden. This will provide your garden with a 2-metre buffer zone from the park. Controls already in place will reduce the risk of spray drift.

‘Biodiversity is the foundation of ecosystem services to which human well-being is intimately linked.’

Biodiversity in a community garden

We live in a large city that connects living systems (plants, animals), the built environment and the natural physical world (rocks, streams). The health of this natural and man-made environment is vital for our own health and wellbeing, and relies on biodiversity.

What is biodiversity?

> ‘Biodiversity is the foundation of **ecosystem services** to which human well-being is intimately linked.’
> – Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005.

A common measure of biodiversity is the number of species in a given area. A healthy, complex and biodiverse environment is the basis of human health and wellbeing, and economic prosperity.

In cities, biodiversity provides the following ‘ecosystem services’. It:

– Improves air quality – ensuring breathable air;

– Purifies water – ensuring potable water;

– Controls stormwater runoff – reducing pollutants going into rivers and oceans;

– Maintains healthy and fertile soil;

– Supports a healthy urban climate – minimising urban heat; and

– Recycles wastes.

Creating habitat for local wildlife and enhancing biodiversity in urban areas will contribute to making gardens healthier and increase our urban biodiversity.

Frog ponds and water gardens

Water features are a great way to increase biodiversity and to grow water produce plants such as chestnuts. All ponds must have a strong mesh cover to prevent children falling into the water.

Native bees

The inclusion of native bees in a garden will assist with pollination and increase seed production. Native bees are quite small and are ideal for native plant pollination. The City recommends the *Trigona* species to community gardens in public areas.

Exotic bees

Exotic bees are a risk to people who have an allergy. Not all people are aware of this allergy. The City recommends stingless native bees.

Trees in a community garden

The city’s trees are valuable assets that provide numerous environmental, social, economic and aesthetic benefits.

Apparently harmless actions can compromise the health and stability of trees. The following activities and works must not take place within the drip zone of trees (extent of canopy spread):

– Soil cut or fill including excavation and trenching;

– Soil cultivation, disturbance or compaction; and

– Stockpiling, storage or mixing of materials.

If excavation is required for any reason, consult with the City’s Tree Management Team through the Community Gardens and Volunteer Coordinator.

Do not place material such as wire, nails or signage in or around the trunks of trees.

Avoid placing any item or structure within the drip zone of a tree. Any item or structure that prevents the infiltration of surface water and occupies a ground surface area greater than three square metres will require approval by the City's Tree Management Team.

Pruning or removal

Street and park trees: Trees in streets and parks are owned and managed by Council and should not be removed or pruned (including root pruning). Requests to remove or prune these trees can be lodged through the City's Customer Service Centre.

Council-owned properties: The removal or pruning of trees (branches or roots) on Council-owned property (other than parks or streets) requires an application and assessment in accordance with the City's Tree Preservation Order.

Privately owned trees: The removal or pruning of trees (branches or roots) on private property requires an assessment in accordance with the City's Tree Preservation Order through lodgement of a private tree pruning application with the City.

Further information is available on the City's website at:

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/123993/Application-to-Prune-or-Remove-a-Tree-on-Private-Land.pdf

Animals in a community garden

Will you allow pets into your community garden? Will you want to keep chickens or ducks for the eggs or the beneficial droppings?

Pets

The City requires that pets in a garden are under the control of a competent person and restrained by an adequate chain or leash.

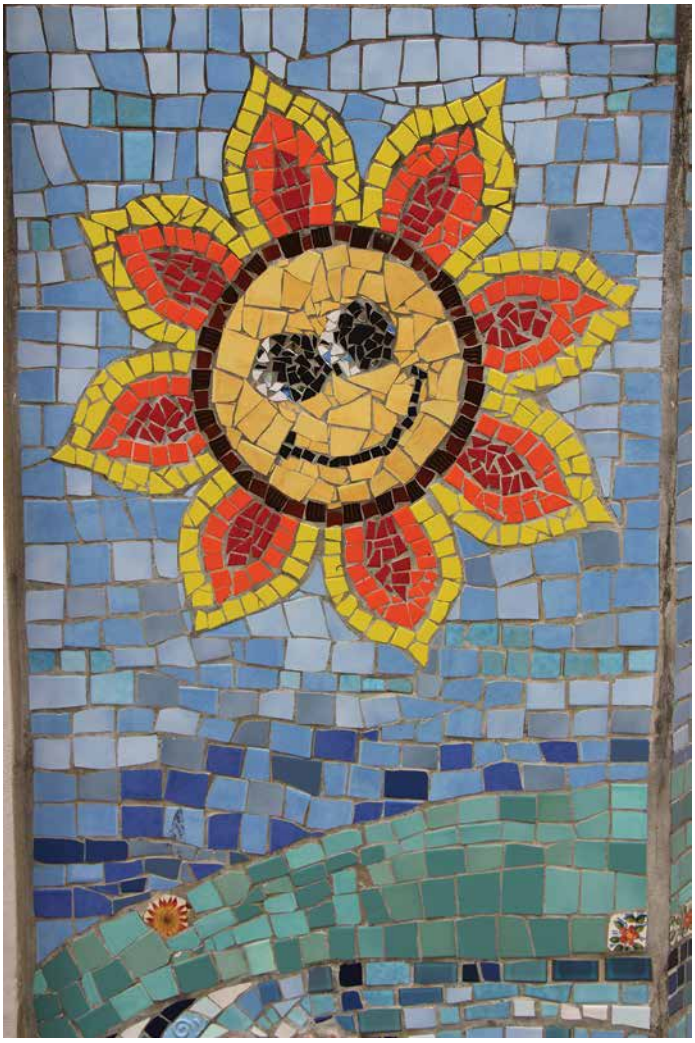
Pet owners have a legal and social responsibility to pick up after their animals. Uncollected faeces poses potential health risks, particularly near growing food crops in a community garden.

Chickens or ducks

The City will consider proposals to have chickens or ducks in community gardens. The proposals must describe how the birds will be funded, how their good health will be maintained, and how complaints from neighbours will be resolved. Roosters will not be allowed.

The keeping of fowl must not cause any nuisance to neighbouring premises such as noise, waste that could attract vermin, odour, or other issues that could deem the land or premises to be unhealthy. The City can serve legal orders and notices for these matters under the *Local Government Act 1993*.

James St Reserve community garden – native bee habitat hotels.



Waterloo Estate community garden – mosaic art.

Art in a community garden

The City encourages community gardens to display creative art pieces. If you wish to have permanent or temporary artworks in your garden these need to be included in the management plan and design layout, and approved by the City to ensure safety and compliance with the City Public Art Policy. Art displays may not be approved, or may be removed if they are considered a risk, could be used as a missile or could cause a nuisance to the community.

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/explore/arts-and-culture/public-art

Managing community gardeners

Community gardens need the assistance of interested community members who are willing to donate their time and effort towards the project. Community gardeners may wish to make a difference in the community, learn new skills or make new connections. Your group will need a person to coordinate the activities of gardeners, and processes for training them.

Community garden coordinator

The City recommends that all groups have a community garden coordinator position within the group. This is the main contact person for group members and the community, and the liaison person between the landowner and the City.

The person in this position requires strong interpersonal skills to maintain gardeners' involvement in the long term, as well as skills in communication, e.g. listening, problem solving, decision-making. Other skills like leadership, project organisation and ability to work with a diverse range of people are important. Contact details of the coordinator should be widely publicised.

Induction for new community gardeners

Having a process to welcome new gardeners will encourage their participation and make them valuable members of the group. A garden induction process is essential to ensure that all new gardeners are aware of:

– The vision for the garden and the aims of the project;

– The names and positions of other members;

– Their rights and responsibilities in the garden;

– Health and safety protocols, and risks;

– Training and learning opportunities; and

– The value of their contribution.

Training for garden members

Community garden members should be encouraged to attend workshops to enhance their skills. A garden with multiskilled members will make it easier to work together. Encourage skilled members to share their expertise and knowledge. Your group should have skills or knowledge in the following:

– Healthy and safety protocols;

– The local area, networks and community organisations;

– Gardening including pest and disease identification and control methods;

– Administration, budgeting and financial management;

– Communication and computing;

– Leadership and group facilitation;

– Grant applications, promotion and marketing; and

– Research and writing, reporting and monitoring.

Community gardener activities and recognition

Organised activities can help build friendships among your team of gardeners through:

Socialising in the garden to get to know each other, share skills, ideas information and build friendships.

Celebrating milestones such as the date your garden was approved, completion of construction, seasonal crop harvests, or member birthdays.

Sharing meals by cooking and eating together with BBQs, picnics, morning teas, lunches, and to share or swap produce.

Recognising the work of gardeners through a simple thank you or perhaps a certificate, morning tea or small gift to show appreciation for individuals who have put in a lot more effort to ensure the garden is working well.

Retaining members is about matching their skills with a role that makes them feel valued and appreciated within the group. Take the time to get to know the gardeners and find out about their skills and experience.

Employment programs

Community gardens can develop work-skills programs for the unemployed. These can build confidence, skills and motivation in participants while they provide significant assistance in the garden. Participants should be afforded the same respect and opportunities as other gardeners, and encouraged to participate in training, social events and decision-making. If considering a work-skills program it is advisable to get advice and assistance as there are administrative, coordination and financial responsibilities involved.

Corporate groups

Corporate groups usually request a one-day project for 10 to 20 people. A corporate group can assist in a major task that could take a garden group a month to complete, such as moving soil or mulch to fill garden beds.

Managing communication

A self-managed garden needs an efficient communication system to ensure that all members have the opportunity to share their ideas, issues or success stories. Communication methods include:

– Noticeboards for listing events, working bees and special events;

– Newsletters, emails or minutes of group meetings;

– A garden record or diary to show member details, tasks and times;

– Social media discussion; and

– Phone calls or text messages.

The City recommends that all community garden groups develop an information flyer, website or social media page to explain the overall vision for their garden.

Group meetings

Regular meetings provide members with opportunities to discuss what is happening in the garden, their achievements and concerns, and news about completed projects. Meeting minutes should be distributed to all members to keep them informed.

An annual meeting can plan events for the year ahead including training workshops and harvest days. It is also an opportunity for the group to review the management plan and a great opportunity to celebrate the year's achievements.

The City recommends that garden groups make their decisions democratically and transparently to ensure all members have their say.

Networking

Links with other community gardens are an important means of increasing your skills, as well as your access to funding and resources. As your garden develops it will become a great example of sustainable living. Other organisations may want to visit your garden for field trips, practical activities or workshops.

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 avoid excluding anyone. Even non-gardeners can still enjoy the space for relaxation or social interaction.

Open days/demonstration days/special events

Events are a great way to involve local residents, businesses and the broader community in the garden. They assist with socialising, networking and helping to reduce conflict, and promote the growing and eating of healthy fresh food.

There are a variety of events that can occur in the garden. Groups with gardens on Council land can hold:

– A "pop in" event that provides a cup of tea and a biscuit.

– A formal event that includes amplified music, catered food and temporary structures. This will require City approval.

Additional public liability insurance may be required.

The City may be able to assist with resources for your event.

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/235830/Event-Guidelines-V2.3.pdf

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/112058/EventApplication.pdf

Catering or food stalls at the event must comply with the City's temporary food stall requirements. Additional insurance may be needed for food stalls, music and the larger than usual number of people attending the event. A risk management plan will must be submitted for approval prior to the event.

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/business/regulations/food-and-drink-businesses/temporary-food-stalls

Where community gardens are established on Council land, the City retains the right to use the garden as a demonstration site for community education activities such as tours and workshops.

Signs

Signs in a community garden are a way to communicate to other gardeners and the local community. The City can provide signage which features a blackboard to promote working bees, harvest days or good news stories.

We recommend signs for the compost systems (compost bins and worm farm) to advise gardeners what can be placed in the systems and what should not be included. These could be in several languages and illustrated.

Media

The City can assist in promoting your garden, a project or event. At times the City receives requests from the media to do a story on a community garden team. We would like all groups to participate in these activities to demonstrate what a community can achieve.

Social media

Social media is a useful online tool to connect gardeners, the community, networks and the City. It may include a website, Facebook, blog or Twitter account. These provide gardeners with an opportunity to share ideas, knowledge and information through online networks, and to communicate with others.

The City's website

The City of Sydney website has a community gardens section that lists locations of community gardens and the group coordinator contact details. These are provided for people who would like to participate, or learn more about gardening, or for media requests. Community garden profiles showcase the individual gardens. Please advise the City's Community Gardens and Volunteer Coordinator if there are any changes to your group's coordinator or contact details.

The City of Sydney logo

Permission to use the City of Sydney logo must be made in writing, accompanied by the artwork, prior to using it on materials to promote your garden.

05
Managing a community garden

Community gardens should be managed by the community in a way that takes the needs of all stakeholders into account.

Responsibilities of community gardeners

You should maintain your garden so that the health and safety of the surrounding community is not adversely affected. In particular, your garden group should:

– Maintain effective relationships with the surrounding neighbourhood, partnering organisations and other gardeners;

– Comply with the City's policies, guidelines, procedures and code of conduct;

– Maintain the garden and facilities to minimise risks for gardeners and visitors;

– Include health and safety protocols in induction processes;

– Wash all produce before eating or cooking;

– Not use machinery, power tools or synthetic chemicals;
– Control weeds and pests using organic methods;
– Store materials safely so they do not create an unpleasant environment;
– Maintain clear access paths with no trip hazards;
– Not discriminate due to differences in race, culture or sexuality;
– Communicate regularly with the City and/or other landowners and stakeholders;
– Employ democratic, transparent and inclusive decision-making;
– Ensure that any water leaving the garden is not contaminated by sediment, fertiliser, manure or excessive organic matter that might pollute waterways;
– Ensure noise levels within the garden are not disturbing to neighbours;
– Ensure compost, worm-farming systems and fertilisers do not to attract vermin, cockroaches or produce unpleasant odours;
– Maintain rainwater harvesting systems to ensure water is of a high quality; and
– Welcome visitors to the garden, and ensure members of the public can access the community garden during daylight hours.

Rights of community gardeners

Community gardeners have the right to:

– Develop their own internal policies, rules, organisational procedures and management plans, providing they liaise with and get support from the landowner; and also ensure their policies comply with City's policies;
– Be consulted about any decision that may affect the project and be advised by the City in a timely manner of any policy changes that affect them;
– Be treated with respect by other gardeners, local residents and partnering organisations; and
– Negotiate a secure and reasonable agreement with the landowner.

Insurance and risk management

Your group should be aware of the risks associated with undertaking a community garden project with public access. Each group has a duty of care to the people who visit the garden areas so a minimum of $10 million of public liability insurance is required. Small community groups with limited funds for this insurance could consider the following options.

1. The City's community engagement insurance policy may be extended to cover a garden on Council land where an extensive risk management process has been undertaken (the City's insurance policy does not automatically cover community gardens located on Council land).
   – This policy provides $10 million public liability insurance cover.
   – This policy will not cover use of machinery or power tools or synthetic chemicals except organic sprays approved for use by community gardeners.
   – This policy will not cover groups who sell their produce or participate in any off site activity or fundraising effort.
   – If a group is approved for cover under this policy it will be a named insured and responsible for payment of the policy excess (currently $500) in the event it makes a claim.
2. The group can become an incorporated association through the NSW Department of Fair Trading and manage their own insurance.
3. The group may be auspiced by another organisation or agency, such as a neighbourhood centre, and be covered by their insurance.
4. A group of community gardens with similar objectives might obtain insurance together.

Incorporation of the garden group

The City encourages community garden groups to have a clear and identified legal structure. Your group can apply to NSW Fair Trading to become an incorporated association. This will give the group some flexibility in the management of funds and enable you to open a bank account, obtain public liability insurance cover and apply for government grants.

Health and safety obligations

The City recognises the significant contribution made by community gardeners within our community, and has an obligation to ensure they are provided with a healthy and safe workplace (community garden) and to ensure they are aware of their work health and safety responsibilities.

The City's responsibilities involve discussing the following matters with community garden groups:

– Induction procedures;

– Awareness of documents, e.g. code of conduct

– Personal protective equipment;

– Safety data sheets about sprays and hazardous substances;

– Risk assessment of the garden or site;

– Information, instruction and training in safe work methods;

– Tool maintenance; and

– Hazard, accident and incident reporting.

Gardeners are required to be aware of the risks that may affect their health, safety or welfare in the workplace (community garden) and act in a way that does not put themselves or others at risk. Your garden group needs to provide the following information to new garden members:

– Introduction to other garden members;

– Awareness of the Community Garden Policy and garden group rules;

– Requirements of being a gardener on site;

– Location of facilities such as first-aid kit, storage shed, toilets and noticeboard;

– Emergency and evacuation procedures; and

– Methods for communication with garden members.

Financial support for community gardens

Funding is essential for the success of any community garden project. Your group should aim for long-term financial sustainability so that you are not dependent on unreliable sources of funding, such as grants or sponsorship.

The City will support the development of community gardens through its grants and sponsorships programs. The grant will be provided once the Community Garden and Volunteer Coordinator has approved the group's grant application, management plan and design.

The City will also consider providing funding for:

– Urgent repair of items that pose a significant safety risk. This will be mainly for community gardens on Council-owned land;

– Public signage and educational materials for the community garden; and

– A limited supply of mulch, manure, soil and plants.

Funding for all these items will depend upon budget constraints and demand. For more information on the City's grants programs visit:

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/grants-and-sponsorships/community-grants-sponsorships/community-matching-grants

Resolving conflicts and complaints

Your garden group should promote an environment that is tolerant and caring. If a conflict arises the group should take steps immediately to resolve the issue by communicating respectfully with those involved and engaging the assistance of a mediator where appropriate.

The City recommends that your management plan contains a gardener's agreement that all members agree to follow. The agreement should include expected behaviour on site, the management of shared garden areas and plots, and a conflict resolution process.

Community gardeners must also be aware of the City's Bully and Harassment Policy, Code of Conduct and Equal Opportunity Principles.

Using gardens as demonstration sites

The City's vision is to promote the development of community gardens as demonstration sites for sustainable living that, through careful design and management, can be utilised for educational and community activities. To demonstrate sustainability best practice, community garden groups are encouraged to include outdoor learning, performance and meeting spaces; interpretive signage; and to use recycled materials and practice water-efficient and organic gardening. Council also encourages groups to participate in the educational garden bus tour.

Garden inspections

The City carries out inspections of community gardens throughout the local area. New gardens have random inspections for a trial period of 6 to 12 months. Existing gardens are assessed throughout the year.

The garden facilities are assessed on their condition from the highest at excellent condition through to the lowest at non-compliant.

The City will look for a well maintained, loved and cared for garden as this shows a high participation level and a group of gardeners working well together.

A well maintained garden includes:

– Pathways – clear of debris, no trip hazards, weeded and accessible for all users;

– Garden beds – safe, without sharp edges and splinter free;

– Fences – safe, working and clear of debris and vegetation;

– Vegetation – crops have minimal pests and diseases, are weeded, and not shading other garden plots;

– Materials – to be looked after and kept tidy;

– Tool shed – organised and tidy with clear access;

– Water tanks – in working order;

– Existing trees – clear of material around base, branches and trunk;

– Composting systems – well maintained, free of pests and odours;

– Stakes – to be installed in garden beds and to have cross bars flush with post to avoid injury to passers-by; and

– Signage – free of graffiti.

Sustaining your garden and group

Measures of the success of your garden

The City would like all the community gardens to be successful and self-managed for a long time. Thinking about long-term goals provides an opportunity for the group to assess how it has evolved.

Success can be measured by considering:

– When did the group start?

– How long has the group been gardening or composting on the site?

– Has the group achieved the aims and objectives of the project?

– What skills and knowledge have been learnt?

– How popular is the garden in the community?

– Has your garden received awards or media attention?

– Does your garden have sustainable innovations and re-use and recycle materials?

– How many garden members do you have compared to when you started?

– How many hours of gardening work has the group completed each year?

– How many people have visited or contacted the garden to join or to ask questions?

– How much fresh, healthy and organic produce does the group produce for consumption?

– Does the garden look great and is it maintained to minimise weeds, pests and diseases?

– Is there minimal conflict within the garden group and with local residents ?

– How many garden tours, open days or demonstration days are provided to the community throughout the year?

– Does the garden group have its own social media accounts to share information and ideas?

– How much publicity, media or acknowledgement of your garden has been provided throughout the city?

Record keeping

Keeping accurate records can help to showcase your group's progress and measure the success of your garden. Records may also be required by the landowner or to show how grant funding was spent. Groups can keep a garden diary or have a record sheet on their noticeboard to record the progress of the garden on a daily basis, which can be used in future grant applications or for the landowner. For gardens on Council land the City requires the following information to coincide with the annual public liability and management plan review.

– Number of active members;

– Number of people in the community who support the garden;

– Number of gardening hours;

– Amount of produce grown;

– Amount of funding received;

– Amount of waste recycled in a compost system;

– Amount of promotion and media about your garden;

– Photographs of your gardeners, events, garden or produce; and

– Good news stories.

06 Establishing a community garden on Council land

In order for the City to consider supporting the development of a new community garden, applicants will need to ensure they address the City's principles for a community garden (see page 12). For gardens on City-owned or controlled land, applicants will need to address the site selection criteria and procedure for starting a new community garden outlined below.

The first steps in this procedure include establishing a community garden group, conducting an assessment of potential sites and discussing the proposal with the City to identify any possible issues.

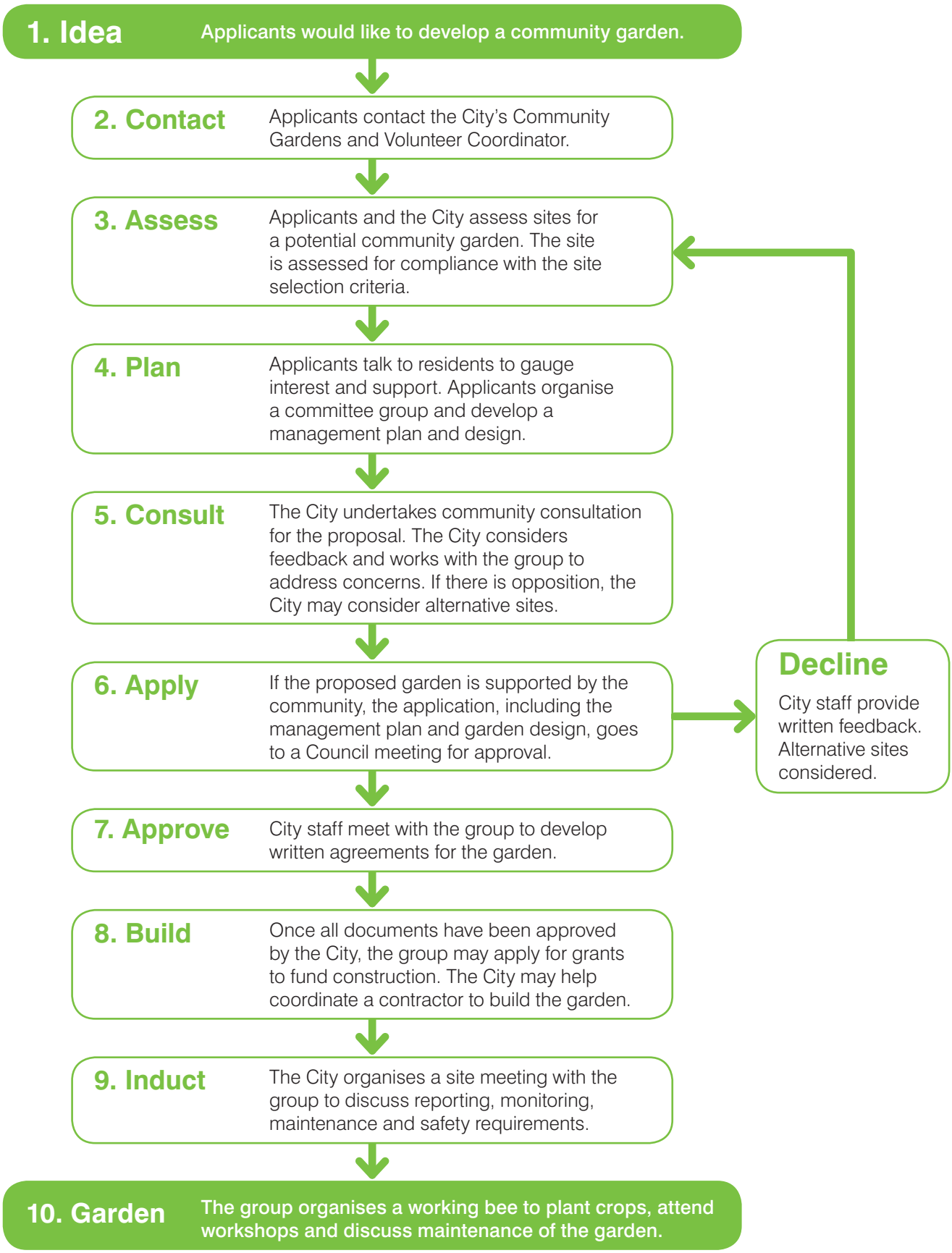
Once a preferred site has been established, applicants will need to contact the City's Community Garden and Volunteer Coordinator to assess the site. Once the site is approved the group can submit a completed management plan and design for the proposed garden. If the application is supported, then the City will organise community consultation with local residents and work with the community garden group to address any concerns.

The proposed garden information will then go to a Council meeting for approval. Once approved the group can apply for grants to fund the construction of the garden.

Procedure for starting a new community garden on Council land

The timeframe to establish a community garden on Council land may vary. It can take 12 months to obtain approvals as community consultation and endorsement through a Council committee meeting are required.

The group's management plan should be reviewed and approved by the landowner or Council.



Community footpath verge gardens

Establishing footpath verge gardens requires special design consideration by the City to ensure that pedestrian and traffic access is not affected, and that environmental issues such as stormwater capture and street trees are considered in the design.

Applicants wanting to establish a community garden on the nature strip need to contact the City to see if their street is suitable for the installation of garden beds or planter boxes. Applicants will also need to form a community garden group, get support from their neighbours and develop a management plan and design.

These community footpath verge gardens can be approved by the City and do not need a Council meeting for approval. The City recommends crops smaller than one metre to so that garden stakes are not necessary, to reduce risks to the public. For more information refer to the Footpath Gardening Policy and checklists;

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/150051/6687_FA2_Footpath-Gardening-Update.pdf

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0013/150052/6687_FA2_FootpathGardeningChecklist1_PlanterBoxes.pdf

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/150053/6687_FA2_FootpathGardeningChecklist1_GardenBeds.pdf

Community composting facilities

Where feasible, the City will work in partnership with community gardeners to establish community composting and worm farm systems within community gardens. Composting facilities in parks will only be set up on a trial basis when there is a group of local residents willing to attend training and maintain the compost systems.

Composting systems in parks can be approved by the City and do not need to go to Council for approval.

For further details on composting please refer to the Community Composting Guidelines.

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/participation/community-gardens/community-composting

Security of tenure

New gardens established on Council land will be provided with an option to have an initial licence for a trial period of one year. The City will not charge community garden groups for the licence preparation fees. If the garden group fulfils all its responsibilities in managing the garden, a longer arrangement may be negotiated.

Site selection criteria for new community gardens on Council-owned land

The following criteria should be considered when selecting a site for a new community garden.

Location: Sites classified as community land under the *Local Government Act* may be appropriate. These sites are usually established for community use such as parklands, open spaces and community centres that have outside areas. Priority will be given to sites located in high density areas and near community centres or community organisations that might be able to support or partner the project.

Safety: Sites should have no major safety or health concerns; and have good passive surveillance (e.g. can be easily seen from nearby houses or shopping areas).

Accessibility: Sites should be accessible for a range of user groups. Sites should be located close to public transport, allow disabled access, have vehicle access (e.g. for delivery of mulch and soil) and accommodate groups wanting to visit the garden.

Solar access: Sites need to be suitable for growing vegetables and receive full sunlight – ideally for at least six hours per day.

Size: Sites should be large enough to accommodate garden beds, composting systems, rainwater tanks, seating areas, shelter for gardeners and for community workshops and demonstrations.

Water: Sites should have easy access to water or buildings nearby from which rainwater can be collected.

Soil contamination: Sites may need to be checked for soil contamination. If high levels are present then expert advice will be needed on whether it is suitable for growing food.

Multiple use: Consider sites where a community garden can be integrated without conflicting with other land uses and where the community garden can still be used by non-gardeners for passive recreation and educational workshops.

Existing features: Consider existing buildings, facilities and vegetation that may be utilised or retained in the gardens.

Land suitability: The location should have good passive surveillance of traffic and pedestrians. The topography of the land should be fairly flat without the requirements of cut or fill to develop a garden.

Note: It may not always be possible to find a site that meets all of the above criteria. The City will prioritise the sites that can meet as many of the requirements as possible.

Land use planning

A community garden may require development consent depending on the land ownership. Community gardens on a park or public reserve owned or controlled by Council can be created without consent under State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007. Development consent may be required for a community garden on privately owned land or NSW Government-owned land, such as schools and public housing.

Some works and structures may not need development consent if they meet specific criteria under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008. These include:

– Garden sheds, fences, poultry houses;

– Landscaping structures, pathways and paving;

– Rainwater tanks, water storage containers; and

– Water features and ponds.

The City's planning staff at the Neighbourhood Service Centre can help applicants find out whether a proposed development is permissible and whether a development application is required.

Council's planning requirements are set out in the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 and the Sydney Development Control Plan 2012.

The City will prioritise support for new gardens in areas that do not have a community garden within a short walk of a major residential area. This includes suburbs such as Surry Hills, Kings Cross, Green Square, Beaconsfield and Roseberry.

Open space management

There is a high demand for the City's open space (Council-owned community land), which is why the City encourages diverse gardens, and use of footpath verges and rooftops, as spaces to grow produce plants. Where appropriate, community gardens may be incorporated into plans of management for public open space.

The City's Open Space and Recreation Needs Study (April 2007) identified a number of neighbourhood and 'pocket' parks within the City that are under 2,000 square metres and not suitable for sporting activities. Some of these parks may be considered as potential sites for new community gardens. Existing community facilities can be ideal sites for community gardens because they may already have infrastructure such as toilets, shelter and storage areas.

St Helens community garden – before establishing a community garden.

St Helens community garden – after establishing a community garden.

07 Appendix

Definitions

A number of terms are used in these guidelines to describe community gardening and associated activities.

Allotment gardens are community gardens where gardeners have exclusive access to a plot or small area of the garden.

Biodiversity is the variety of plant and animal species that exist in a particular area.

Biodynamics is an approach which incorporates caring for the life and organisms in the soil.

Community gardens are garden spaces that are self-managed by the community for the production of fresh produce crops and to contribute to the development of a sustainable urban environment. The gardens are open to the public and anyone may become a member.

Community gardener is a person that volunteers their time for gardening activities. If younger than 18 they must be directly supervised by a parent or guardian at all times.

Community garden coordinator is the person that coordinates the garden group and liaises with the Council. This person requires minimal supervision and is able to induct new members to the garden site.

Composting systems break down vegetable scraps, garden waste and other materials into a rich organic matter to fertilise the garden. These can be compost bins or worm farms.

Demonstration sites are spaces within community gardens to share the ideas, skills and knowledge of the group with the local community.

Food forests are areas used for the production of food where the design mimics a natural ecosystem by including structured layers of plants such as edible groundcovers, shrubs and trees.

Food security is defined by the Sydney Food Fairness Alliance as the condition where all people at all times are able to access and prepare sufficient, safe, appropriate, nutritious and affordable food necessary to enjoy an active and healthy life.

Footpath verge gardens are garden beds established on the nature strip and managed collectively by local residents rather than the City.

Garden design is a landscape design plan showing details of the garden beds, pathways, composting area, tool shed or rain tanks. It may also show the materials used and development stages.

Grants are funds provided to assist a group with the services or projects they undertake, where the City only receives acknowledgement as the grant giver.

Harvest days are usually held once a month to distribute the grown produce to the garden members and provide the surplus to the community.

Interpretive signage explains a feature of the landscape to enhance interaction with the site and educate readers.

Management plan is a document developed by the community garden group to describe their vision for the garden, the details of the garden, their objectives, and the responsibilities of the group.

Open days are organised by the community garden group to encourage local residents and businesses to visit the garden and ask questions.

Open space is land designated for parks, trees and green spaces.

Organic growing is a food production system that does not use toxic chemicals such as synthetic fertilisers and pesticides. It aims to improve the long-term fertility of the soil.

Permaculture is a holistic approach to landscape design and human culture. It employs consciously designed landscapes that mimic the patterns and relationships found in nature, while yielding food and energy for local needs.

School kitchen gardens are developed within or outside school property. They help educate children about food production, and supply school kitchens with fresh food for teaching children cooking skills and serving them fresh food.

Self-managed describes a garden group that can work together and manage their garden without supervision or assistance from the City. They have regular working bees and on-site meetings to discuss the garden, and a management plan and garden design that is reviewed annually.

Soil contamination is the presence of chemicals or other harmful substances within the soil.

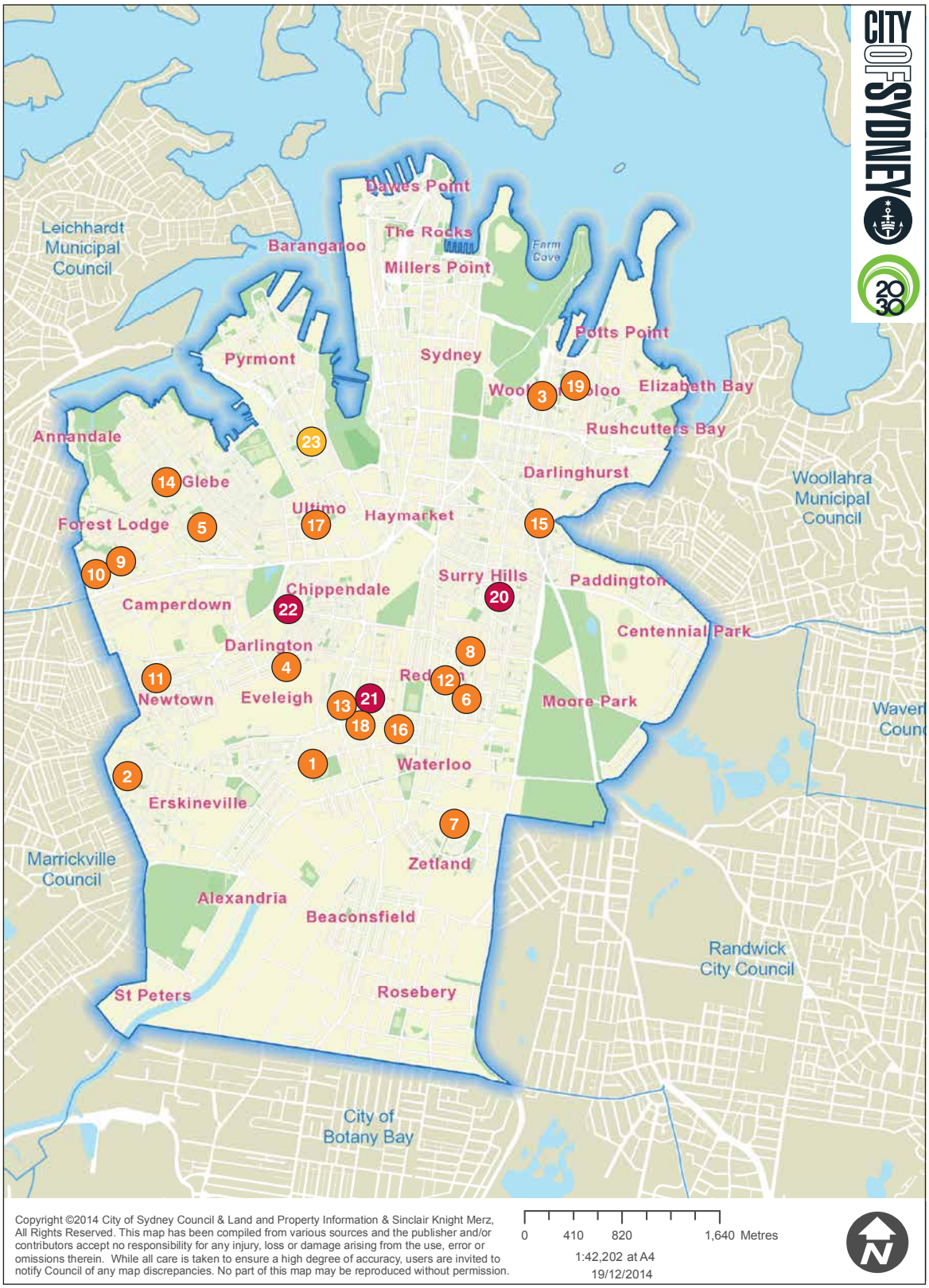
Sponsorship describes an agreement between an organisation and the garden group where the group receives a benefit to the value of the sponsorship.

Sustainability is an approach that is mindful of not harming the environment or depleting natural resources.

Trial period for a project ensures that it meets all of the requirements and receives few complaints from the community. A trial period may last for 6 or 12 months.

Map and list of community gardens in the City of Sydney (February 2016)

The map shows the 19 community gardens and three footpath verge gardens in the City of Sydney. The circles indicate the area around each garden that is within a short walk (750 metres).



List of community gardens in the City of Sydney (February 2016)

Contact details for each garden are listed on the City's website at:
http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/participation/community-gardens

Community gardens		
1	Alexandria Park Community School	Alexandria
2	Angel St Permaculture Food Forest	Newtown
3	Bourke St Community Garden	Woolloomooloo
4	Charlie's Garden Community Garden	Darlington
5	Glebe St John Community Garden	Glebe
6	Greg Hewish Memorial Community Garden	Redfern
7	Green Square Growers	Zetland
8	James St Reserve Community Garden	Redfern
9	Joanna O'Dea Community Garden	Camperdown
10	Mission Australia Rooftop Community Garden	Camperdown
11	Newtown Community Garden	Newtown
12	Poets Corner Community Garden	Redfern
13	Salvation Army Community Garden	Redfern
14	St Helens Community Garden	Glebe
15	St Michaels Community Garden	Surry Hills
16	The Eden Community Garden	Redfern
17	Ultimo Community Garden	Ultimo
18	Waterloo Estate Community Garden	Waterloo
19	Woolloomooloo Permaculture Community Garden	Woolloomooloo
Footpath verge gardens		
20	Arthur St Footpath Verge	Surry Hills
21	Phillip St Footpath Garden	Redfern
22	Sustainable Chippendale Footpath Gardens	Chippendale
Community composting		
23	Ada Place Community Composting	Ultimo

References and acknowledgements

City of Sydney and Thomas, F, *Getting started in Community Gardening, A guide to planning, design and implementation of community garden projects (2008)*

City of Sydney, *Draft Social Sustainability Strategy,* City of Sydney Council, Sydney

City of Sydney 2011, *Corporate Plan 2011–2014,* City of Sydney Council, Sydney

City of Sydney 2012, *Interim Waste Strategy,* City of Sydney Council, Sydney

City of Sydney 2007, *Open Space and Recreation Needs Study,* City of Sydney Council, Sydney

City of Sydney 2008, *Sustainable Sydney 2030,* SGS Economics and Planning, Sydney

City of Sydney 2011, *Volunteer Policy*

City of Sydney 2013, *Social Media Policy*

City of Sydney 2012, *Grants and Sponsorship Policy*

Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network

Brisbane City Council, *Brisbane Community Garden Guide*

Randwick City Council, *Community Garden Guidelines*

City of Melbourne, *Street Garden Guidelines*

Auckland City Council, *Community Garden Policy*

Gold Coast City Council, *Gold Coast Parks Community Gardens Start-up Kit*

City of Melbourne, *Draft Community Garden Policy*

San Francisco City Council, *Community Garden Policies*

City of Sydney, *Green Roofs and Walls Policy*

City of Sydney, *Green Roofs and Walls Policy Implementation Plan*

Contact

Community Garden and Volunteer Coordinator
City of Sydney GPO Box 1591
Sydney NSW 2001
Phone: (02) 9265 9333
Email: council@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

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Links to assist garden groups

City of Sydney community gardens

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/participation/community-gardens

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/participation/community-gardens/getting-started

Footpath Gardening Policy

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/150051/6687_FA2_Footpath-Gardening-Update.pdf

Community composting

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/participation/community-gardens/community-composting

Workshops

http://www.greenvillages.com.au/upcoming-workshops/

http://www.eventbrite.com.au/o/green-living-centre-1110083569

Grants and sponsorship

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/grants-and-sponsorships

Australian Community Gardens Network

http://communitygarden.org.au/

Royal Botanical Gardens

http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/

List of vegetables and herbs to grow in Sydney

http://www.yates.com.au/herbs

http://www.yates.com.au/vegetables/

Poisonous plants

http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/En/HealthAZ/SafetyandtheEnvironment/Poisoning/Pages/Plant-safety.aspx

http://www.petpoisonhelpline.com/poisons/

Organic materials

http://www.greenharvest.com.au/

Alternative plants to grow

http://www.growmeinstead.com.au

Biodynamic Sydney Inc.

bioddynamicssydney@gmail.com

NSW Food Authority

http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/

EPA - Integrated Pest Management

http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/pesticides/integratedpestmgmt.htm

Biodiversity in the garden

http://sydneyweeds.org.au/wp-cms/wp-content/uploads/Your-Hidden-Garden-08.pdf

Companion planting

http://www.yates.com.au/vegetables/tips/companion-planting/#KWKmvfWwxLtGIjSc.97

Crop rotation

http://www.abc.net.au/gardening/vegieguide/crop_rotation.htm

http://www.todayshomeowner.com/vegetable-garden-crop-rotation-made-easy/

Worm farming and composting

http://www.tumbleweed.com.au/Composting.aspx

http://www.tumbleweed.com.au/WormFarming.aspx

Dwarf fruit trees

http://www.daleysfruit.com.au/fruit%20pages/dwarfcitrus.htm

Trolley tracker

http://www.trolleytracker.com.au/

Phone: 1800 641 497

Asbestos

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/live/residents/health-and-safety/asbestos

Illegal dumping and needle hotline

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/live/waste-and-recycling/clean-streets

Green roofs and walls

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/vision/towards-2030/sustainability/greening-the-city/green-roofs-and-walls

Dial b4 you dig

http://1100.com.au/#

phone: 1100

Needle clean up hotline

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/live/waste-and-recycling/clean-streets

Phone: 1800 633 353

Community garden management plan and garden design template

We have provided this template to guide your group of all aspects that could be considered when developing a management plan. To assist your group to create a comprehensive plan that defines the overall vision for the garden, describes the roles and responsibilities of the group members, and outlines the benefits to the broader community. To assist your group gain funding, sponsorship, landowner approval or assist with new members. The plan should also include a landscape design layout to show the placement of the garden beds, pathways, tool shed and composting systems.

Title page – Group name, picture and date

1. Vision

Describe the overall vision for the garden.

a. What is the purpose of your community garden? Is it be a place for gardeners and the community to meet and learn about growing food? Is it to assist with food security? Is it to demonstrate food production to residents, schools and educational institutions?

b. How will this garden benefit the broader community?

c. Will you develop the garden in stages over a couple of years?

d. How will you achieve your objectives within the community garden?

2. Site of the garden

Describe the site location of the garden or footpath verge.

a. Who owns the land? Do you have permission for a garden?

b. Does the location fulfil the site selection criteria?

3. Management of the site

Describe the resources you will require as part of your garden design.

a. Garden beds – Describe the design and size of your garden beds, and what they will be made of.

b. Sustainable materials – Will you use sustainable materials?

c. Garden tools and storage – Will you have a tool shed? What will it be made of? Will it be big enough to store all the materials or will you need somewhere to store additional items? How will you maintain the tools?

d. Accessibility – Have you allowed for people with disabilities on the pathways? Or provided disabled access to at least one garden bed? Will your garden be open to the public? If not, will you hold open days for the community?

e. Managing waste and contamination – How will you deal with organic and non-organic waste on site? Or any dumping of rubbish? How will you deal with soil contamination?

f. Water management – Do you have access to water on site? How will you deal with water runoff from the site?

g. Facilities repairs – How will you manage or fund repairs if facilities are broken or vandalised?

h. Signage – How will you provide notices to other gardeners or members of the public in your garden? (The City provides two types of signage. Which type do you prefer?)

4. Gardening

Describe the gardening methods you will use and the resources required, and the structure to maintain these.

a. Type of garden – What type of garden will you have?

b. Style of garden – Is the chosen style suitable for the current number of gardeners? Does it allow for new gardeners to join?

c. Methodology – Does this method of gardening suit the site? Does your group have the skills to develop this method of gardening?

d. Allotment gardens – What happens when members are on holidays or sick? Do you have a communal garden for new gardeners on the waiting list for a plot garden?

e. Communal or shared garden – Will the group meet to discuss what to plant for each season? Do the members harvest throughout the year or will you have a harvest day?

f. Crops in the garden – What will you grow? Will you grow vegetables, fruit, herbs, medicinal herbs, flowers, bush tucker, native or other crops? Does your group have the skills to manage pests and diseases? Does your site have enough space for these crops? Can you purchase miniature varieties?

g. Surveillance – How will you provide surveillance of the garden, and reduce shadows on other gardeners' crops?

h. Watering roster – Will you have a roster to ensure watering throughout the year? How will you measure the amount of water or rainfall in the garden?

i. Composting system roster – Does your group have skills in composting? Will new members attend a composting workshop? Will you have a composting roster to ensure maintenance?

j. Odours, noise, and vermin – How will you manage these issues in the garden? How will you deal with complaints?

k. Vandalism and undesirables – How will you deal with issues of stolen produce, misuse of the garden or graffiti in the garden?

l. Poor aesthetics and messy gardens – How will you manage the overall look of the garden and ensure members understand the importance of keeping it well maintained?

m. Organic gardening – How will you apply organic gardening practices? How will you control pests, diseases and weeds organically? Will you use organic sprays? What will your process be for using these sprays?

n. Maintenance – How will you ensure maintenance of the garden? What if gardeners are on holidays or sick? Or a gardener does not maintain their garden? Will you have processes in place to manage these situations?

o. Access – Will members require keys or combinations to unlock the gate or access the tool shed?

p. Animals or native bees – Does you garden have enough space for animals or native bees? How will these creatures be maintained? And funded?

q. Tree pruning approval – How will you fund tree pruning or removal of a tree? (The City of Sydney can fund your application fee for approval for trees to be pruned or removed.)

r. Council Licences – Does your group have a licence agreement with the City?

s. Timeframes – The City considers community gardens to be long-term features of the community. How will your group ensure the garden is sustained over the long term?

t. Monitoring – The City will carry out random assessments of the garden and will contact the group coordinator if there are any issues.

5. Management structure

Describe your group's structure and how it will be managed.

a. Member coordinator – Who will be the group's contact person and liaise between the City and the group? The City will need their contact details to promote the group on the City's website.

b. Roles and responsibilities of members – Can you provide a list of roles, responsibilities and contact details for the gardening group?

c. Children in the garden – Will you have children under the age of 18 working in the garden? Will they be supervised by a parent or guardian? Is your garden within a community school? If so, your members will need to have a working with children check.

d. Communication – How will you communicate within the group and to other stakeholders?

e. Meetings and minutes – How often will your group meet to discuss the garden? Annually? Quarterly? Monthly? Will your group take minutes of the meeting and send a copy to the City?

f. Community – How will the community benefit from your community garden?

g. Structures – What structures will you have in the garden and for what purpose?

h. Working bees – Will you have weekly or monthly working bees? Will you invite new members to these working bees?

i. Demonstrations, open days, bus tours – Will you have special events when the garden is open to the general public for guided tours, or gardening demonstrations, or to share excess food produce? Will you provide guided tours to other gardens, or to school groups?

j. Festivals and displays – Will you participate in community festivals or set up displays to promote your group to the local community?

k. Community education – How will you educate the community about the garden and composting system?

l. Committee – Will you have a committee or a smaller group to make decisions?

m. Gardener's agreement – Will your group have a gardener's agreement or a set of rules to follow for a gardening plot? What happens if a gardener disobeys the rules? Will these rules be incorporated in the management plan?

n. Garden beds – Will residents go on a waiting list if there is no garden bed available or can they still participate? If a member forfeits their garden bed how long will it be before a new member is allowed to take it over?

o. Decision-making process – Will decisions be made by all group members or by a smaller group or committee?

p. Corporate groups or unemployment schemes – Will your garden be available to assist these groups to participate in gardening for one-off or short-term projects?

q. Conflict resolution and resolving disagreements – How will your group deal with conflict within the group, or with neighbours or local residents?

6. Budget

Provide a detailed budget of the costs of developing and running the garden. This should include:

a. Proposed budget for the development and construction of the garden

b. Costs for planting out the garden

c. Ongoing maintenance costs including plants, mulch, manure.

7. Health and safety

Describe how your group will meet the health and safety requirements.

a. Induction to site – How will you induct new members to health and safety procedures?

b. Personal protective equipment – Will you supply personal protective equipment to gardeners or will they have to supply their own? Will you ensure all gardeners are wearing covered shoes when gardening?

c. Risks and safety – How will you assess and manage risks in the garden?

d. Needles and asbestos – How will you deal with these items? The City can provide training for your group.

8. Garden membership

Describe how your group will manage garden membership and partnership.

a. Membership – Will you have an annual membership fee to participate in the garden? Will you have a process for new gardeners?

b. New memberships and friends of the garden – Will you have a category of membership for friends of the garden?

c. Organisations and schools – Will you allow local cafes, businesses, schools or organisations to participate in the garden or composting system? How will your group manage this?

d. Communication and promotion – How will your group promote and communicate to existing members and to the broader community?

e. How will you communicate with the landowner and the City of Sydney? Will this be via phone, email, on-site meetings or when required?

9. Communication

Describe how your group will communicate with each other about meetings, issues, new ideas or suggestions.

a. Community consultation – Will you require assistance with community consultation?

b. Social media – Will you use social media (Facebook, Twitter) or websites to promote your group? How will you manage this?

c. Media and sponsorship – Will you send out media releases about your garden? Will you apply for sponsorship to assist fund the garden?

d. Media – Will your group be available for photos and media interviews through television, radio or magazines?

10. Policies and guidelines

Describe how your group will educate members about policies, procedures and documents.

a. Policies, procedures and supporting fact sheets – How will you educate your gardeners about these documents? Where will you store these documents so they are available to gardening members?

b. Alcohol and smoking on site – How will you deal with gardeners who wish to drink alcohol on site? How will you deal with gardeners who wish to smoke on site?

c. Pets – Will you allow pets into the garden? How will your group manage this?

11. Funding

Describe how your group will fund the garden for short-term and long-term goals.

a. Membership fees – Will you charge fees to become a member? Will you provide discounts to members on low incomes or benefits, or who wish to become friends of the garden?

b. Budget – What will it cost to develop your garden and acquire materials? Can you develop the garden in stages over time to coincide with your budget?

c. Applying for grants – Will your group apply for grants? Will you require assistance with this?

d. Fundraising activities – Will your group organise fundraising events?

12. Training and education

Describe how your group will gain new skills and education for gardening, team building, administration and health and safety.

a. Training workshops – Will members attend training workshops or courses to increase skills and knowledge? The City provides workshops and can provide specialised training if required.

b. Sharing knowledge and skills on site – Will members share their skills and knowledge on site, during meetings or working bees? Will you share skills with other groups, or mentor new groups?

13. Reporting

Describe how your group will report outcomes, measure the success of the garden and lessons learnt.

a. Frequency – How often will the group report to the City? Monthly or quarterly?

b. Measurement – How will your group measure success and report on the lessons learnt?

14. Garden design

Describe in detail the overall garden design and placement of materials on the site.

a. Design principles – What materials and styles will be used?

b. Garden design layout plan – Provide an overall plan of the garden design, showing stages if appropriate.

15. Layout

Include a detailed layout design of the garden.

a. Show the boundary of the garden area and the neighbouring properties.

b. Show the placement of the garden beds, composting system and tool shed.

c. Show the types of crops you may grow to indicate the size and height.

Agreement

This is an agreement of the _____ group

Date: _____ Review date: _____

_____ _____

Signature of authorised person Signature of authorised person

_____ _____

_____ _____

Full name and position of signatory Full name and position of signatory

Community Garden Group Coordinator City of Sydney

CITY OF SYDNEY

Sydney2030/Green/Global/Connected

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