



# BYRON SHIRE COMMUNITY GARDENS GUIDELINES

A guide to develop, implement and  
maintain a successful community garden  
in Byron Shire.

2020 - 2025

# Contents:

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1	<b>Getting started</b>
1	- Community gardens in the Byron Shire
1	- Before you get started
2	- Five components of a successful community garden
3	- Seven steps to starting a new community garden
4	<b>Step 1 - Contact and assess</b>
4	- Discuss the project with Council
4	- Find the right site
5	<b>Step 2 - Consult and plan</b>
5	- Establish a community garden committee
8	- Choose a garden model, method and design
10	- Investigate insurance options
11	<b>Step 3 - Lodge</b>
11	- Communicate your intention to lodge
12	- Complete checklist for establishing a new community garden
14	- Submit an expression of interest to Council
14	<b>Step 4 - Apply</b>
14	- Apply to establish a community garden
15	- Funding your garden
17	- Garden management plan
18	<b>Step 5 - Approval</b>
18	- License to garden
19	<b>Step 6 - Gardening</b>
19	- Council's roles and responsibilities
20	- Community garden committee's roles and responsibilities
22	- Organisational systems
23	- Garden maintenance and inspections
24	<b>Step 7 - Thrive</b>
24	- Attract and retain new members
25	- Orient and educate members
26	<b>Appendix</b>
26	- Forms and templates
26	- Definitions
28	- References
29	- Other useful links
30	- Garden Plan of Management Template



**Welcome!**

## Getting Started

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Community gardening is an immensely satisfying and enriching experience, and we hope that this guide will help in supporting the development of a strong network of diverse and beautiful gardens across the Byron Shire.

These guidelines are a companion document to the Byron Shire Community Gardens Policy. They are based on Council's knowledge of successful community gardens in the Byron Shire and around Australia, and contain everything you need to know about setting up and running a community garden.

These guidelines are primarily intended for:

- People wanting to start a new community garden
- Existing community garden committees

## Community Gardens in the Byron Shire

Open and natural spaces are important to the Byron Shire's community. There are currently two community gardens in the Byron Shire; Mullumbimby Community Garden and Shara Community Garden in Ocean Shores. A community garden is Council owned land used for the primary purposes of growing fresh produce and providing gardening-related recreational and educational activities as a multi-functional space. Community gardens provide a range of social, environmental and educational benefits.

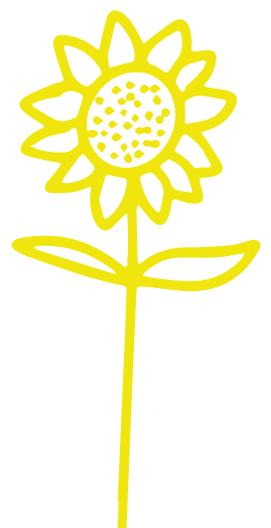
## Before you get started

### Is creating a new community garden right for you?

Beginning a community garden takes a great deal of time, commitment, energy and a strong network of like-minded community members to bring the vision to life. The following questions will help you to identify if a community garden is the right project for you:

- Do you have an established community group that want to do this project and are in it for the long haul?
- Is a community garden the most effective way to address your community's needs, e.g. food security, social opportunities, health promotion, environmental improvement or learning for sustainability?

If you answered no to either of the above, there is still some work to do. Perhaps joining an existing community garden could be a better way to achieve your goals, whilst also strengthening and enhancing that garden. If you believe that a community garden is right for your community group and you have the ability to achieve your goal, then read on.



## Five components of a successful community garden

The five essential ingredients for creating a thriving and long-lasting community garden are;



### People

Your garden committee 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.



### 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, easy access for all pedestrians, adequate parking and access to public toilets.



### Style

The natural and man-made features on the site will determine the style of garden.



### Structure

A garden management plan will provide structure for the garden committee by outlining responsibilities, rosters, maintenance and record keeping.



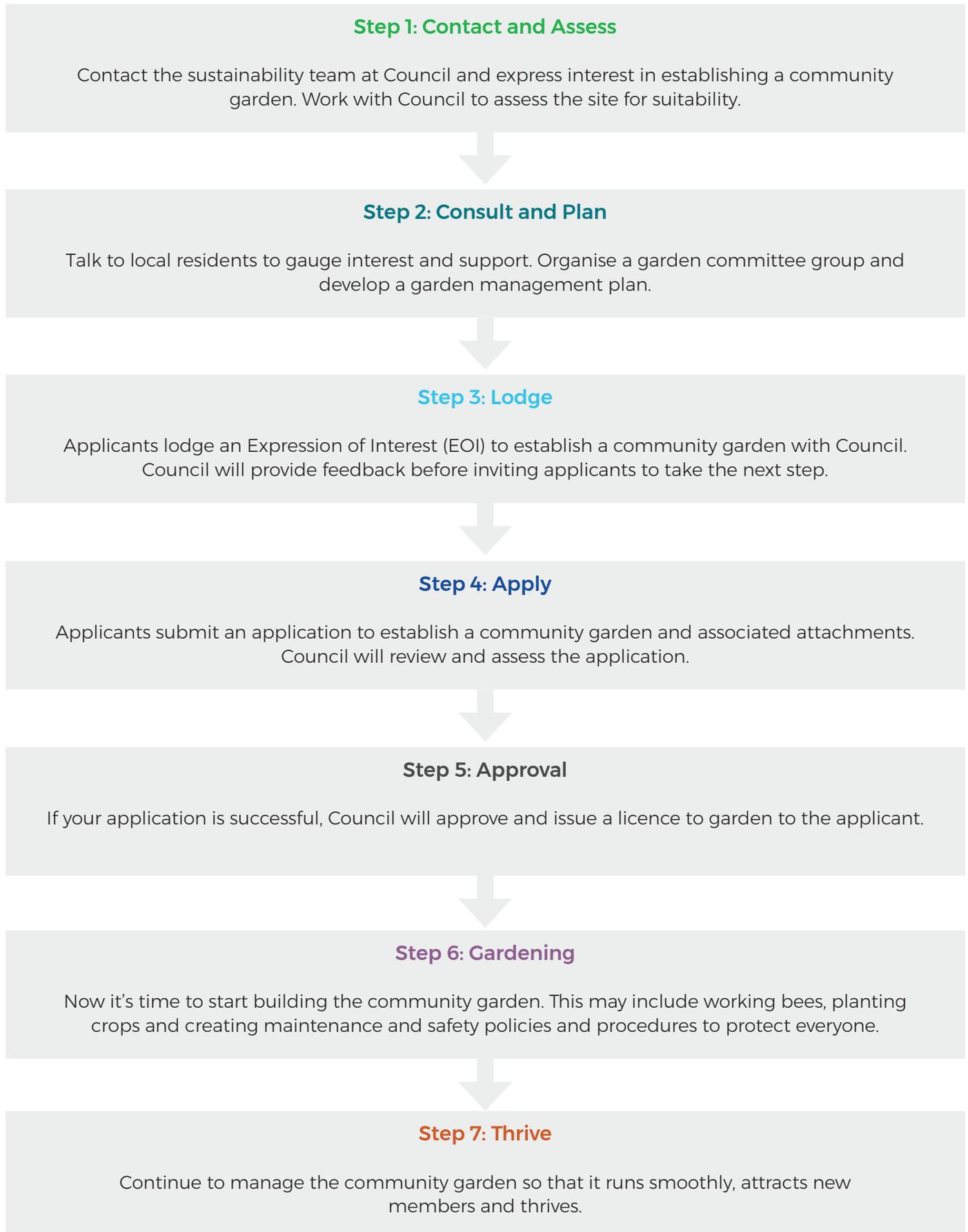
### Communication

Clear internal and external communication is something to prioritise, especially with your local neighbours and garden members.



# Seven steps to start a new community garden

This flow chart is a summary of the seven steps you need to take to create a community garden. Details and guidance for each step are provided in the following sections.





## Step 1- Contact and Assess

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### Discuss the project with Council

#### **Council's role**

The first step in starting a community garden involves conducting an assessment of potential sites and discussing the proposal with Council staff. Contact Council's sustainability team about your idea, on 02 6626 7000 or email [sustainability@byron.nsw.gov.au](mailto:sustainability@byron.nsw.gov.au).

It is important to maintain contact with Council's sustainability team throughout the process as council staff can provide you with useful advice regarding possible garden sites and may be able to connect you with others in the community also looking to start a community garden. In cases where the site is unsuitable, Council may suggest an alternative site or provide feedback.

### Find the right site

#### **Assessing the options**

When considering a potential garden site, make sure you take the time to assess it to ensure you identify all the risks, opportunities and possible threats to the garden.

Some useful questions to consider are:

- Who owns the land?
- What community groups and businesses are nearby that might support or partner (or object to) the project?
- What is the land currently used for? Does it have any zoning restrictions?
- What plants are already on the site?
- Does the site have underground services: electricity, water, telephone or sewerage?
- How much sun does the site get?
- What are the possible flooding or acid sulphate soil risks?
- Are parking, access and public toilet facilities adequate?



## Step 2 – Consult and Plan

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### Establish a community garden committee

#### Consult your local community and grow community partnerships

Informing your local community that you plan to establish a community garden is a good way to generate awareness and build support for your idea as well as address any concerns. It is critical to have a strong relationship with your surrounding community, particularly with immediate neighbours, who can be both your best advocate and your strongest critic. This is an important relationship to nurture throughout the whole garden project.

Many successful community gardens have developed strong supportive partnerships with other community groups, schools, businesses and organisations in their local area, providing a valuable source of resources, collaborative projects and ideas.

#### The first community meeting

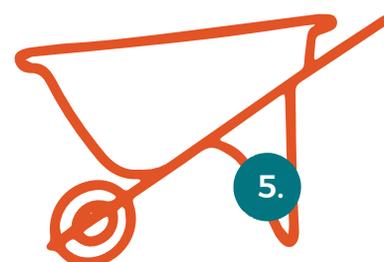
The purpose of the first meeting is to float the idea of the community garden and to gather people interested in starting it. Make sure to let Council know about the meeting so they can field any enquiries and send interested people your way, and also attend as a stakeholder. Put flyers up on notice boards and letterbox drop the local neighbourhood, particularly if you have a proposed site in mind.

At the meeting, clearly explain your ideas about the community garden and your motivation. If possible, have a skilled facilitator run the meetings so that any ideas/objections are recorded and try to work through any issues as soon as possible.

#### Setting up a garden committee

A community garden is built on a sense of community and is unlikely to succeed with the enthusiasm of just one or two people. Choosing people with a range of skills and experience to be on the initial committee is important because they will influence how the garden evolves. Skills that are useful include: landscape design, horticulture, hydrology, seed saving, organisation (liaising with Council), communication, public relations and education.

The size of the committee will depend on the size of the project. It may be as large as 20 or as small as five, however make it big enough to ensure that the responsibility and workload can be shared. Once you have established your committee, organise regular meetings and social events to discuss the development of the garden whilst also maintaining enthusiasm and growing relationships.





### **Community garden coordinator**

Creating a community garden coordinator position within the garden committee is an important step. This person will be the main contact for garden members, the community and Council. They require strong interpersonal and communication skills, such as listening, problem solving, decision making, leadership, project management and being able to work with different types of people. They need to be readily available by email and phone and, if the role changes, this should be communicated to all garden members and Council early to avoid confusion.

## Define your purpose

It is useful to clarify the purpose of the garden with your committee in the early meetings as there can be many different ideas on this. A clear purpose will help to establish exactly what it is the group wants to achieve, unify the group and prevent conflict. Some good questions to ask to are:

- Why do you think a community garden would be a good idea?
- What is the main purpose of it?
- What do you expect to get from the community gardening experience?

## Research your garden project

Once you have brought together a committee, it's a good idea to visit other community gardens to look at what they have done and to talk with those who manage them, for example local organisation Mullum S.E.E.D. [www.mullumseed.org.au](http://www.mullumseed.org.au). Alternatively visit Council's website, [www.byron.nsw.gov.au](http://www.byron.nsw.gov.au), to see examples of existing local community gardens.

### You could ask about:

- organisational structure
- decision making
- conflict resolution
- record keeping processes
- insurance
- funding



## Choose a garden model, method and design

While it might feel like a lot of detail now, choosing your garden model, method and design early on in the process will assist you later on in the application process. There are several design options for community gardens. Take the time to consider which design type and organisational model best suits your garden.

### Organisational models

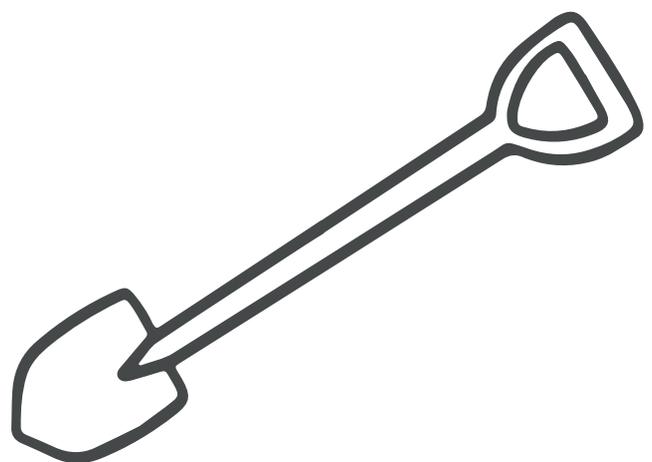
1. **Communal** - This model can incorporate a large number of people and assist members with limited knowledge or skills in gardening. The garden is managed collectively, with members deciding on crops and rosters for garden maintenance and meeting on harvest days to share the produce.
2. **Allotment** - 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.
3. **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.
4. **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.
5. **Community garden bed** - Council recommends that all community gardens have at least one garden bed planted with herbs for the community to harvest. This encourages the participation of the local community and reduces vandalism.

### Gardening method and design

There are a variety of methods and designs to choose from when creating a garden so it may be worth seeking advice from a professional or another community garden as to what works best. Consider the skill level in the garden committee and ease of use for the community when choosing.

#### Garden methods include:

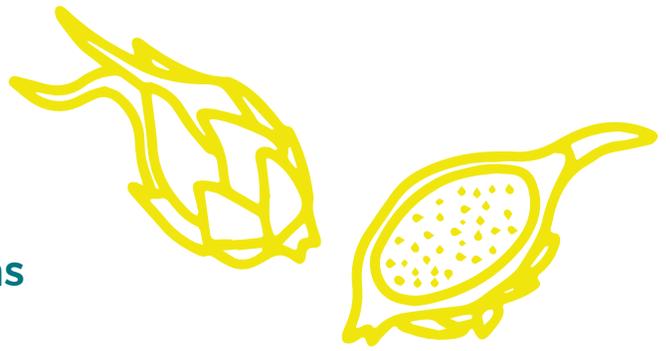
- raised soil garden beds
- wicking garden beds
- permaculture/food forest
- aquaponics
- no-dig garden





Garden design elements to consider:

- **Aesthetics** – ensure the overall look of the garden is attractive.
- **Cultural diversity** – consult with your local indigenous and other cultural groups and look to include the plants and cultural traditions significant to that area.
- **Services** – plan around your existing services (electrical cables, water pipes, taps and sewer).
- **Water and waste management** – look for water harvesting and passive irrigation opportunities. Recycle and compost waste on site. Use recycled and local materials.
- **Pest management and biodiversity** – consider a range of plants that provide habitat for predatory insects, reptiles, amphibians and birds.
- **Accessibility** – think about those with limited mobility. Ensure garden beds are narrow enough to avoid over straining and high enough so those in a wheelchair can reach them. Signage should be in a large, clear font.
- **Safety** – maintain clear lines of sight and provide places for people to sit and enjoy the gardens.
- **Education** – create opportunities for experiential learning, demonstration and practical small-group activities.



## Investigate insurance options

### Public liability insurance

All community gardens need to acquire and maintain a minimum of \$20 million public liability insurance, as it protects both the garden and Council against potential charges made against them if a gardener or visitor is hurt or injured. It also increases the range of grants that you may be eligible for.

Garden committees with limited funds for insurance could consider these options:

1. The committee can become an incorporated association through NSW Fair Trading and manage their own insurance.
2. The committee may be under auspice of another organisation and thereby covered under their insurance. This may involve paying a small management fee to the auspice organisation.
3. A group of community gardens with similar objectives might buy group insurance together.

It is a good idea to do a yearly review of your insurance to ensure that any new garden activities, such as new volunteers or paid staff, are covered by the policy.

### Incorporation of your garden committee

Council recommends a community garden have a legal structure to allow for flexibility in the management of funds and to enable you to open a bank account, obtain your own public liability insurance and apply for grants. If you do choose to be under the auspice of another organisation, make sure you are aware of all your rights and responsibilities under your auspice agreement.

You can apply to NSW Fair Trading to become an incorporated association. Incorporation may stipulate that an organisation:

- establish roles such as secretary, treasurer, public officer and president
- provide an annual report to NSW Fair Trading
- adopt a constitution and a set of rules
- hold a number of general meetings throughout the year, one of which will be an annual general meeting



## Step 3 - Lodge

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### Communicate your intention to lodge

The next step now is to get in touch with Council again and let them know you are ready to lodge **Form 1 - Community Garden Expression of Interest**.

Contact Council's sustainability team about your idea, on **02 6626 7000** or email [sustainability@byron.nsw.gov.au](mailto:sustainability@byron.nsw.gov.au).

Once you have contacted Council this will trigger a formal Expression of Interest process in which you will be invited to be a part of by lodging **Form 1 - Community Garden Expression of Interest in the Appendix**.





## Checklist for a new community garden

Before you lodge Form 1, consider all the items in this checklist so as to ensure you have thought through all the important elements of your garden before going further. Make sure you choose at least one answer per question before continuing.

### What is the purpose of the community garden?

- to grow fresh produce crops
- to supplement with a health food supply
- to socialise with your community
- to learn new skills
- to educate others
- to foster food security
- to reduce food miles

### Proposed site considerations

- Ownership of land
- Current use of land
- Cultural or ecological significant sites on the land
- Native vegetation on the land
- Safety and passive surveillance
- Accessibility for all users
- Proximity to town
- Existing facilities such as toilets and parking
- Sunlight up to 6 hours a day
- Size of the space to accommodate needs
- Lighting and fencing on site
- Water and electricity on site
- Soil type and contamination
- Flooding possibility/contour of land
- Multiple uses by the broader community

### How many gardeners can participate in this project?

- 10 or more
- 15 or more
- 25 or more

### How we will garden?

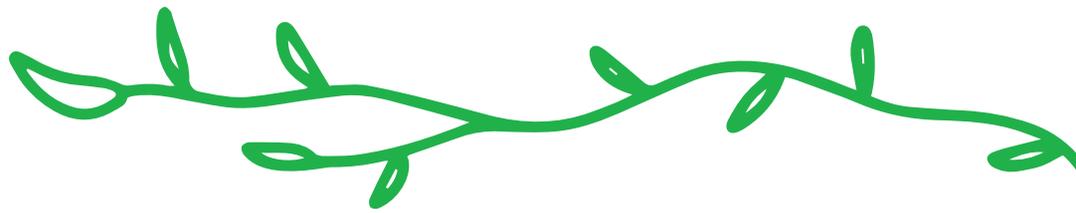
- organic
- chemical free
- non-organic
- mixed

### Style of garden

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

### What features will the garden have?

- garden beds
- accessible pathways
- tool shed
- water taps
- nursery for plant propagation
- open space for play and picnics
- rainwater tanks
- educational signs
- public art
- compost and worm farm system
- wheelchair access/garden bed
- community garden bed
- seating nearby
- biodiversity habitat
- native bees
- no animals



#### What skills and training does our group have?

- Plant propagation or seed saving
- Pest management
- Landscape design
- Composting and/or worm farming
- Organic gardening
- Horticulture
- Hydrology
- Grants and sponsorship
- Health and safety
- Public relations and communication
- Education

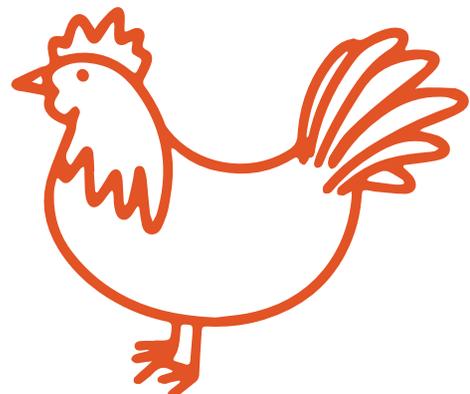
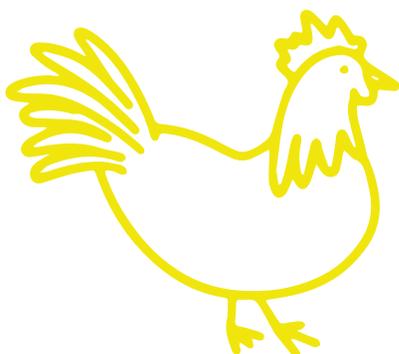
#### How will we engage with the local community?

demonstration days and workshops around different topics (e.g. compost/worm farms/waste reduction/water saving)

- Public meeting/consultation
- Demonstration days and workshops around different topics (e.g. compost/worm farms/waste reduction)
- Open days
- Signage
- Flyers
- Social media

#### How will you obtain your public liability insurance?

- become an incorporated association and manage it on your own
- become auspiced by another organisation and be covered by their insurance as per your agreement
- buy a group insurance policy with other community gardens





## Submit an expression of interest to Council

As required under legislation, Council will initiate an EOI process to ensure that the opportunity to establish a community garden on Council land is equitable and transparent. The EOI seeks to establish the credibility of the proposal and of those making it. It also assists Council in determining if the proposed community garden would suit with Council's plans for that land.

Once invited by Council, complete **Form 1 – Community Garden Expression** of Interest in the Appendix and submit to Council. Council will assess the EOI and invite the successful applicant to submit an application to establish a community garden.



## Step 4 – APPLY

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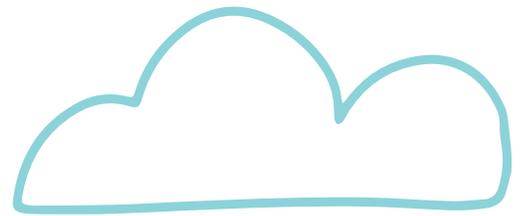
### Apply to establish a community garden

If your proposed community garden is successful in the EOI process, the next step is to lodge an application to establish a community garden with Council, using **Form 2 – Application to Establish a Community Garden**. This form is similar to the EOI from Step 3 with some additional questions regarding;

- garden committees' skill level and experience
- purpose of garden and benefit to the community
- funding
- health and safety
- garden management plan (template in **Appendix – Form 3**)

See Appendix for **Form 2 - Application to Establish a Community Garden and associated attachments**.





## Funding your garden

Once you know what your garden will look like, you will need to develop a budget and consider where you will obtain the necessary financial resources. Some common things that most gardens need to budget for are:

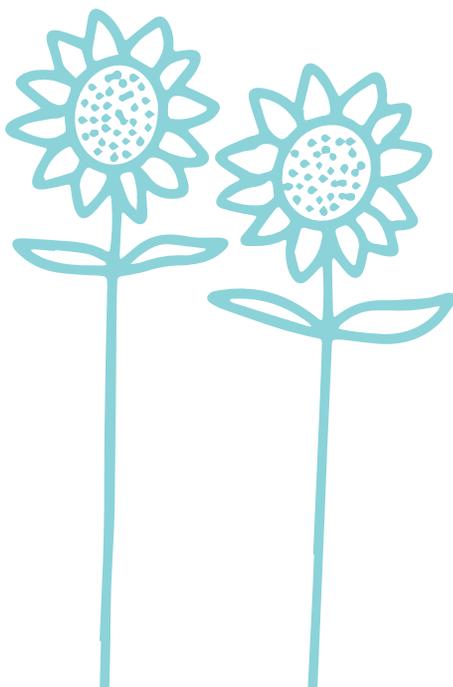
- public liability insurance
- construction materials for the garden
- community outreach (promotions/flyers)
- security (locks and vandal proof fittings)
- tools and equipment
- materials (soil, plants, mulch)
- rainwater infrastructure
- professional advice (design and construction)

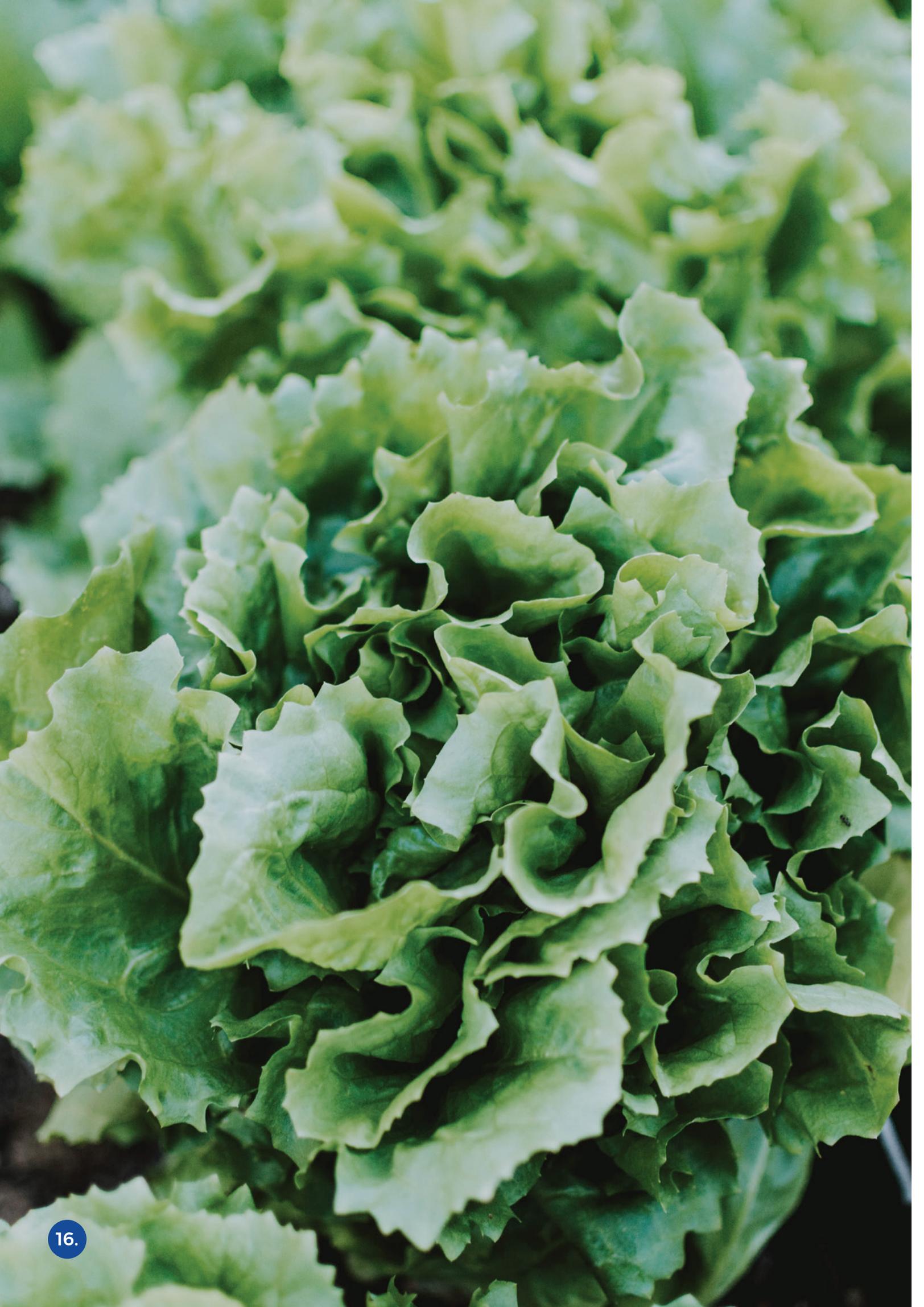
There are many ways to fundraise, but choose carefully as it's important to ensure that the value of the money raised is worth the effort expended. In-kind support can also be a great asset.

Funding options include;

- annual membership fees (a consistent income),
- crowdfunding campaign,
- services (run workshops/talks that provide an income stream),
- local raffles,
- sponsorship through local partnerships (i.e. on-going discounts or sponsorship in exchange for publicity),
- donations (money or resources),
- grants (these can cover start-up costs, construction or ongoing costs of a new or existing garden).

Council can help provide advice on what grants are available. To receive regular grant updates from Council go to [www.byronshire.grantguru.com.au](http://www.byronshire.grantguru.com.au) and register there.





## Garden management plan

Developing a management plan for your garden is an important step in identifying the governance procedures by which the garden will be developed and organised. It also demonstrates to Council and to funding bodies that an appropriate level of thought and research has been undertaken before implementing the project.

The plan should be thoroughly documented and a copy provided to people wanting to join the garden, along with a membership application form, or something similar, so that they agree to comply with it. When writing your garden management plan, keep the following in mind:

### Code of conduct

A code of conduct is important as it will define what is and is not acceptable behaviour within the community garden. It is also an important tool for resolving conflict.

### Conflict resolution

Promoting a tolerant and caring culture in your garden is important and beneficial; however, it is inevitable that conflict will sometimes arise, either within the garden committee members or with external stakeholders. When conflict occurs, it is important to deal with it immediately, have in place clear processes to resolve it and communicate respectfully with all those involved. A garden member agreement containing a code of conduct and conflict resolution procedures can be extremely helpful.

### Constitution

In contrast to a code of conduct, a constitution is a longer and more formal document with legal status. It is useful as it formalises the fundamental principles and terms that the garden committee abide by and is a requirement for community gardens that have decided to become incorporated associations.

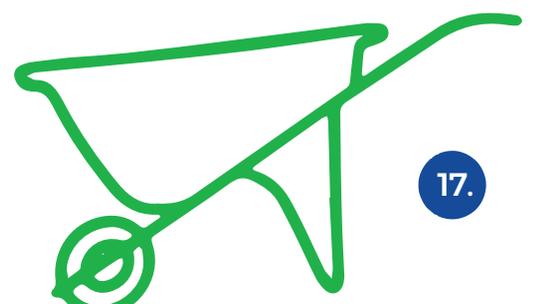
### Complaints process

It is recommended that a complaints register is kept. When your garden receives a formal complaint it should be provided as a written summary, and then communicated with Council's sustainability team by email ([sustainability@byron.nsw.gov.au](mailto:sustainability@byron.nsw.gov.au)) on the first day of each month, in accordance with the community garden's licence agreement.

### Evaluating and celebrating your success

Occasionally your garden committee should sit down to reflect on whether or not you are achieving what you set out to achieve. Evaluation helps you celebrate how far you have come, if you've encountered any road blocks, shows you where potential sources of conflict are and is a useful means of leveraging funding and publicity for your project.

**See Appendix for Form 3 - Garden Management Plan Template**



## Step 5 – Approval

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### License to garden

If your application has been approved, a temporary 1-year licence will be issued, and provided all conditions are satisfied a subsequent 3-year licence with on-going renewal will be issued. Council staff will meet with you to develop written agreements for the garden.

Following this, Council will then organise an on-site meeting with the committee to discuss reporting, monitoring, maintenance and safety requirements.

**NOTE:** Your group will need to purchase public liability insurance before a licence can be issued to authorise community gardening. No works at the garden site can be carried out before a licence is issued.



## Step 6 – Garden

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### Council's roles and responsibilities

#### Council's role

Council supports community gardens by providing land and a framework to establish and manage the garden. The role of Council is to:

- Consider owners consent for the use of the land, a licence for temporary use of the land, and receive and review relevant development applications;
- Act as a point of contact for all community garden committees;
- Provide guidance in relation to the selection of suitable areas for the establishment of new community gardens;
- Notify existing community gardens of any changes to relevant Council policies, guidelines, licences and plans of management;
- Provide on-going advice and communication with community garden committees;
- Respond to environmental and social impacts of the ongoing operation of a community garden;
- Liaise with community garden committees to resolve any problematic issues that may arise;
- Work with community garden committees to negotiate connection to service utilities.

#### Responsibility of Council

Council is responsible for all public open space under its control and takes the interest of all stakeholders into account when licensing the use of parcels of land. Council needs to ensure that the development of community gardens will fulfil a public benefit. Council encourages a nominated community garden coordinator to be the key point of contact when liaising with Council's Sustainability Team.

Council:

- retains the right to inspect community garden sites if needed;
- may require the repair of unsafe features that could endanger the safety of gardeners or visitors;
- may require the clean-up of sites that clearly pose a health threat.



## Community garden committee's roles and responsibilities

Your roles and responsibilities as a community garden committee are to comply with all your licence conditions, the Byron Shire Council Community Gardens Policy, these Guidelines and your approved garden management plan. This includes:

- Be responsible for the safe maintenance, upkeep, and activation of the garden spaces, within the boundary of the allocated public land
- Operate as a not for profit incorporated association or an organised committee with public liability insurance, in accordance with the licence agreement
- Provide a nominated contact officer (community garden coordinator) and contact details for all Council and licencing matters
- Maintain open communication and provide regular updates of committee members' details to Council;
- Keep and maintain required records, according to the licence agreement
- Obtain consent and maintain effective relationships with the surrounding neighbourhood, partnering organisations and other gardeners
- Obtain and maintain all required approvals according to permitted use outlined in the licence agreement
- Operate in accordance with the licence agreement.





## Rights of community garden committees

Community garden committees have the right to:

- be treated with respect by other gardeners, garden visitors, Council and partnering organisations,
- develop their own internal policies, rules, management and organisations processes, providing they comply with Council licences and policies,
- be consulted and advised in a timely manner by Council regarding any decision or changes that may affect the garden.





## Organisational systems

### Internal organisation and communication

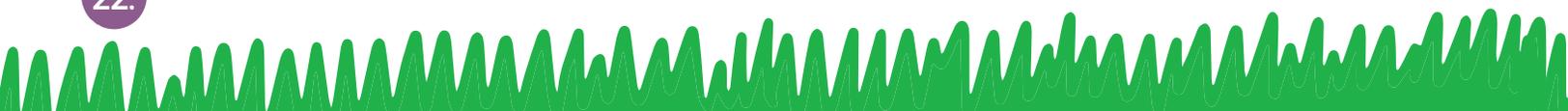
A community garden needs a well-developed system of internal organisation and efficient communication to ensure that all garden committee members feel engaged and have clear lines of responsibility and accountability. Without these critical things in place, the bulk of the work tends to rest excessively on the shoulders of a few people who can rapidly burn out and become discouraged.

### Keeping records

A good practice to establish from the beginning is a simple process for keeping records. Recording volunteer and member contact details, volunteer hours and their demographic can help with internal communications, to promote the garden's progress and help in obtaining funding.

### Handling money

If your community garden is planning on selling a product, such as seedlings grown on site, you must acquire an Australian Business Number (ABN) through the Australian Taxation Office. You can do that here <https://www.business.gov.au/Registrations/Register-for-an-Australian-business-number-ABN>. You should also keep careful records of all sales (income invoices) and expenditure (receipts), especially if you are spending money from a grant that requires a financial report.





**Bee safe**

## Garden maintenance and inspections

### Council inspections

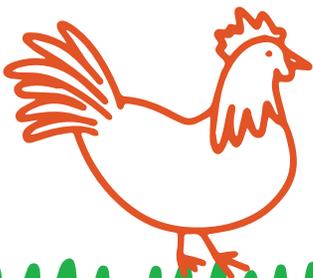
Having a well cared for and maintained garden is not only aesthetically pleasing and attractive to potential new members; it also helps to keep people safe and the garden in a workable condition.

Council's compliance team carries out inspections of community gardens periodically and looks for the following things to be in place:

- signage – visible and easy to read
- pathways – accessible and clear of trip hazards and debris
- garden beds – safe and in good condition
- fences – safe and clear of debris
- vegetation – plots have minimal disease, pets and weeds
- materials and tools – tidy and organised
- composting systems – free of pests and strong odours
- stakes – have safety caps to avoid injury
- structures – are safe, approved and abide by the rules of the licence

### Garden maintenance

One way to ensure the communal areas are kept clean and tidy is to hold monthly work days that include a social activity/shared meal for all plot holders. This also helps to build community relationships. These monthly work days can be recorded using a logbook and a roster of specific roles, with corresponding incentives.



## Step 7 – Thrive

### Attract and retain garden members

Just like a bee is drawn to colourful flowers, having a bright, happy and buzzing garden will help to continue to attract new members to it. Some ideas that have worked for other successful gardens include:

**Design a beautiful garden** - Paying attention to aesthetics is important for attracting new members to your garden and for ensuring good relations with your neighbours. Spend time designing the presentation of the entrance areas, provide sheltered seating areas and have welcoming signage.

**Good communication** - Have a brochure explaining the garden's purpose and objectives available to give to visitors. Install interpretive signage that makes your vision clear to visitors from all walks of life. Set up a comment box at the garden for visitors to pop in their suggestions and feedback.

**Open days and social events** - Run well-promoted open days, work days and BBQs, in consultation with your license agreement and approval from Council. Invite schools, local residents and friends to come and get involved.

**Hold regular workshops** - Hold short, practical workshops that new and old gardeners could see value in attending. Do a survey of skills your garden members would be interested in learning more about.

**Promote your events and garden** - Social media and local newspaper articles are a useful tool for connecting with new and old gardeners who might want to become involved and share ideas. Register the project with a local volunteer network.

**Recognise and value members** - In order to maintain the long-term interest of a member to your garden, you need to make them feel valued and appreciated through a simple thank you or morning tea.



## Orient and educate members

### Induction Process

To encourage new involvement in your garden, it is important to have a process that both informs and welcomes them to the garden. Design a volunteer/member induction process that ensures all new people are aware of:

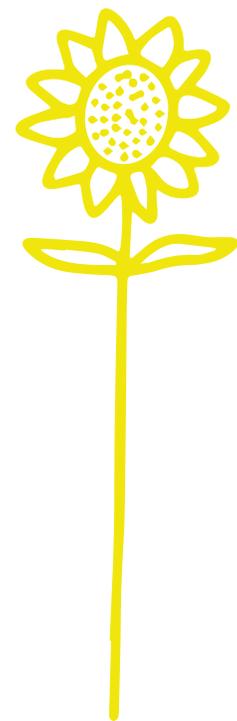
- the purpose and objectives of the garden
- their rights and responsibilities
- the community garden coordinator's contact details
- Health and Safety systems
- training opportunities
- how valuable their contribution is to the garden

### Member training

A garden with multi-skilled members will make it easier to work together. Hosting skill-sharing workshops at the garden is a great way of facilitating further learning. Workshops can be presented by skilled garden members or you can bring in an expert to build capacity. Make sure all garden members have a say in what skills they feel need to be developed.

### Employment programs

Some community gardens develop work-skill programs for the unemployed. These can build confidence, skills and motivation in participants as well as provide significant assistance in the garden. It is advisable to conduct research on what level of administrative, coordination and financial responsibilities are involved before going ahead.



# Appendix

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## Forms and templates

Form 1 – Community Garden Expression of Interest

Form 2 - Application to Establish a Community Garden and associated attachments

Form 3 – Garden Management Plan

## Definitions

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

**Auspice** – where one organisation provides support, sponsorship or guidance to another according to a legal agreement.

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

**Community gardens** – public land identified for the primary purposes of growing fresh produce, providing gardening-related recreational and educational activities. As a multi-functional space, community gardens provide a range of social, environmental and economic needs.

**Community garden committees** – a group of people responsible for the overall compliance and legal responsibilities of the garden. They help to set up the policies, procedures and processes to ensure that the community garden and its members are safe.

**Community garden member** – a person who has a membership with the community garden.

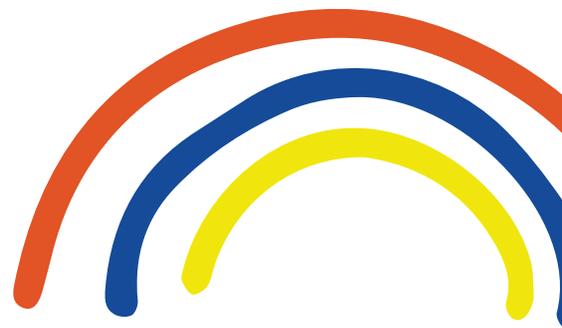
**Community gardener** – a person that volunteers their time for gardening activities. If younger than 18, they must be directly supervised by a parent or guardian at all times.

**Community garden coordinator** – the person that coordinates the garden committee and liaises with the Council.

**Composting** – a system of breaking down vegetable scraps, garden waste and other materials into a rich organic matter to fertilise the garden. This can be done using compost bins or worm farms.

**Food forests** – 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** – 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.



**Garden design** – 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.

**In-kind support** – resources besides money, such as manual labour, products and other services.

**Garden management plan** – 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** – days organised by the community garden committee to encourage local residents and businesses to visit the garden and ask questions.

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

**Organic growing** – 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.

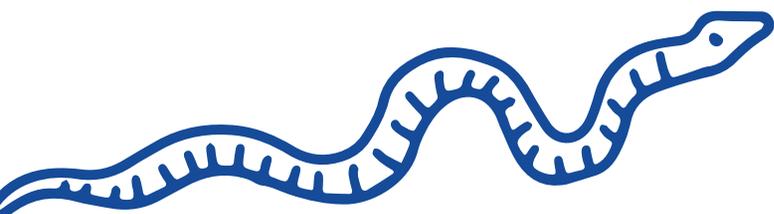
**Permaculture** – a holistic approach to landscape design and human culture. It employs consciously designed landscapes that mimic the patterns and relationships found in nature, while yielding food and energy for local needs.

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

**Sponsorship** – an agreement between an organisation and the garden committee where the committee receives a benefit to the value of the sponsorship.

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

**Work day** – days when all garden members get together to do maintenance/building work for the community garden.



## References

Byron Shire Community Garden Policy

City of Sydney, Community Garden Guidelines

Brisbane City Council, Brisbane Community Garden Guide

Randwick City Council, Community Garden Guidelines

City of Melbourne, Street Garden Guidelines

Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network

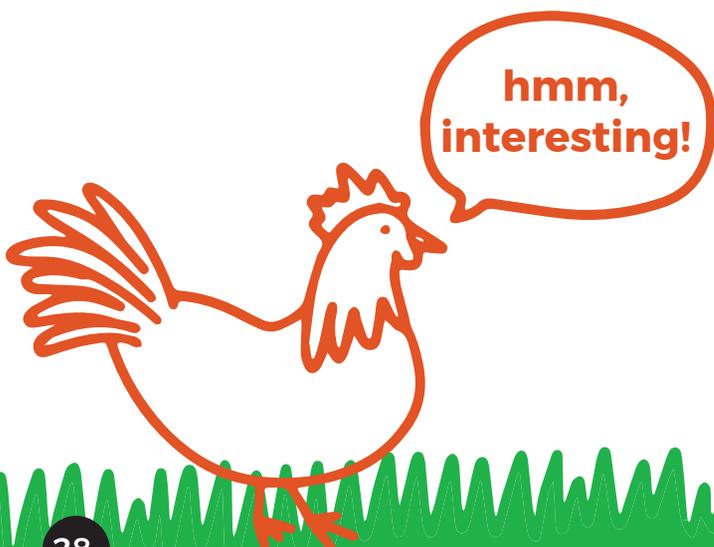
City of Melbourne, Community Garden Policy

## References

You may download, use or reproduce this work, in part or full, for the non-commercial purposes of promoting or developing community gardens. Please acknowledge the Byron Shire Council in references.

## References

Byron Shire Council, Sustainability Team on **02 6626 7000** or email **[sustainability@byron.nsw.gov.au](mailto:sustainability@byron.nsw.gov.au)**.



## Other useful links

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

<http://communitygarden.org.au/>

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

[http://www.yates.com.au/vegetables/Poisonous plants](http://www.yates.com.au/vegetables/Poisonous%20plants)

<http://brunswickvalleylandcare.org.au/native-plants/>

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

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

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

<http://www.growmeinstead.com.au/>

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

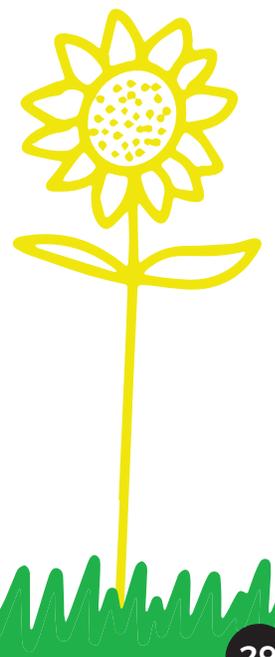
[http://www.yates.com.au/vegetables/tips/companion-planting/#KWKmvfWwxLtGjSc.97Crop rotation](http://www.yates.com.au/vegetables/tips/companion-planting/#KWKmvfWwxLtGjSc.97Crop%20rotation)

[http://www.abc.net.au/gardening/vegieguide/crop\\_rotation.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/gardening/vegieguide/crop_rotation.htm)

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

<https://products.tumbleweed.com.au/collections/worm-farming>

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



# Garden Management Plan Template

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We have provided this template to guide your garden committee in all aspects that should be considered when developing a management plan. It will 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. It will also assist in funding, sponsorship and inducting 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 - GARDEN NAME, PICTURE AND DATE

### 1. Vision – describe the overall vision for the garden.

- What is the purpose of your community garden?
- How will this garden benefit the broader community?
- 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.

- Have you consulted with Council? Do you have permissions for a garden?
- Does the location fulfil the site selection criteria?
- Have you assessed suitability of the site? E.g. sunlight, aspect, water availability etc.

### 3. Management of the site – describe the resources you will require as part of your garden design.

- Garden beds and design – describe the design and size of your garden beds.
- Sustainable materials – will you use sustainable materials?
- Garden tools and storage – Will you have a tool shed? 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?
- 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?
- 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?
- Water management – Do you have access to water on site? How will you deal with water runoff from the site?
- Facilities repairs – How will you manage or fund repairs if facilities are broken or vandalised?
- Signage – How will you provide notices to other gardeners or members of the public in your garden?

**4. Gardening – describe the gardening methods you will use and the resources required, and the structure to maintain these.**

- Type and style of garden – what type of garden will you have?
- Methodology – Does this method of gardening suit the site? Does your group have the skills to develop this method of gardening?
- Communal or shared garden?
- Crops in the garden – what will you grow? Does your site have enough space? Are any of your chosen crops considered weeds?
- Watering roster – will you have a roster to ensure watering throughout the year?
- Composting system roster – How will you create and maintain the onsite composting system?
- Odours, noise and vermin – how will you manage these issues? How will you deal with complaints?
- Vandalism and undesirables – how will you deal with issues of stolen produce, or misuse of the garden?
- 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?
- Organic gardening – will your garden be organic?
- Maintenance – How will you ensure maintenance of the garden? What if gardeners are on holidays or sick? Will you have processes in place to manage these situations?
- Access – will members require keys or combinations to unlock the gate or access the tool shed?
- Council Licences – does your group have a licence agreement with the Council?
- Timeframes – how will your group ensure the garden is sustained over the long term?
- Monitoring – Council 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.**

- Community garden co-ordinator – who will be the group’s contact person and liaise between Council and the garden? The Council will need their contact details to promote the garden on the Council’s website.
- Roles and responsibilities of members
- 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?
- Communication – how will you communicate within the group and to external stakeholders?
- Meetings and minutes – How often will your group and committee meet?
- Structures – what structures will you have in the garden and for what purpose? Will they need DA approval from Council?
- Demonstrations and open days – 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?
- 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?
- Decision-making process – will decisions be made by all group members or by a smaller group or committee?
- 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.**

- Proposed budget for the development and construction of the garden
- Costs for planting out the garden
- Ongoing maintenance costs, including plants, mulch and manure.

**7. Health and safety – describe how your group will meet the health and safety requirements**

- Induction to site
- Personal protective equipment – will you supply equipment or will gardeners bring their own?
- Risks and safety – how will you assess and manage risks in the garden?

**8. Garden membership – describe how your group will manage garden membership and partnership.**

- Membership – will you have an annual membership fee to participate in the garden?

**9. Communication – describe how your group will communicate with each other about meetings, issues, or new ideas.**

- Community consultation – how will you communicate with local residents and neighbours?
- Social media
- Media and sponsorship

**10. Policies and guidelines – describe how your group will educate members about policies, procedures and documents.**

- Policies, procedures and supporting fact sheets – how will you educate your gardeners about these documents?
- Pets – how will your group communicate the ‘dogs on leash’ requirement to gardeners?

**11. Funding – describe how your group will fund the garden for short-term and long-term goals.**

- Membership fees
- Budgeting
- Applying for grants – will your group apply for grants? Will you require assistance with this?
- 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.**

- Training workshops
- Sharing knowledge and skills on site

**13. Reporting – describe how you group will report outcomes, measure the success of the garden and lessons learnt.**

- Frequency – how often will your group need to report findings to Council?
- Measurement – how will your group measure success?

**14. Layout – include a detailed layout design of the garden**

- Show the boundary of the garden area and the neighbouring properties – Council can help you with this.
- Show the placement of the garden beds, composting system and tool shed
- Show the types of crops you may grow to indicate the size and height.





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