

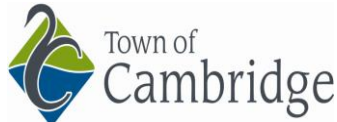


COMMUNITY GARDENING

SUCCESS FACTORS

THE 9PS OF GROWING VIBRANT AND VIABLE COMMUNITY GARDENS





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Lockridge Community Garden
Cnr Diana Crescent and Arbon Way
Lockridge

West Leederville Community Garden
60 Cambridge Street
West Leederville

All photos by Anne Goodall

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INTRODUCTION

There is a kind of magic that happens in a great community garden; but the 'how to' of creating such a garden is not all smoke and mirrors. This resource offers insights into nine key factors that help grow successful community gardens (the 9Ps) and provides tips to assist you in establishing or maintaining a vibrant and viable community garden in your local area.

The resource draws on experience gained through coordinating the Growing Communities WA project that supported the development of community gardens in Western Australia from 2008 to 2010 and is informed by action research carried out for the project with Lockridge Community Garden and West Leederville Community Garden. It is designed specifically for community self-managed gardens, but will also be relevant to agency-managed and Council-managed gardens. Whilst the resource draws on the experience of community gardens in WA, the information and tips provided will be relevant for community gardens anywhere.

THE 9PS

1. **Plants** – build on the special qualities of gardens
2. **People** – you can't do it alone
3. **Planning** (and chaos!) – develop a shared vision
4. **Process** – how you get there is important
5. **Partnerships** – many and diverse
6. **Place** – make a great community place
7. **Physical maintenance** – gardens need constant love
8. **Patience** – it won't happen overnight
9. **Pleasure** – it needs to be fun!

1. PLANTS – BUILD ON THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF GARDENS

Of course you don't need reminding that plants are a crucial element in any community garden. However it is useful to remember that it is the special qualities of gardening and plants that make community gardens different from other community facilities and also extends the range of benefits they can generate for communities. Plants are complex, natural, living organisms that can be cultivated and sometimes consumed for food. As a result of these qualities, community gardens:

- **Are natural, living environments.** Community gardens are 'life-full' places where the very structures and elements of the space are living and growing (just as we are). They help to connect people with nature, the seasons and the cycles of life. This can enhance mental health and well-being, as well as encouraging a commitment to caring for the natural environment. Through use of composting and worm farming systems, gardens also offer communities natural waste management solutions.
- **Are beautiful, sensory environments.** Community gardens are full of wonderful *sights* (colours, textures, people, artwork), *sounds* (bees buzzing, birds singing, children laughing), *tastes* (food picked fresh from the garden), *smells* (aromatic herbs, sweet compost, food cooking) and *tactile experiences* (warm sun on your back, wriggling worms, hands in the soil). The stimulation of the senses in a garden helps bring a sense of peace and makes them therapeutic environments.
- **Are interesting and informative environments.** Plants and ecosystems are complex; understanding them can be a life's work. Community gardens offer almost never-ending opportunities for learning across a wide range of areas and for putting knowledge and skills into practice. This makes them great 'outdoor classroom' venues for informal learning, school-based learning, formal education and training courses and lifelong learning.

- **Connect people with food and food cultures.** Access to good food is one of the fundamental building blocks of human life. Getting involved in community gardens helps people to better understand where food comes from, encourages healthy food choices and can enhance nutritional health. There is much vibrant and rich cultural activity bound up with the growing, harvesting and enjoyment of food. Community gardens also connect people with their own and other people’s food cultures and therefore enhance the cultural vitality of communities.
- **Encourage people to be physically active.** Gardening is a physical activity and hence involvement in community gardens can bring physical health benefits. Depending on abilities, people can choose between light physical exercise and more strenuous activities in the garden.
- **Offer people a place to ‘put down roots’.** For migrants and refugees (or even people moving to a new suburb, town or city), the act of literally ‘putting down roots’ by planting in a community garden can help them to connect with their new home.
- **Are inclusive places.** The range of skill levels catered for and activities on offer, together with the ‘hands on’ nature of gardening and the universal language of food, mean that community gardens provide fabulous opportunities for cross-cultural connections and for social participation by people who find it difficult to access traditional recreation and leisure options in the community. Community gardens are also one of the few types of community facilities where you’ll commonly see people of all ages coming together and intergenerational exchange taking place.

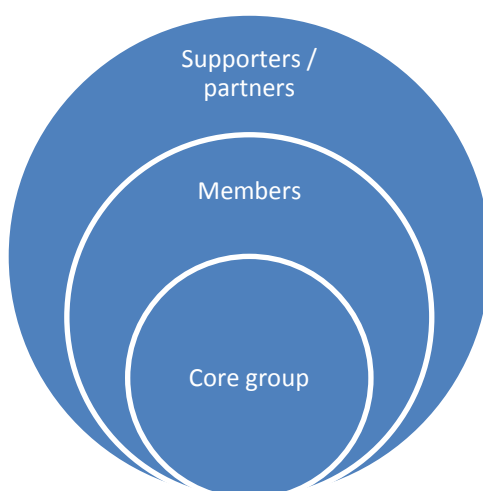
These are the key strengths and offerings of community gardens – make the most of them! Staying focused on building on the special qualities of plants and gardens will help your community garden to succeed.

2. PEOPLE – YOU CAN’T DO IT ALONE

Just as you can’t have a community garden without a garden, it’s equally true that you can’t have a community garden without a community. People are the other critical element. If you can ‘get the people stuff right’, you are a long way towards having a successful community garden.

HOW MANY PEOPLE DOES IT TAKE TO GROW A COMMUNITY GARDEN?

The number of people you will need to start and maintain a community garden in your local area will depend to some degree on the size and scale of your community gardening initiative. As a general rule, the people involved in community gardens tend to fall into the following three categories:



Most gardens tend to have a core organising group of around 6 to 20 people who spearhead the development and management of the garden. For some gardens, the core group organise themselves in an informal manner, whilst others adopt formal committee roles. Ideally, there will be a good mix of skills and interests in the core group for your garden and enough people to share the organisational workload so that it remains fun!

In addition to a core group, community gardens will generally have a broader membership base of people who contribute to and use the garden and share the physical workload. They might 'lease' a plot (in an allotment-style garden), regularly tend communal garden beds or take on other garden maintenance roles. Some gardens have structured membership categories with fees, whilst membership is informal in other gardens. To be viable in the long-term, your garden will need a membership base of sufficient size to keep on top of the ongoing maintenance tasks associated with your garden (this will vary depending on the size and scale of your garden).

Supporters and partners make up the third group of people involved in community gardens. This is the wide network of people who have connections with gardens and contribute to their success in some way, for example Local Council staff who secure support for gardens in their local area, community members who attend events at gardens, businesses who sponsor gardens, staff from disability agencies who bring clients to use gardens, school teachers who hold lessons in gardens and so on. Having a broad supporter base and a variety of partnerships will enhance the vibrancy and long-term viability of your garden. See the Partnerships section for more information.

ENGAGING PEOPLE

The question of how to engage people in your community garden is a critical one in the establishment phase of the garden and remains important as you continue along your community garden journey. People from all walks of life, backgrounds, ages and interests get involved in community gardens; there is no stereotyped 'community gardener'. Whilst gardening is a focus, community gardens are generally multi-purpose community hubs for a range of activities including education and training, playgroups, arts and creative activities, preparing and sharing food, community events and celebrations, and social enterprise. These days it is common to find people who are interested in community gardening:

- Residing in the streets surrounding the garden
- Involved in the local residents' association
- Using the local community, neighbourhood or learning centre
- In gardening clubs, organic growers' associations and slow food groups
- In local environmental groups
- In local service clubs
- Attending local playgroups
- Attending local churches
- Working for local schools and training providers
- Working for the Local Council or serving as a Local Councillor
- Working for organisations based locally that offer services for people with mental health issues or disabilities

Your efforts to attract new people to your garden will be most effective if you use a variety of engagement strategies to help you tap into the interest and enthusiasm of these different groups of people. For example, West Leederville Community Garden has found that having Earth Carer training courses (community waste education programs) delivered at the garden is an effective way of engaging new people. They also host annual garden open days and ran a project to engage local young people by inviting them to spray-paint artwork to adorn the garden shed. Busselton Community Garden runs a 'Mums, Bubs and Grubs' playgroup at the garden that brings in young families and has attracted other new people by hosting a wide range of community workshops and activities such as organic vegetable gardening, sour dough bread making, harvest feasts, solstice celebrations and car boot sales.



West Leederville Community Garden shed decorated with artwork created by local young people

Once you've attracted interest and attention to your community garden, the next step to involving more people is providing specific opportunities to 'plug-in' to the garden. Opportunities could include: becoming a member; 'leasing' a plot; volunteering to maintain communal garden areas; participating in busy bees; joining the organising committee; joining the garden mailing list; making a donation; or providing sponsorship. It is important to publicise and promote the various ways that people can get involved in your garden, to help convert people's interest in the garden into active involvement. You could include this information on garden signage, your website, in flyers and leaflets handed out at the garden or distributed locally, through email newsletters or at a membership stall set up during garden events and open days.

INDUCTING NEW MEMBERS OR VOLUNTEERS INTO THE GARDEN

Taking new people through an induction process when they join your community garden will contribute to successful garden functioning and long-term viability. An effective induction process will help to:

- Make people feel welcome
- Ensure people are aware of their rights and responsibilities (in particular in relation to maintaining plots and communal areas)
- Make people aware of any facilities available at the garden
- Ensure people understand how the garden is run, how they can have input to decision making and what steps will be taken to resolve any conflict in the garden
- Make people aware of opportunities for social interaction in the garden
- Enhance safety and security at the garden

West Leederville Community Garden has recently updated their process for inducting new people into the garden, to make it more formal and comprehensive. The experience of the garden is that by making the induction process a bit more 'official', new members are more likely to take it seriously and to fulfill their responsibilities. The garden's induction program now includes the provision of a Garden Participation Pack (including information on roles and responsibilities, the history of the garden and gardening tips), a garden talk and tour (delivered using a checklist of all the points that need to be covered), signing of a garden agreement and completion of an induction survey (to let the garden know how well people have understood key information and give new members the opportunity to provide feedback). Samples of these induction tools are available to download from the Community Gardens WA website (www.communitygardenswa.org.au).

3. PLANNING (AND CHAOS!) – DEVELOP A SHARED VISION

Community gardens come in all shapes and sizes. There is no ‘one size fits all’ community garden model or template that can be transplanted into communities and therefore a range of planning decisions need to be made when starting a new garden or further developing an existing garden. Some key decisions relate to the:

- **Size** of the garden (small vegetable patch, large scale community facility or something in between)
- **Style** of the garden (allotment, communal or both)
- **Design elements** in the garden (e.g. composting systems, pizza oven, poultry, disability access features)
- **Management structure** of the garden (e.g. informal structure, incorporated association)
- **Garden practices** (organic or not organic)
- **Types of plants**

Coming together and spending time identifying the overall aims and goals of your particular garden will give your group a clear framework within which to make these and other planning decisions. For example, if your vision is for the garden to be a place that’s welcoming and inspiring for children, then you’ll want to ensure there are design features that help to achieve this (perhaps a sandpit, climbing frame, frog pond or having chooks in the garden). If education is an important part of your vision then you’ll want to consider possible outdoor classroom areas. And so on.

It’s also useful to remember that people get involved in community gardens for different reasons and come with different experiences of and ideas about community gardens. Creating a shared vision is about getting people on the same page and working towards the same goal. Undertaking a planning and visioning process for your garden will give people the opportunity to discuss and reach agreement about its purpose and therefore minimise the chance of conflict emerging about how the garden should be developed.

VISIONING PROCESSES

There are a variety of ways you could engage people in creating a shared vision for your community garden. Different approaches will work better for some groups than others. You would know from your own experience whether you prefer to fill in a questionnaire, take part in a small group discussion, attend a large public meeting or perhaps participate in a creative arts-based activity. All of these approaches can be useful for generating a vision for your garden; it is a good idea to offer a few different ways for people to have input to your vision in order to ensure the process is inclusive of the whole garden community.

If you would like some support in conducting a visioning process for your community garden, it is likely that there will be people in your local community who have expertise in this area and would be willing to assist (for example Local Council community development staff or people working in a local community, neighbourhood or learning centre). Some gardens find it useful to secure funds to buy-in a skilled, external facilitator to assist with visioning processes.

Here are some visioning questions that may be helpful in identifying the overall aims and goals of your garden:

- What activities do you envisage happening in the community garden?
- Who will use the garden and what will they use it for?
- What community needs could the community garden help to meet?
- What issues in your community could the community garden help to address?
- What initiatives or activities that are already happening (or are planned) in your community could complement the community garden?
- What organisations, groups or businesses in your area might benefit from partnering with the community garden?

ALLOWING CHAOS AND RENEWING YOUR VISION

Developing a vision and plan for your garden doesn't mean that things can't change and evolve along the way. A healthy dose of chaos is important in any living system and this is certainly true in the development of community gardens. At Busselton Community Garden for example, an unexpected donation of children's play equipment changed the initial garden design. The play structure ended up being installed in the centre of the garden, providing a wonderful focal point that has really put the involvement of children at the 'heart' of the garden.



A good approach is to develop a vision for your garden in the early stages and then build-in regular (perhaps yearly) opportunities for renewing it. West Leederville Community Garden recently benefitted from renewing their vision after being open for two and a half years. The process provided a good opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the garden in that time. It also helped to reinvigorate long-term members as well as giving new people a chance to feel included, have an increased sense of 'ownership' of the garden, offer their skills and put their hand up for tasks. Renewing your garden's vision over time will help it to stay in touch with the changing needs of the people involved in the garden and your local community.

Play equipment at Busselton Community Garden

4. PROCESS – HOW YOU GET THERE IS IMPORTANT

Community gardens aren't like regular public gardens or parks. They're not simply places to grow food and plants; they're places that grow community. At their heart, community gardens are *community development* initiatives that strengthen and build the resilience of local communities through increasing community connections and networks of support, developing the skills and knowledge of local people, identifying and building on local assets, and encouraging community members to work cooperatively to solve problems and meet their own needs.

In order for your garden to ultimately be a place that builds community, it's important that the *process* of developing the garden – or 'how you get there' – is a community-building experience. The following process principles will help keep your garden on track:

- **Ensure your garden reflects and expresses local needs, interests and culture.** If your garden is to be well-used and viable in the long-term, it needs to reflect and express the needs, interests and culture of the people involved in the garden and the community that surrounds it.
- **Invite and welcome involvement from a wide range of people in the community around your garden.** The development of your garden will be enriched and strengthened through engaging as wide and diverse a range of community members as possible. Like a healthy eco-system, diversity is strength in a community garden. Some people will be interested in being involved in planning and decision-making, whilst others will only want to get involved once the garden is up and running and they can tend their own plot. Be prepared for and invite these different degrees of involvement. Look for opportunities to involve people at every stage of start-up, design, construction and ongoing management of the garden.

- **Build connections.** Community gardens can serve as hubs for people to meet, make friends and develop networks of support and exchange. These connections enhance personal and community resilience. Find ways to make and build connections between the various people, groups and organisations involved in your garden.
- **Value local skills, knowledge and resources.** Look for skills, knowledge and resources within your garden group and local community before calling in outside ‘experts’ to do things on your behalf. This will contribute to building pride, self-reliance and self-sufficiency in your garden and consequently your local community. Conducting a simple skills audit of the people involved with your garden can help to uncover the skills, knowledge and resources of your group. One way to do this is by including some basic questions on these topics in your garden’s membership form.
- **Build local capacity.** When you do bring in outside expertise to assist with developing and maintaining your garden, look for ways to build the knowledge and skills of people involved in the garden at the same time. For instance, a straw bale building workshop was held at Carss Park community garden in Sydney where members learnt skills under the guidance of a qualified instructor whilst assisting with the construction of a straw bale building onsite.



Straw bale building being constructed at Carss Park Community Garden in Sydney

5. PARTNERSHIPS – *MANY AND DIVERSE*

Your garden will be strengthened through having partnerships with a diverse range of organisations and groups. Partnerships will help to bring additional people and resources to your garden and expand your supporter base. The wide appeal of community gardens means a growing number of governments, community organisations, businesses and community groups are actively seeking out opportunities to partner with gardens. There has really been no better time for your garden to secure productive partnerships to help it survive and thrive.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

The visioning questions listed in the Planning section provide a useful starting point for identifying potential partners and avenues of support for your community garden. The following organisations and groups are some of the key potential partners for community gardens.

LOCAL COUNCILS

Community gardens can help Local Councils to achieve their strategic aims and Councils can play a key role in ensuring community gardens are viable, so there is a natural fit between them. Community gardens benefit from developing strong, positive relationships with both Local Councillors and relevant Council staff. There are many different ways that Local Councils can support community gardens, including through the provision of: land; funding; insurance cover; Council worker time; advertising and promotion; and supplies of water, electricity and mulch. Gardens can relate to a number of areas within Local Councils, however staff that are actively involved in supporting community gardens most commonly work in the Community Development, Sustainability, Environment or Parks and Gardens areas of Councils.

REGIONAL COUNCILS

Regional Councils exist within the Perth metropolitan area and in regional areas of WA. They work on behalf of member Local Councils to provide coordinated waste management and other services and activities that benefit from regional collaboration (for example environmental management, regional and urban development and risk management). Many Regional Councils deliver waste education to the community, to encourage people to 'reduce, reuse and recycle'. The use of composting and worm farming systems in community gardens means they can provide interesting and informative venues for delivering community waste education; hence the potential value of partnering with gardens. Waste Education Officers at Regional Councils are good contacts for community gardens.

COMMUNITY, NEIGHBOURHOOD AND LEARNING CENTRES

Community, neighbourhood and learning centres are friendly, comfortable places which offer a wide range of courses to the community at minimal costs, including courses for adults, workshops, discussion groups, exhibitions, displays, management training and social events. Centres are continually looking for new, attractive and relevant adult learning activities and opportunities to offer to their members. Community gardens can offer centres high quality and accessible outdoor learning environments either onsite or at a neighbouring location. They can enhance the relevance, appeal and accessibility of centres by providing opportunities for:

- **Inclusive activities**, such as activities suitable for frail aged and people with disabilities, intergenerational and cross-cultural activities and activities that appeal to male members of the community
- 'Hands-on' **informal learning** through regular volunteering in the garden
- **Formal learning** opportunities through the wide range of community courses and programs that can be delivered in community garden settings, such as organic vegetable gardening, waterwise gardening, composting and worm farming, art in the garden and healthy, seasonal cooking
- The **creation of beautiful outdoor spaces** to be enjoyed by the whole centre community that also enhance the appeal of the centre as a venue for hire

OTHER ORGANISATIONS AND GROUPS

- State and federal government agencies (particularly in the areas of housing, health, mental health, disability, training and employment)
- Community service organisations
- Property developers
- Education providers
- Schools
- Community groups
- Church groups
- Service clubs (e.g. Rotary)

CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

It's important to remember that it takes a fair amount of time and a strong commitment to make partnerships work. Before your garden rushes into the first partnership opportunity that comes along, make sure you check that your garden committee and/or membership are willing and able to invest the necessary time and energy into making the partnership work and that the following conditions¹ for an effective partnership are in place:

- Partners have a **shared interest or concern**
- The partnership has a **clear purpose**; partners have a **common understanding** of what the partnership is about
- Partners are interested in and able to work together; there is a **good relationship** between one or more key people
- Partners believe the **partnership brings benefit and real value** to their existing activities
- There is **recognition and acknowledgement of any differences** in the contexts that the partners work within (i.e. if partners come from the government or private sectors there is likely to be differences between them and gardens in terms of areas of skills and knowledge, resources, priorities, timelines and so on)
- There are **agreed and effective communication processes** put in place for the partnership
- There is **regular feedback** between partners about the progress, glitches, achievements and next steps for the partnership

It's a good idea to have some agreed processes in place for how your garden will weigh up and makes decisions about potential partnership opportunities. You might find it helpful to come up with your own checklist for assessing opportunities, e.g. must help achieve the goals of the garden; must bring in income or at least not leave the garden 'out of pocket'; must engage groups that the garden wants to engage and so on. Be prepared to say no to potential partnerships that won't work well or won't deliver sufficient benefits to your garden and your community. For more information on successful partnerships see the *Growing Education: Community gardens building effective partnerships with education providers* and *Funding Your Community Garden* resources that are available to download from the Community Gardens WA website (www.communitygardenswa.org.au).

6. PLACE – MAKE A GREAT COMMUNITY PLACE

Community gardens that are well-used and much-loved are great community *places*. Project for Public Spaces (world leaders in the field of *place making*) have studied successful public places around the world and identified four qualities² that they share. Enhancing these four qualities in your community garden will help it to thrive:

- **People are engaged in activities.** It's a simple idea: the more things there are to do in your garden, the more people will use the garden. A good place to start is to identify ten things you could do in your garden and plan your design to support these (for example possible activities could include gardening, resting in a peaceful sitting spot, preparing and sharing food, interacting with animals, playing chess, attending a workshop or creating garden artwork). Having a greater range of potential uses on offer in your garden (both active and passive) means that family or intergenerational groups are more likely to use the garden together.

¹ This list of conditions has been compiled from Frank and Smith (2006), VicHealth (n.d.) and Mitchell and Goodall (2010).

² Project for Public Spaces (n.d.).

- **The space is accessible.** Your garden will be more successful if it is easy to see into and easy to get to. Look for ways to increase visibility into the garden (people are more likely to enter a space if they can see good things are happening in it), to enhance the accessibility of the garden for people with disabilities, to link the garden with walking routes and public transport options and to provide sufficient space for parking bikes and cars.
- **The space is comfortable and has a good image.** How does your community garden look from the street? Does it make a good first impression? Attractive gardens will be more appealing. This doesn't mean gardens need to be neat and ordered places; what's important is that it is clear people care for the space and there are beautiful and interesting elements to entice people in. Ensuring your garden is a comfortable place to spend time is another key to success (this includes the availability of places to sit, perceptions of safety, cleanliness, protection from the weather and access to amenities like toilets and drinking water).
- **It is a sociable space, where people meet each other and take people when they come to visit.** You can encourage a welcoming and convivial atmosphere in your garden by taking the time to greet and speak to people who come to the garden, learning the names of fellow gardeners, creating spaces for people to gather and spend time together (e.g. tables and chairs under shelter), organising social activities for garden members and nurturing a culture where simply 'hanging out' in the garden is smiled upon.



Sunday mornings at Lockridge Community Garden - making a great community place

For almost a year now, Lockridge Community Garden has been attracting a good crowd of people to the garden for monthly, free gardening workings on Sunday mornings. However it's not the workshops alone that account for this success. As one gardener recently remarked, "it feels like the garden has become a place". There are a range of activities on offer including attending the workshop, buying a freshly cooked pizza straight from the garden's pizza oven, checking out the 'Bring and Buy' swap meet happening at the senior citizens' centre next door, chatting and hanging out with friends and neighbours and, (for kids) enjoying a free mini-train ride run by the local Rotary Club. The garden has plenty of different seating options and shade structures are set up during the workshops to keep people comfortable. There is no fence around the Lockridge Community Garden so it's easy for people walking past to see all the action, wander in and stay awhile. The welcoming and casual atmosphere of the Sunday mornings mean people are able to move freely and easily between different activities and to simple 'hang out'. A great example of how effective place making can enhance a community garden!



Gardening workshops at Lockridge garden



Eating and hanging out at Lockridge garden

7. PHYSICAL MAINTENANCE – GARDENS NEED CONSTANT LOVE

Whilst community gardens have a lot in common with other community facilities, one significant way they differ is the amount of regular physical maintenance required to keep them functioning. Gardens are living structures that need constant care and nourishment to survive and thrive. Many vegetable plants are only expected to live for one season. Compost needs to be turned, fruit trees pruned and seeds planted. The great benefit of the living nature of community gardens is that they can constantly adapt and evolve in response to the changing needs and interests of the people involved; the challenge of these types of community facilities is staying on top of the physical maintenance tasks required to keep things working and looking good.

DESIGN THE GARDEN TO MINIMISE THE ONGOING MAINTENANCE REQUIRED

When designing your garden, look for ways to keep the maintenance workload manageable for your garden group. It may be that you start with a small garden and increase the size as more people get involved. Try to use low-maintenance materials in the construction of your garden. For example West Leederville Community Garden has found that their mulched pathways require constant weeding and re-mulching. The garden is considering replacing these with crushed rock paths to reduce the need for ongoing maintenance.

STRATEGIES FOR ENSURING PEOPLE MAINTAIN THEIR PLOTS AND COMMUNAL AREAS

Community gardens with allotments (small plots of lands that people pay to garden) sometimes face issues of members not maintaining their plots and/or not contributing time to maintaining communal areas in the garden (e.g. shared garden beds, pathways, worm farming and composting systems, fruit trees and seating areas). Here are some strategies you can employ in your garden to deal with these issues:

- Take people through a **comprehensive induction process** when they join the garden to ensure they understand their responsibilities in relation to maintenance of their own plot and communal areas. At Busselton Community Garden for example, members are responsible for maintaining a weed free plot and must contribute to at least two busy bees at the garden per year.
- Hold workshops to **provide new members with the skills** they need to maintain their plots (for example Busselton Community Garden runs a 'prepare and revitalise your vegetable plot' workshop).

- Publicise **agreed procedures for dealing with members who aren't fulfilling their membership responsibilities** and make sure you **follow-through** and implement these procedures when appropriate. At Busselton Community Garden for example, if a member has neglected their plot for one month they receive a phone call from the committee and then have two weeks to attend to their plot. If no action is taken the member risks forfeiting their plot.
- Host weekly gardening days or regular busy bees when people can **work together** to undertake maintenance of communal areas.
- Invite people to **nominate to be responsible for specific maintenance tasks** in the garden (e.g. turning the compost or feeding the chickens).

Animal Roster	Rabbit	Guinea Pig	Geese	Ducks	Chooks
	Pellets Water Greens Bedding	Pellets Water Greens Bedding	Grain Greens Water Bath	Grain Greens Water Bath	Grains Greens Water Eggs Bedding
MON Amber	X	X	X	X	X
TUES CLAY	X	X	X	X	X
WED THOM	X	X	X	X	X
THUR CLAY	X	X	X	X	X
FRI Amber	X	X	X	X	X
SAT John Kids	X	X	X	X	X
SUN					

Animal roster at Perth City Farm

8. PATIENCE – IT WON'T HAPPEN OVERNIGHT

A number of elements need to come together in order to grow a successful community garden. Even before the first hole is dug or seed planted, there are people to be engaged in the process, an appropriate site to be secured, a shared vision to be developed, a garden design to be drawn up and funding and other resources to be obtained. All of these tasks take time, especially when undertaken by volunteers who are fitting them in around paid work as well as family and other commitments. It commonly takes a year or more from the time of the first discussions about developing a new garden to work beginning onsite to construct the garden. For some gardens, the start-up phase takes a lot longer. It's likely that you will need to be patient in relation to the pace of the development of your community garden. Remember you're not just building a garden, you're building community and that won't happen overnight. In the same way that investing time in building up the nutrients in your garden soil will pay dividends in the long run in terms of a bountiful harvest of fresh vegetables, the time your garden group spends doing things well – building strong relationships, undertaking careful planning, negotiating effective partnerships, raising funds and so on – will reward you with a strong foundation for a successful community garden.

9. PLEASURE – IT NEEDS TO BE FUN!

Digging holes, shifting sleepers, managing group dynamics, responding to concerns of neighbours – setting up and maintaining a community garden can feel like hard work at times. Make sure you are always on the lookout for ways to enjoy the journey! Celebrating both the small wins and the big achievements in the development of your garden will help to maintain enthusiasm and energy amongst people involved. See the Physical Maintenance section for tips on minimising the burden of ongoing maintenance tasks and for ensuring the workload is shared amongst garden members. Why have a meeting when you can have a party? Sharing food and drink when you get together to plan and discuss garden developments is a simple yet effective way of making meetings more enjoyable. And most importantly, make sure you set aside plenty of time for simply relaxing in the garden – smelling the orange blossom, feeling the breeze on your face, watching the chickens – and for admiring the wonderful community asset that you are helping to create.

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