The GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE for COMMUNITY GARDENS

By Cultivating Community 2002
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The production of the Good Practice Guide for Community Gardens has been a project funded and managed by Cultivating Community. Thanks to all the committee members who contributed time, ideas and support.

Many other individuals and organisations have generously shared their knowledge and information which has helped to make the Good Practice Guide what it is.

The Good Practice Guide drew heavily on the community gardens starter pack designed and developed by the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens in the United Kingdom. Thanks for their generosity in sharing their information – their full contact details are in Appendix D ’More Information – Organisations’.

Thanks also to the following:

- Collingwood Children’s Farm, who made their recently compiled Community Garden Manual freely available.
- Outreach Victoria and the Brotherhood of St. Lawrence.
- Russ Grayson and Fiona Campbell from Pacific Edge Permaculture in Sydney, who made available the ‘How to Start a Community Garden’ information on their website.
- Glen Ochre from Common Ground allowed her information on group process, conflict resolution and good meeting process to be adapted to the needs of this manual.
- The Local Government Association of the UK and Richard Wiltshire (author) for allowing use of their publication Growing in the Community – a good practice guide for the management of allotments.

About Cultivating Community

Cultivating Community is helping to develop a thriving network of community gardens in public housing estates and other community areas throughout Melbourne. Our work is based around encouraging sustainable farming and gardening projects in urban areas. We promote the cultural richness of food, plants and people within community gardens. Through such projects we work with a wide range of people to cultivate ‘community’ and the ‘soil’.

If you are interested then join us. Cultivating Community has some exciting projects on the go, an active committee of people and three new gardens always welcome.

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Published by Cultivating Community 2002

Copyright – The manual has been designed to assist organisations get gardens going. Full copies are available from Cultivating Community for $15, or free via e-mail (E-mail ben@cultivatingcommunity.org.au). Feel free to copy parts of the manual if it helps!
INTRODUCTION

Community Gardens

Community gardens are places where people come together to grow vegetables, fruit, herbs and flowers in a supportive community context – mostly on individual plots within a larger communal area. Melbourne’s inner city community gardens play an important role in the well-being of many people who would otherwise be denied the chance to till the soil and enjoy the health and nutritional benefits of fresh home-grown produce. By providing a social focus community garden projects have a strong capacity to build community. Their role in reducing food miles by producing food close to home is an important environmental benefit. As part of urban agriculture, community gardens have the potential to integrate food production, organic waste recycling and social equity into our cities.

Access to garden space is limited in the densely populated inner city; hence community gardens are extremely popular with long waiting lists common place. Creating more community garden opportunities is vital if we are to meet this growing demand.

Cultivating Community is a not-for-profit community group working to support, promote and advocate for community garden projects in Melbourne. Cultivating Community sensed the need to develop support material for individuals and organisations wanting to start new projects. The result is the production of this Community Garden Good Practice Guide, which should also be a valuable resource for existing projects.

Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network

Melbourne’s first community garden began in the late 1970s. Since that time more than 50 City Farms and Community Gardens have started up in cities all over Australia. Informal networking between projects over the years resulted in the formation of the Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network. This is an informal, voluntary network of people interested or active in community gardens, with the aim of facilitating information and knowledge exchange relevant to community gardens. The network has representatives in each state who provide direction, advice or support to people making inquiry. For a listing of state representatives visit the Pacific Edge community gardens webpage: www.magna.com.au/~pacedge/garden/. Remember, the network contacts are volunteers who may have to squeeze their work for the network in between their employment, family and study commitments.

Community Gardens as Part of Urban Agriculture

The Australian network is part of a much larger worldwide movement. On an international level, the movement for urban agriculture is becoming more established and in some places it is a powerful tool for re-evaluating our images of how cities work (see the recommended website addresses in the more information section).

Growing food in cities has a long tradition, dictated largely by necessity. Before modern-day cities emerged people were more often their own providers. Today society tends to regard urban agriculture as a hobby for people who like gardening rather than as an activity that can make our cities better places to live. Unfortunately, planning for modern cities has not seen gardening and farming as a valid land use.

Did you know?

• Australia is one of the most urbanised countries in the world – 90% of our population lives in cities and towns.
• Australian food commonly travels hundreds of kilometres from production to consumption
• More than half the world’s population now lives in cities which consume 75% of the world’s resources and produce most if its pollution. (Source – New Internationalist)
There are obvious economic, social and environmental benefits to us all in integrating food growing into the urban environment and some cities are beginning to draft policies that recognise the value of urban agriculture. Community gardens bring significant benefits to our cities.

They:
- **build community** - a sense of community develops through participation in a common enterprise
- **improve nutritional health** – by increasing the production and consumption of fresh, organic, locally grown food
- **improve amenity** – by diversifying and beautifying public open space
- **reduce environmental impact** – by reducing food miles and recycling waste
- **Create purposeful recreation** – by getting people growing food!

Difficulties in accessing land, the insecurity of tenure and attitudes about appropriate land use restrict the growth of gardening and farming projects in cities. Despite this, Melbourne already has an impressive collection of isolated models and demonstrations of urban agriculture (approximately 40 community gardens and six city farms). To move towards a sustainable city we need policies that build on these grass roots initiatives and provide people with access to land. In cities such as Bristol in the United Kingdom there are more than 100 community garden sites and over 5,000 plots for a population of only 400,000 people. They have a community garden unit employing three people in the local Council and have a policy to provide no fewer than 7 plots per thousand of population located no further than 1 kilometre from any one person’s home.

Here in Melbourne, the Department of Human Services now recognise the value of community gardens and is supporting the development of community gardens across the public housing sector.

**Biodiversity**

The industrial and corporate nature of modern western agriculture has reduced the diversity of plant and animal species being farmed – global biodiversity is in serious decline. Removed from extreme commercial pressures and in close proximity to their market urban farmers and gardeners can afford to grow varieties of plants that may not be the most highly productive but have other valuable qualities.

By gardening and farming with a broader range of genetic resources we collectively contribute to the maintenance of biodiversity. The legacy of this important work is a living bank of genetic material that can be used in the future to develop new, diverse, and useful varieties. Together, community gardens and city farms are making a strong contribution to the maintenance of biodiversity and the promotion of urban agriculture in Melbourne.
GETTING STARTED

Your interest in starting a community garden is rooted in the common good – it is more than your individual idea or need. To start and run a new organisation you will need to enlist the support of others. Make sure you can clearly answer the following questions:

- Is it needed or is somebody else already doing it? Where is the closest community garden to you? [See Appendix A – Community Gardens in Melbourne.] Is it being fully utilised? Your energy may be best spent in contributing new energy to an existing group.
- What do you want to provide and for who?
- Is it really non-profit? Don’t assume that a not-for-profit is the best way to do things; many public services are now provided by commercial enterprises on government contracts.

It’s a journey

Any group intending to start a community garden is about to begin quite a process. Try to:

- Recognize it will be a journey and enjoy it!
- Develop a vision and keep developing it
- Build relationships and community
- Get help to become self-reliant
- Develop clear procedures and responsibilities
- Maintain balance between the ‘process’ and ‘product’
- Develop clear means of communication between participants

Top-down or bottom-up

Most community gardens are started the bottom up way. A group of people with no land and funds get together and approach their council or other land holders for access to land and perhaps a small grant to cover start up costs. The idea to start a community garden can sometimes come from Council staff who see community gardens as a means of enhancing their work. They start with land and funds, but no community. Both approaches can succeed if the following Community Building Principles are utilised:

- build on the community’s own ideas and priorities
- listen to each other
- reach out and encourage community commitment
- identify and utilise local assets
- respond to ‘non-gardening’ needs
- create formal and informal opportunities to come together
- create common space in the garden
- build relationships with each other
- build on racial, ethnic, cultural and age diversity
- identify community resources
- form broad-based community coalitions

(Adapted from Principles & Practices for Community Gardening as a Community Building Tool. Published by the American Community Gardening Association)
More than one way

There is no single way to go about starting a garden. It all depends on the circumstances you are faced with. What this Good Practice Guide attempts to do is provide a checklist of considerations and ideas. You will find that good thinking and planning in the beginning pays off in the long run. When the time comes to put a submission for your community garden to council, they will be more impressed with a group that has clearly thought through how they would go about designing and managing a garden. It’s not just about how realistic your plans are, but how Council or the landholder perceives your group. You need to give them reason to have confidence in you.

Get the numbers

Your first task is to get together a group of interested people. You need to establish if there is sufficient interest within the local community to undertake getting a whole new project of the ground. It is no small task! To do this you need to publicise and run a public meeting. Try:
- tapping into your own networks – each person is to bring another
- making the most of local newspaper and radio coverage
- putting up posters in local community places
- doing a letterbox drop in the immediate area
- have meetings at your site, if possible, and at an appropriate time
- organise a BBQ or something to promote the idea
- if no-one comes to the first meeting, don’t give up – organise another

Collect information

Providing you generate sufficient interest the next step is to use this manual to provide yourself with the information you need to set up and maintain a community project. We recommend visiting other community gardens to collect information on:
- what type of organisational structure they have
- how they make decisions
- how their garden is layed out / designed
- how they manage the garden
- where they obtain resources
- their links to local government
- how they are funded
SETTING UP THE GROUP

Some basic steps

- **Elect office bearers**
- Undertake a *skill audit* for the group – everybody has some skills and experience
- Ensure you have the necessary *organisational skill* to operate effectively. Find out about training courses for community groups. [*See Training section.*]
- **Get advisers** - seek and set up a group of advisers to help the group (i.e. a solicitor, architect, tree surgeon, horticulturalist, etc.)
- **Publicise your project** – appoint a publicity officer to build contacts with the media (local papers, radio, and regional TV and community newsletters).

You need to decide on:

- Your Structure – what sort of legal entity suits your needs?
- The Constitution - the group's purpose, its membership, decision making, etc.
- To incorporate or not to incorporate – implications and demands
- Charitable Status – do you need tax deductibility status?

Structure can benefit your group

In their early stages garden groups are often organised informally and operate successfully. However, as projects grow and workloads expand many groups choose a more formal structure. Structure can stabilise, protect and help an organisation to grow and last. When a group decides to lease or own land, raise funds, involve volunteers and possibly have paid staff, it takes on legal and managerial responsibilities. At this stage it is essential to adopt a set of rules that establish responsibilities. By setting out these obligations – i.e. establish a constitution, you will be more credible if you have clear structure and are representative of local people.

Ask other community gardens or community groups about their structure and constitution – what works well for them? Why doesn’t? There are a number of options for legal structures and a community garden might adopt – the most common and straightforward is to become an incorporated association. [*See below]*

The Constitution – the group’s foundations

Rules governing the structure and organisation of a community garden are set out in a constitution. A constitution is the foundational and legal foundation for governing an organisation and is necessary for the bill of rights:

- To ensure the project's purposes are agreed by its members
- To provide mechanisms for making decisions and resolving disputes
- To gain credibility with other organisations and bodies
- To clarify liability and lines of responsibility
- To ensure accountability
- To take advantage of charitable status
- To gain the benefits of joining other bodies

Decide on a constitution setting out the objectives of your group and the rules for running it. The constitution outlines protocol surrounding the group’s objects and powers, membership, financial and legal issues, meetings, annual general meetings, directors, office bearers and the board. Don’t worry, this is a straightforward process as model constitutions are available for adapting to your specific needs (refer to VCOSS book on the next page). Make sure you are clear about your *decision making process* – will it be by consensus, a two-thirds majority or a simple majority vote? You also need to be clear about *how you define your*
**members.** Members are responsible for electing the management committee and office bearers at the Annual General Meeting. The office bearers as part of the committee then assume the ultimate responsibility for the project. A member could be anyone who wishes to support your organisation or they could be restricted to people who are using the garden.

**Getting incorporated**

Incorporation is a system of state government registration that gives association legal advantages in return for accepting legal responsibilities. An incorporated association receives recognition as a legal entity separate from its members, offering some protection for office holders from debts and liabilities incurred by the group. Three organisations have produced very helpful material that can make becoming incorporated a straightforward task:

- **Consumer Affairs Victoria** is the body that register and administer the incorporation of associations. They will mail to you free of charge an **Information for Incorporated Associations** starter pack, containing a series of fact sheets covering topics such as how to become incorporated, statutory obligations, accounting and audit requirements, roles of a public officer, etc. Phone them on 1300 361 673, visit [www.consumer.vic.gov.au](http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au) or email associations@justice.vic.gov.au.

- **The Victorian Council of Social Services (VC OSS)** sells a book ‘Incorporations – a guide for Victorian groups wishing to become incorporated.’ It includes a disk that provides a model constitution that you can easily adapt to your specific requirements. It costs $11 including postage and handling. Phone 96545050, visit [www.vcoss.org.au](http://www.vcoss.org.au) or email vcoss@vcoss.org.au.

- **Our Community** provides an excellent free list of publications relevant to starting up new organisations. In the help sheets under advice and learning look for compliance and search for information on incorporation or look for incorporation procedure in your state or territory. Visit [www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au) or email service@ourcommunity.com.au. Our Community is based at 51 Stanley St, West Melbourne and can be contacted on 93206800.

**Charitable Status – do you need it?**

Charities are altruistic institutions, funds set up for the relief of poverty or for the public benefit. Your group needs to determine if you need charitable status. It may be necessary to become a charity if you propose to seek major grants/donations, or if you propose to hold land in trust for the benefit of a community. Registered charities gain Deductable Gift Recipient (DGR) status which means any donation of more than $2 is tax deductible.

Getting charitable status takes time and you will need advice and support in the process. To register as a charity, your community gardens' aims and objectives as stated in your constitution must be charitable and you need to choose an application category. Through their regional offices, the Australian Taxation Office is responsible for making decisions about organisations eligibility for charitable status. Tax law is a highly complicated business. If you have any ideas of applying for any of the various tax privileges attached to different kinds of community groups you will need to get this sorted out early in the piece because it has implications for your constitution. The Tax Office has a useful series of help packs online for non-profit organisations. Go to [http://www.ato.gov.au/nonprofit/](http://www.ato.gov.au/nonprofit/) for all you need to know about eligibility, consequences and application for charitable status.
MAINTAINING THE GROUP

Oiling the Chain – group maintenance

As well as getting the garden up and running you need to put energy into maintaining the group along the way - be aware of the “process” and the “product”. Groups are often so focused on physical outcomes like ‘digging the soil’ or ‘getting the water on’ that they overlook the maintenance needs of contributing individuals or the organisation as a whole.

Hold effective meetings

There is nothing more frustrating than poorly run meetings that run overtime and leave people feeling like they have not achieved anything. Running good meetings requires effort and skill. Good chairing or facilitating is essential to this process. Building the capacity of the group in this area is a good investment. [Refer to Appendix F – A Checklist for Effective Meetings and Appendix G – The Basics of Facilitation]}

Share the work around

Too much left to too few is a common problem in community organisations. Establishing a clear and effective structure helps to share work around. Select a structure that suits the people involved. Outline the work of your group and develop clear responsibilities for undertaking the tasks required. Make sure people know who has ownership responsibility for what. At meetings ensure you reach decisions, record them, clearly delegate responsibility and time-lines. Form subcommittees to tackle specific tasks so the whole group is not getting bogged down in detail irrelevant to them. Identify core people, i.e. someone who is happy to be a go between person and who is going to be around for the long haul.

Deal with difference

In any group there will be differences. Differences are the basis on which individuals, relationships and organisations birth and change. Difference needs to be acknowledged, expressed and discussed – it is hypocritical to talk about commitment to the community if people are unwilling to value everyone’s ideas, opinions and contributions. Your group needs to be able to identify and accept conflict to prevent it undermining the performance of the group. A dissident voice often holds the key to a new direction or an enlightening perspective. [Refer to Appendix H – Conflict Resolution]}

Further, you may need to translate documents for those from non-English speaking backgrounds. Interpretation and Language Service (VITS) provides such a service through Victoria Interpretation and Language Service. They can be found at www.vits.com.au, inquiries from vits@vits.com.au or by phoning (03) 9280 1941 [Full details in Appendix D – More Information - Organisations.]

Review and evaluate

To ensure that you are getting where you want to be you need to keep track of your progress. This means putting some effort into identifying performance measures and tracking them. If you have a goal of minimising water use (and cost) through the summer months then install a water meter, take measurements and record them. Close the loop – use the information in a process of continual evaluation and improvement. Refer to the section on evaluation.

Acknowledge and celebrate achievement

No one has the capacity to keep working for the common good without some acknowledgment or positive feedback. It is essential for the morale of the group to acknowledge and celebrate achievement. [Refer to Appendix I - Pats on the Back]
THE SITE

Finding, choosing and securing a site

Often community gardens start because an area of land is derelict or under-utilised and people want to improve it. However, some gardens also begin by groups wanting to find a suitable site; this section is written for you!

It can take time

Don’t expect to find land immediately – it often takes a while. Keep in mind that you might be knocked back a number of times, especially if the council requires community consultation with the neighbours of your preferred site. Also, don’t focus all of your energy on one site; keep your options open.

Another common source of frustration is finding contamination on suitable sites. When finding garden space takes too long, members of your group may become dispirited and drop out. Try to maintain enthusiasm with an active program of searching for land, social events and workshops to develop your skills. Remember, if you stick at it and do it well, the garden will be a valuable community asset for many years to come!

Work with council to find land

Try to develop a relationship with the appropriate personnel in local government and attempt to work together to find a site. You will often need council’s planning approval anyway. Check with the local council on what holdings they have in your area, or whether your group can use part of an existing facility. Be well briefed on:

- ‘How to Work with Your Local Council’ – Appendix J
- ‘Social and Environmental Benefits of Community Gardens’ – Appendix K
- ‘Rebuttals of Common Concerns about Community Gardens’ – Appendix L

Use personal contacts to promote your cause whenever possible. Council will have policies that support your endeavour – you need to identify them. They could be within the environment, health and community planning portfolios. A community garden can play a significant part in contributing to local councils’ objectives. If they are foresighted councils they are likely to provide good advice and support to community groups.

Possible land sources

- Old bowling greens
- Land adjoining railway stations or tracks
- Land owned by a charity for public benefit
- Old churchyards and cemeteries
- Waste ground and derelict sites
- Land within existing parks and recreation grounds
- School, hospital or university grounds
- Common land on a housing estate
- Urban fringe agricultural land
- Nature strips / back lanes
- Vacant blocks

Choose your site carefully

Keep your options open. If you are in the position to consider several alternatives – judge each site carefully. Draw up a list of all possible sites, organise site visits and use the criteria listed in Appendix M – the Site Hunters Checklist to pick the best. Try to locate the garden amongst or near other community resources i.e. near sporting facilities, within
existing parks, beside railway stations, near shopping strips, etc. Such sites can help integrate your project with the local community. Be sure to test soil for contamination.

**Securing your site**

Prospective community gardeners should be aware that not everyone will love the idea and you may have to argue your case often and convincingly to concerned neighbours, etc. [Refer to Appendix L – Rebuttals of Common Concerns about Community Gardens.]

You will need to negotiate with Council or another landowner to gain access to a site. Use the following ground rules of negotiation to guide you through this process.

- Both parties hope to reach a mutually acceptable agreement
- Each party is expected to move from its original position
- Negotiation is likely to include a series of offers that give something of value to both parties
  - Firm offers must be distinguished from provisional offers. Firm offers may not be withdrawn once they are made
  - Use a third party if both parties agree that further progress would otherwise be impossible
- The terms of agreement should be clearly understood by both parties and put in writing

**Sell the benefits**

Do your homework and be well prepared before you have any formal meetings with the owner. Make a considered presentation of your ideas for a community garden placing particular emphasis on the benefits to the owner and the community. [Refer to Appendix K - Social and Environmental Benefits of Community Gardens.]

Think about what you are offering – the owner will receive favourable publicity by putting land back into use for community benefit. For some owners, such as the local council, you can demonstrate that community gardens help meet their service agenda, e.g. education, leisure and recreation, health and waste reduction (composting). If the landowner is the council, it is important that you fully understand how the council works, what its priorities are, and what help it has given to other community and voluntary organisations. [Refer to Appendix J – How to Work with Your Local Council.]

**Aim for security**

Most existing community gardens do not own the land that they use – they are leased. [Refer to Appendix N – A Sample Community Garden Lease Agreement. They typically pay a peppercorn rent, i.e. a nominal sum. Gaining real security of tenure is a critical achievement. Development pressures in cities often threaten to shut projects down over the course of time. Press for the greatest security you can negotiate and try to gain an agreement that the more successful you make the project (i.e. the more community involvement it facilitates) the better case you will have to continue to use the site in the future. Local zoning and land use regulations can help preserve community garden land – become familiar with your local zoning and development regulations. Look for opportunities to work with developers to secure your needs – there can be kudos in it for them. Work to get community garden space planned and allocated for in your local council’s master plan.
DESIGNING THE SITE

Designing a site is an important early step in providing your project with the basics, i.e. plots, pathways, water, etc. Don’t forget, the garden can also improve the look and feel of the area if you design to include a variety of elements (i.e. fruit trees, sitting areas, flowers, etc.)

If you are starting from scratch, good design can make things run smoothly for many years to come. It is fruitless to attempt to outline an ‘ideal’ design because every situation is different. However, the following principles should be helpful when designing your community garden. Recognise and seek help, if needed, with the design and documentation process.

Security – protect your plot

Most community gardens have some sort of perimeter fence to deter unwanted visits by vandals, thieves or animals. Do you need one? (Internal fences often clutter and obstruct and have a tendency to keep getting bigger over time.) Think about whether you want visibility into and out of the garden, what use you could make of the fence structure as a support for growing vines, etc. Many gardens have a locked gate that requires a system for distributing and managing keys.

Cater for social, cultural and recreational needs

People garden together in a variety of ways. They include individual allotments, communally managed areas (i.e. orchards), and varying combinations of both. What does your group want? You need to establish this at the beginning of the design process.

Think about resting. Not everyone is working all the time. Community gardens are important places for people to relax. People may appreciate a shady fruit tree to rest under in the summer. Are there any culturally specific needs? For example, many Vietnamese gardeners cultivate a heavy gourd which would benefit from a strong trellis. A well designed garden will allow for changing developments and cultural preferences. Incorporate such cultural needs into your garden design. Your community garden may benefit from the periodic introduction of animals (chooks may be worth considering). [Refer to Appendix B – More Information - Books and journals for books on raising chickens, etc.]

Access – make it easy

People and gardening materials need to be able to get around the site easily. Consider providing limited access for in wheelchairs. Design main pedestrian pathways 900 – 1200 metres for the main pedestrian pathways and wider passing areas. You need to be able to easily move materials. Pathways can take up valuable growing space, how do you use them? Think about the access hierarchy. Where do the big things need to get to? Leave a space for bulk deliveries of manure, compost, mulch, etc. Make sure your gateways are big enough to allow access for trucks for such deliveries. Pathways can be dressed with a variety of materials (concrete, woodchip mulch, sawdust, clover, etc.). Woodchip mulch from street tree clearing services can often be obtained free and makes an excellent path surface.

Communal Facilities – share as much as you can

Communalise facilities where feasible. Designing for communal facilities reduces clutter, allows more space to be used for growing food, and facilitates social interaction. For example consider having a greenhouse and a nursery area to allow all gardeners to raise seedlings. A communal toolshed and tools may also be a possibility. Communal facilities could include:

- toolsheds and garden tools (including hoses)
- a greenhouse and nursery area
- a storage area for manure, fertiliser, garden stakes
- compost bins or worm farms
- a covered area to shelter from the rain or sun
- seating and a table – appropriate seating for clientele, i.e. elderly
- an area for washing vegetables (i.e. old concrete laundry trough)
- rubbish and re-cycling bins
- toilets
- BBQ social gathering space
- children’s play space
- a garden notice board (located near the entrance)

Can any of these facilities be linked to community arts projects? What about birdhouses, beehives, a drinking fountain or scarecrows?

**Supplies and tools**

It is important to source materials ethically. For example, some large hardware companies are involved in logging old growth forest. Support small independent local businesses and they will support you. Buy Australian-owned and made equipment, supplies and tools where possible.

**Diversify bed size and design**

Think about the plot size that would suit most people in your group. It can be good to have a variety of sized plots to accommodate varying gardening capability. The average sized plot in the UK is almost 300 square metres, at the Collingwood Children’s Farm is 25 square metres (most people don’t fully utilise this amount of space) and at the Collingwood High Rise it is only 5 square metres. Raised beds can be useful for people with limited mobility or in wheelchairs – a variety of sizes can suit different needs. Visit gardens that have catered for people with special needs or limited mobility such as the Doncaster Community Gardens and Kevin Heinz Garden Centre, 39 Wetherby Road, Doncaster, or the Ilma Lever Garden Centre, 2A Station Street, Coburg. [For a full list of community gardens around Melbourne, including, indications of ones containing wheelchair access, see Appendix A – The Green Map or visit www.housing.vic.gov.au and follow the Community Garden link.]

**Re-cycle waste**

Think about what comes into the site and what leaves it. The only plant materials that need leave the site are edible fresh fruit and vegetables. Well designed and maintained composting and worm farm systems can turn almost any other plant material into valuable fertiliser or compost. Think about how many people have to be involved in taking material to these facilities – they are best located near households. [Refer to Appendix B – More Information - Books and Journals for books on composting, worms, etc.]

**Water – think about it**

Services cost money and water is no exception – think about ways to minimise its use and prevent wastage. Can any water on-site be harvested for use on the garden i.e. caught from building rooves and stored in tanks? Determine how many taps will be required. Where are they most efficiently located? Where does water flow / gather? Will it make the paths muddy and boggy in the wet winter months? Where does the excess water from the hose points or veggie washing area drain? Can you direct it to water fruit trees, garden beds or other useful plants?
GARDEN MANAGEMENT

Policies, Practices and Protocol

Community gardens require strategies and systems for managing eligibility, access, development, maintenance, administration and security. Developing these systems takes time; however, your project will not reach its full potential unless you put the time into this area. In community projects there can be resistance to policy, rules, etc., however, if your management approach and expectations are clearly documented and available to gardeners it prevents misunderstanding and conflict. Developing such material and storing it in the form of a manual is recommended. The content of a community garden manual can include application forms, gardener contracts, waiting lists, policy documents, rules and guidelines, members’ details, garden maps, etc. [Refer to Appendices N, O, P, Q & R for samples.]

Policy – why start a community garden?

Regardless of the size of your project it is useful to develop a policy document outlining:
• why are you doing what you are doing? i.e. your aims and objectives
• who the service is available to?
• your management principles i.e. organic growing, community development approach etc.
• how you will relate to and work with outside organisations?

Rules and Guidelines – make things clear

Documenting the ’dos’ and ’don’ts’ of your project is time well spent. Make sure that all gardeners have this information provided to them and provided in written form before they start - this leaves no room for misunderstanding of what you ‘are’ and ‘are not’ allowed to do.
Ensure that you cater for the needs of your clientele, i.e. provide translations of all documents where required. [Refer to Appendix Q – Responsibilities and Appendix R – Rules and Guidelines for samples.]

Set up capable administrative systems

You need to think about the information required to manage the garden and to how to store it. When people apply for a plot collect information that will help with the allocation process and later administration tasks, such as their address, how big their home garden is, what
languages they speak and if they have a health care card, etc. [Refer to Appendix 0 – Draft Community Garden Application Form.]

Your organisation could also benefit from:

- **A good induction process** – make things clear for new gardeners from the start. An A4 summary of what you expect from gardeners is useful. [Refer to Appendix Q – Responsibilities.]
- **A community garden contract** to formalise the tenancy arrangement. [Refer to Appendix P – Sample Contract.]
- **A data base** to store information such as waiting list and plot holder details.
- **An annual billing system** – deal with billing for one month of the year not twelve!
- Regularly **reviewing & updating the waiting list** - keep waiting lists as short as you can.
- Keeping **records of plot use** – i.e. the intensity of plot use.

**Get together**

Holding regular community gatherings can help build up the momentum behind your project. This may be obvious in the early stages; keep it in the equation as time ticks on. Regular working bees are an excellent means of keeping the general appearance and maintenance of the garden up to scratch and provide opportunities for gardeners to meet each other.

Include a minimum attendance level in your rules and guidelines.

**Develop membership – involve local people**

It is important to demonstrate to local people support for the garden by choosing to become members. Though membership, people can have their say in the garden’s running. There can be resistance to participation from members – especially where members are on low incomes. However, there are advantages:

- Money from members is dependable
- Members tend to feel more responsible
- Membership demonstrates local support

**Aim for financial self-sufficiency**

Membership fees are the traditional way of recruiting sufficient members and they are needed to cover the running costs of the garden. When setting membership fees aim to be as financially independent as possible. Set your fee to cover the proportion of the garden’s running costs that you member has been willing. Aim for financial independence should not preclude seeking support from local or other sources. However, funding can often be a volatile and if funding sources fall away you need to able to independently generate sufficient income to keep managing the garden well. Money from members can be barred from joining; it is better to offer feasible membership to you get some income from those who are prepared and able to pay, and offer assistance to those in real hardship. There are alternatives to fixed fees:

- Offer a range of ways to pay, e.g. a monthly rate.
- Offer discounts if members provide agreed volunteering services.
- Have different rates for families, individuals, and pensioners.
- Consider a Friends of the Garden group, for supporters not directly involved.

**Support - helping people grow the food**

People who want to be part of a community garden are often enthusiastic, but do not necessarily have the prior gardening knowledge or skill. People can feel like they are a gardening failure and cause them to give up their plot. Support and advice is given informally from other gardeners, but it is helpful to implement an induction process for new gardeners, which includes referral to the resources they may require. That includes good books, gardening magazines, and gardening courses.
MANAGING MONEY

The first things your group needs to find out are what financial skills and experience you have in your group. Is it satisfactory or do you need help or training? What organisations in your area offer financial services to community and voluntary groups. A number of areas have community accountancy projects that offer direct services, training and advice. Check with your local Council or library. Ask other established community groups how they organise their finances, who independently checks (audits) their books and who gives them financial advice.

Basic Bookkeeping – General rules on handling money

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

- Always issue a receipt when money is received
- Include your ABN on all receipts
- Always obtain a receipt for money paid out and sign for any money received
- Always ensure that receipts are written in ink not pencil
- Never keep more money than is necessary in the treasurer’s home or the garden’s premises. Make sure your insurance covers you for small holdings of cash
- Always pay income into the bank as soon as possible
- Never pay from cash that has been received, but draw cash from the bank for expenditure
- Keep as many records and notes of transactions as YOU need.

Goods and Services Tax (GST) – it’s up to you

If your group’s annual turnover is less than $50,000 registering for the GST is your choice. You need to decide whether you are involved in registering and accounting for GST is worth it.

Field officers from the Australian Taxation Office area available to visit and assist community-based organisations deal with the implications of tax. You can submit questions to replyin5@ato.gov.au and there are a number of downloadable resources are available from www.ato.gov.au.

The Our Community website provides a free online list of on-line publications. Look for ‘registering for Goods and Services Tax (GST)’. www.ourcommunity.com.au or email service@ourcommunity.com.au. Our Community is based at 51 Stanley St West Melbourne, Victoria and can be contacted on (03) 9320 6800.

Get an Australian Business Number (ABN)

The ABN is a single identifier that organisations will use to register for the GST and apply to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) for endorsement as income tax exempt charity (ITEC). Charities, non-profit clubs, societies and associations are entitled to an ABN. Your group needs to engage with other businesses (i.e. spend money for goods and services) so you will require an ABN. You will also need to include your ABN on any receipts issued, as all receipts are considered Tax Invoices for taxation purposes.

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

- A budget is a financial plan for a specific period, usually a year.
- It is a tool to help you in managing and controlling the finances of your group.
- A budget will enable you to predict cash flow difficulties.
- Making a useful budget needs a thorough understanding of the garden’s finances. This is easily developed over time; however you may need outside help in preparing initial budgets. This expertise may exist within your group. Find out!

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

Basic steps in preparing a budget

1. Look closely at financially where you are now and make an **Opening Balance**. This is a snapshot of the finances of your garden on a specific date. To do this you need to tally up all monies held in cash, at the bank and any monies owed to you. Deduct from this total all the monies you owe and you have your opening balance.

2. **Discuss developments** planned for the coming year. Better still when you have a 3-5 year Development Plan. Use this information to help predict costs.

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

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

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

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

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

In Victoria, the Victorian Council of Social Services (VCOSS) sells ‘Managing Money – a guide to understanding finances for community management’ (each state should have an equivalent). This is a good, clear and basic manual which can be used for non-profit organisations – covers budgeting, managing and monitoring funds and accounts, staff and committee members etc. More details in the publications section of their website [www.vcoss.org.au/bookroom](http://www.vcoss.org.au/bookroom), phone (03) 9614 5058 or email vcoss@vcoss.org.au.

The Victorian Government also provides a service for small businesses called Business Access. They supply a range of information and services on all aspects of starting and running a small business, from basic bookkeeping and financial management to legal issues and advice. They can be found at Level 5, 55 Collins Street, Melbourne or at a number of regional offices throughout Victoria. Free information sheets are downloadable from [www.businessaccess.vic.gov.au](http://www.businessaccess.vic.gov.au) or call the Victorian Business Line: 13 22 15.

Financial Years

Most organisations set their financial year from July to June to match the official taxation financial year.
RAISING MONEY

Although having some money is important and the topic of getting money tends to dominate many community projects, it is not the answer to all your problems. Money is only one medium to acquire what you need. It is essential for some products and services, however good advice, good volunteers and donations in kind can meet many of your needs. Remember, your most important and valuable resource is the people involved and the voluntary time that they put in.

Fundraising Principles

- reduce your need for money
- raise money within your community
- raise money from a diversity of sources

Reduce Your Need for Money

Remember, any fool can spend money! If you expect others to fund your activities and help develop your garden it is important that you offer value for money. Ask yourself:

- Why should anyone give money to us?
- Are we using the money we have got efficiently and wisely?
- Do we pay too much for services or products we regularly use?

Reducing your need for money comes down to your garden’s forward planning, organisational systems and negotiation skills. Consider the following examples:

- Do you pay bank charges?
- Do you have clear financial controls that help prevent wasteful expenditure?
- Do you have effective and cost efficient insurance? (see insurance section)
- Do you have good recruitment & support systems for volunteers? (see volunteers section)
- Are there any buying consortiums that you can belong to?
- Do you practice the four Rs - Reduce, Re-use, Repair, and Recycle.
- Do you make use of in-kind donations?
- Do you make use of in-kind donations? (see Appendix S - Tips for Finding if for Free or Less)

Raise Money within Your Community

Seek donations of services and resources - set up a wants list asking for donations. Publish it in your newsletter and through the local press. Invite volunteers to contribute.

Offer advertising in newsletter for donation – It is often better to try to obtain goods you require rather than cash to buy them – you get more value in offering advertising for goods to businesses who obtain those goods at wholesale prices.

Sell goods and services – you can sell plants, produce, items made by your gardeners, products processed in your garden, charge fees for workshops.

Fundraise locally – consider all the usual fundraising activities i.e. raffles, car boot sales etc. Critically consider which are the best for you and whether the money raised is worth the time and effort expended.
Enter into partnerships – offer local businesses the opportunity to provide goods or services for promotion, i.e. a local nursery could do demonstrations or supply old or end of season stock in return for recognition and promotion.

Raise Money from Other Sources

Fundraising is hard work, takes time and has costs – set aside the necessary time and resources. Over 90% of fundraising is careful preparation and planning - put yourself in the funder’s shoes - what’s in the project for them? Use personal contacts when possible. It is much harder to raise revenue funding (running costs) than capital funding (e.g. materials).

Fundraising principles

- Seek money to meet your garden’s needs – don’t change your plans or project just to meet the needs of a particular funding source.
- Spend the money as agreed – if the situation changes seek a variation with the funders.
- Keep funders informed and develop a relationship with them.
- Be sure to notify and thank funders of where the money / goods have gone and provide evidence - fostering good relationship with funders is vital.

Basic fundraising steps

- Identify the benefits to funders of supporting your cause.
- Prepare a development plan for your project – prioritise the works that need funding.
- Identify potential funding sources – run a brainstorm session with fellow gardeners.
- Research potential funders – do you fit their criteria? What do they require?
- Prepare professional applications – this takes time and effort.
- Develop relationships with existing and potential funders.
- Keep good records and evaluate.
- Document your project as it develops – can be useful for future fundraising.

If no specific application form is provided, send a short personal letter (no more than one side of A4) including an invitation to visit the site or meet. The application should include the five Ws: Who, What, When, Where and Why; and the big 2 Hs: How and How much. Enclose some relevant support material (not too much), i.e. photos, your last annual report, etc. [Refer to Appendix T – Potential Funding Sources.]
RAISING PROFILE

Investing some time in promoting your garden project can really pay off. Effective publicity can help generate greater community funding, attract more financial support and give the group itself positive feedback and something to celebrate.

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. What local publications / newsletters exist?
2. What community notice boards are in your area?
3. Who else regularly distributes information in your area?
4. Where do existing organisations and groups get together?
5. What schools are in the area?
6. Which local organisations regularly get positive press, radio or TV coverage and why?
7. What contacts do members of your group have with any of the above?
8. Is there an organisation in your area that can help you with promotion and publicity?

If you are running an established community garden, review your on-site publicity and promotional materials.

- Review your signs, notices, leaflets and publications – are they easy to read and doing their job?
- Do notices give positive or negative messages?
- Can your signs be understood by non-literate adults and children? E.g. toilets, etc.
- Is there some form of easily accessible information that clearly explains how your garden works and how people can get involved if they want to?

Promote your garden:

- Hold seasonal or frequent events at the garden which are open to the wider community
- Regularly provide press releases to local newspapers
- Take every opportunity to promote the garden
- Ensure information about the garden is in the public arena
- Regularly lodge articles in community and voluntary sector publications (i.e. neighbourhood newsletters, etc.)
- Talk about your project on local radio – i.e. 3CR in Collingwood, Victoria, has an excellent Sunday morning gardening show

- Take opportunity to call in to talkback radio or gardening programs on regional national radio.
- Investigate local and foreign-language programs (gardening or otherwise) on radio and community television (i.e. Channel 31 in Melbourne.)
- Work with your local council’s PR team to gain media coverage
- Make the most of computer technology – a simple website, an email list to spread the word, etc.
SEEKING ADVICE

Seek advice unless you wish to waste money, resources, time and effort. Your best advisers are often your members who will all have some skills, knowledge and experience you are yet to discover. You need to tap the great variety of local knowledge, skills and expertise that exist in every area. It is common practice to shop around before deciding whom to use. You want someone who is good at their particular skill, but who will listen to your group’s ideas and not try to control you.

Advisers with specialist knowledge, skills and experience are invaluable to your community garden. A solicitor can check your lease and identify any problems; a landscape architect can save you time, money and future problems by working with your ideas. There are national, regional and local organisations that can provide you with help, advice and support.

If advisers are expected to do a significant amount of work for you, your group will need to agree on a written brief, and later agree to a contract that should include terms and conditions of payment. Even if an adviser agrees to carry out a lot of work free of charge, it is best for you both to agree on a brief. Often groups have unreasonable expectations of advisers without understanding their need to maintain their living. Without a contract you will not be able to insist on a certain standard of work or delivery date.

Advisers on tap – not on top

Seek advice, particularly in regard to technical or legal issues, but remember that all major decision and policies must be made by the organisation usually in the form of a management committee meeting. If you become contentious hold a meeting – publish the pros and cons beforehand and organise good facilitation. Important decisions need to be owned by your members. If the advice you are receiving is in language that is difficult to understand, such as an insurance policy, get it explained in simple language by your relevant adviser.

Sources of advice

- Members of your own group and their networks
- Cultivating Community – advocating for community gardens in Melbourne
- Australian City Farm and Community Garden Network – national body
- American Community Garden Association – national body
- Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens - UK’s national body
- Local Councils – often provide general support. This could be through community development workers, landscape architects, open space planners, arts officers
- national bodies - local offices of groups such as ACTV (update) may be able to help
- Volunteering Victoria – support for the not-for-profit organisations
- Philanthropy Australia – support for bodies seeking funding
- Info-xchange – technology for social justice
- Our Community – Australia’s premier community destination
- Horticultural Therapy Association – ?
- Seed Savers Network – all aspects of seed saving

For full contact details refer to Appendix D – More Information - Organisations.
WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS

Your most valuable resource are the people involved. Whatever they do for the garden, and no matter how much time they spend, if they are not paid they are volunteers. Volunteering can cover any activity and responsibility, from the volunteer chairperson with legal accountability to the casual volunteer who helps out a few times a year. Volunteering Victoria's definition of formal volunteering is an activity which takes place in not for profit organisations which is:

- of benefit to the community and the volunteer
- of the volunteer’s own free will and without coercion
- for no financial payment
- in designated volunteer positions only

Community gardens can offer a wide variety of opportunities for volunteering activities. Volunteers will develop new skills and gain experience if you run a well managed and supportive project. Your volunteers can come from your own members and activists, users, other local residents, local schools, special needs support groups and conservation work parties like Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA).

Getting Advice

There are local, state and national organisations that provide support to community organisations running volunteer programs. They can help you recruit and look after volunteers.

Volunteering Victoria is the peak body representing the volunteer movement in Victoria. VV provides education, training programs, and written resource materials on volunteer management. It has local groups where they have got help or support in recruiting volunteers. Remember your most important source is the community in which your garden is situated and your own supporters and members.

4th Floor, Ross House Phone: 9663 6994
247 – 251 Flinders Lane Fax: 9650 8868
Melbourne Vic 3000 Email: volaus@infoxchange.net.au
Web: www.ozvol.org.au

Volunteer Victoria resources and support a wide site network of regional volunteer resource and referral agencies. Full contact details exist in Camberwell (9823 2566), Ringwood (9870 7822), Glen Waverley (9562 0414), City of Banyule (9432 6466), City of Knox (9729 9499), City of Dandenong (9791 8344) and City of Glen Eira (9524 5272). Full contact details can be obtained from the Volunteering Victoria website under ‘State Network’.

Volunteering Australia is the national body. Also based at Ross House in Melbourne it advocates at a national level and supports the state organisations.

Phone: 9663 6994
Email: volaus@infoxchange.net.au
Web: www.ozvol.org.au

About volunteering

- Take volunteering seriously – set up procedures to nurture and support them
- Ensure volunteers feel part of the garden and of any team they are working with
- Review and support volunteers with the same professionalism and purpose as you would staff members
• Investing in volunteers will pay dividends for them and the garden
• Develop a clear volunteer policy that can be given to volunteers during induction

A good volunteer program includes:

• **Comprehensive induction** – make things clear from the start. Every volunteer needs to understand the who, how, why, when and where of the community garden. Group inductions can save time and help ease volunteers into a new situation.

• **Support structure** – show appreciation, acknowledge good work and say thanks. Be sensitive to the individual volunteers needs – a certificate or even a simple morning tea.

• **Welfare structure** – it should not cost people to volunteer – you should provide insurance, protective clothing, travel expenses, refreshments and a place to have lunch and relax.

• **Training opportunities** – should be offered and tailored to meet your volunteer’s needs. Can take place on or off-site; can be formal or informal – see Training section.

• **An organised program** – plan activities to suit ability, interest and time of volunteers. Don’t waste volunteers’ time – having meaningful tasks ready for them to undertake.

• **Record keeping** – record volunteer details. Use a volunteer application form to collect relevant information i.e. contact details, skills, interests.

• **Provide opportunities for exchange** – look at possibilities for volunteers to take their work further a-field; possible international or inter-cultural exchange.

• **Having fun** – make the experience enjoyable, everyone benefits.

A code of practice

Adapted from Code of Practice for Organisations Involving Volunteers from the Volunteering Victoria website [www.volunteeringvictoria.net.au](http://www.volunteeringvictoria.net.au)

In order to enhance the volunteers’ experience and comply with legislation and duty of care (insert your organisation’s name):

1. comply with anti discrimination and equal opportunity legislation
2. provide volunteer staff with orientation and training
3. provide volunteer staff with a healthy and safe workplace
4. provide appropriate and adequate insurance coverage for volunteer staff
5. differentiate between paid and unpaid roles
6. define volunteer roles and develop clear job descriptions
7. provide opportunities for professional development for volunteer staff
8. provide copies of policies pertaining to volunteer staff
9. provide all staff with information on grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures
10. acknowledge the rights of volunteer staff
11. ensure the work of volunteer staff complements, not undermines, the work of paid staff
12. offer volunteer staff the opportunity for professional development
13. reimburse volunteer staff for expenses incurred on behalf of the organisation
14. treat volunteers staff as valuable team members and advise them of the opportunities to participate in decision making
15. acknowledge the contributions of volunteer staff
TRAINING

A wise investment

Training is systematic instruction or practice that helps individuals learn how to do their work and/or do it better. Investing in training builds the capacity of your group. Many of us make the mistake of viewing training as a cost rather than an investment – “if you think training is expensive then try ignorance!”

In any organisation the volunteers and the staff are the key resource – their performance and commitment determine how successful the organisation will be. In a community garden there is usually a desire to implement equal opportunity policies and to establish and maintain a democratic form of management. Training can play a key role in providing the opportunity for people to diversify and upgrade their skills and move into more challenging roles on the project. A Community Garden that cares about its volunteers and staff is one that provides them with opportunities to develop and contribute – if it doesn’t, then people will leave.

Identify training needs

Most training needs become apparent through good supervision and review procedures. Consider asking people to list courses they think are important for themselves or the organisation and give them a priority rating. It is important not to unrealistically raise people’s expectations – there are limits to the amount of training that can be provided.

Use a variety of training methods

A wide variety of training methods can be used on a community garden. Training can be in groups or on a one to one basis. It can be delivered “on the job” whilst working in the garden or “off the job” with people from other organisations. Training methods include – “being thrown in the deep end”, “sitting next to Nellie”, demonstrations, discussions, role-play, games, visits, etc. The most common and least effective is “being thrown in at the deep end”. Physical skills are generally learnt best on a one to one basis with intellectual skills on a group basis. Training possibilities include:

In-house training

- Induction for new employees, volunteers and committee members
- Practical demonstrations – watching someone operate a piece of equipment and copying the action
- Bringing a trainer into the garden to run a session, i.e. composting, etc.

External training

- Listening to a lecture on health and safety with people from other voluntary organisations
- Taking a self study course
- Visits to other community gardens

You will need to choose a combination of methods that suit the needs, skills and experiences of those receiving the training.

We generally learn most effectively:

- when we want to
- when learning is seen as relevant to our needs
- by doing things
- by getting constructive feedback on results
### Training providers

Organisations providing training relevant to your garden needs:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF TRAINING</th>
<th>PROVIDER</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fundraising</strong></td>
<td><em>Philanthropy Australia</em> - Funders who run courses for organisations they fund</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Organisational Management</strong></td>
<td><em>Our Community Common Ground</em> – group process</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Industrial issues</strong></td>
<td><em>Australian Services Union</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Occupational Health and Safety</strong></td>
<td><em>Australian Services Union</em></td>
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<td><strong>Volunteering</strong></td>
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<td>Regional Volunteering Organisations</td>
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<td><strong>Community Gardening</strong></td>
<td><em>Cultivating Community</em> - annual Community Gardens Gathering</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>Local Councils</td>
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<td>TAFE Colleges</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Neighbourhood houses</td>
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<td>Community organisations</td>
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For full contact details, see Appendix D – More Information - Organisations

### Checklist for training

- Does your organisation have a budget for training?
- Is there a policy on training, including how decisions are made about training, who it is available to, what it is expected to achieve and how its effects are evaluated?
- Is training seen as part of an overall approach to learning that includes induction, on-the-job training, a variety of learning opportunities, supervision and appraisal?
LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

An Overview

It is essential that you comply with the laws currently in existence. Each particular law will have a specialist organisation that can help interpret the legislation applicable to your particular circumstance. It is almost always best to involve them at the earliest possible opportunity. By involving officials in discussion of the design of your project you receive extra expert advice and you can build a relationship with people who otherwise make unannounced spot checks to enforce legislation of which you may not be aware.

Employment: Employees of small organisations and part-time workers have individual employment rights such as contracts, periods of notice, redundancy payments, right to claim unfair dismissal and holidays. This is a complex and constantly changing field. If you are an employer, unions in the voluntary / community sector can offer helpful advice.

Many existing community garden workers duties would fall under the Social and Community Services Award (SACS) of the Victorian branch of the Australian Services Union (ASU).


Fire: If you have a building invite the building surveyor from your local council to assess your proposals and give you fire safety advice.

Food: If you intend preparing and/or selling food, either regularly or at one off event, then invite the local council Environmental Health Officer to give you help and advice.

Finance: All organisations should keep accounts and are legally obliged to do so:

- You need an Australian Business Number (ABN) which should appear on all cheques, letterhead and any invoices you issue.
- If your organisation has an annual turnover in excess of $50,000 you must register for Goods and Services Tax (GST).
- Registered charities, co-operatives and companies must keep proper books of account which have to include a statement of income and expenditure.
- Accounts should be independently checked by an auditor or suitably experienced person.
- Accounts books and statements must be kept for a minimum of seven years.
- Registered charities are required to file their returns in accordance with their constitution.
- Gardens employing staff are also legally responsible for maintaining records showing income tax deductions, superannuation contributions, and any statutory sick pay payments.

Legal Agreements

- Community garden bank accounts should have a minimum of two signatories on any cheque issued (usually the treasurer and another management committee member). It is good practice to have three or four people as signatories of which any two can sign.
- Only people authorised by the organisation should sign other legal documents, e.g. a lease. This is usually the chairperson and at least one other office bearer.

Other legal requirements

For insurance requirements, see Insurance section.
For health and safety requirements, see Health and Safety section.
For legal status and the constitution, see Getting Started section.

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HEALTH AND SAFETY

Most of us would be shocked if it were suggested that our practices put other peoples' lives in danger or at risk of injury. The reality is that some community organisations do not pay enough attention to health and safety issues. It is important that your group develops a means of identifying risks or dangers and acts to either eliminate or minimise them.

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

Your obligations – keeping it safe

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

• **Provide insurance** – you need it! See Insurance section.

Five steps for a safer space

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

**Protective gear** – make gardeners aware of good gear and make it available to staff, i.e. hats, sunscreen, boots, gloves, etc.

**Poisonous plants** – if you don’t have sufficient knowledge, then seek advice from the local authority, an established gardening club or local horticulturalist.

**Pathways and walkways** – a major source of accidents. Keep them clear of obstacles.

**Use of wheelbarrows** – don’t overload them. Only move what you can easily manage.

**Use of garden tools** – a major source of accidents e.g. rakes and forks left lying face up on the ground. Proper storage helps reduce accidents.

**Power and electrical tools** – a major source of accidents. Some power tools require the user to be qualified to use them (e.g. chainsaws). The necessary health and safety equipment must be worn.

**Compost heaps** – a well-managed compost heap will not attract vermin. See books on composting in Appendix B – More Information – Books & Journals.

**Dogs** – many community gardens are dog free zones (with the exception of guide dogs). Dog faeces can pose a particular set of health problems, particularly for young children. Many parks in Melbourne now have on-lead and off-lead areas.

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

More information

Victoria:

Workcover
Phone: 1800 136 089
E-Mail: info@workcover.vic.gov.au

National:


[www.ohs.com.au](http://www.ohs.com.au) has an extensive links section on relevant topics such as child safety, food, manual handling and risk assessment.
INSURANCE

Why you need it

You are legally responsible from the day you takeover the site. We strongly recommend that you take out public liability insurance before any work is undertaken on the site, even if this is prior to signing an agreement. Signed waivers from gardeners are not binding (i.e. - posting signs telling people to garden at their own risk). Such practice may discourage lawsuits, but they are not a defence against legal action.

What cover is needed

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

- **Public liability** – to indemnify you against being held responsible for injury, disability or death of people visiting or taking part in your activities.
- **Employers’ liability and group personal accident** – to indemnify you against being held responsible for accidents causing injury, disability or death of employees and volunteers.
- **All risks policy** – to cover the community garden property, such as equipment and money against fire, theft, vandalism, etc. Many policies have a minimum claim level and an excess, the amount you have to contribute towards a claim.
- **Other insurances** – to cover you against any other risks considered important, depending on the nature of the garden plans to undertake, e.g. community garden work or activities that take place away from the garden site.

Basic steps to covering your group

Check with other community groups or voluntary organisations. What type of insurance and level of cover do they have? What does it cost them? Was the company helpful?

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

Go to an insurance broker to get quotations and get them to explain to you in everyday language what is covered and in what circumstances. Make sure you have what you want. Premiums may be based on a number of factors: property size, number of sites, number of gardeners, type and intensity of activity, etc. Because community gardening does not fall under normal classification it can be difficult to find an agency that understands what you want. Due to minimum premium requirements, it is much cheaper to purchase an umbrella policy covering many sites rather than have individual sites purchase their own policies.

**Piggy-back onto existing policies** where possible. Most garden sites on council, state or school land would be covered through existing policies; however be sure to confirm the coverage.

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

The Victorian Council of Social Services (VCOSS) sells a book simply titled ‘**Insurance**’. The cost is $6 including postage & handling. Phone 9654 5050, e-mail vcoss@vcoss.org.au or visit [www.vcoss.org.au](http://www.vcoss.org.au).
EVALUATION

Evaluation involves making judgments about something’s worth. We do this by asking questions and reflecting on the answers we come up with. Remember to keep the emphasis on what has been achieved.

Why evaluate?

• **To see how we are going** – participants or workers need the satisfaction of being able to identify progress and results. Evidence that your garden is providing a good and necessary service can help you win public support.

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

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

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

Put differently:

- What gets measured gets done
- If you don’t measure results you can’t tell achievement from failure
- If you can’t see achievement you can’t reward it or learn from it
- If you can’t encourage achievement you’re probably encouraging failure
- If you can’t recognise failure you can’t address it
- If you can’t demonstrate achievement you won’t win public support

Steps towards implementing evaluation

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

An evaluation question checklist

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

More Information

Appendix B - More Information

**AVAILABILITY:** Publications marked with these symbols are available at the following outlets:

§ - available from Friends of the Earth bookshop, 312 Smith St Collingwood Victoria.
Phone 9419 8700 or e-mail foe@foe.org.au

❖ - available from Victorian Council of Social Services (VCOSS) Phone 1800 133 340 visit www.vcoss.org.au or email vcoss@vcoss.org.au.

Books & Journals

**COMMUNITY GARDENS**

(2001) *People, Land and Sustainability* – A global view of community gardening. Proceedings of an international conference on community gardening held in Nottingham, UK.

**DESIGN**


**GROWING**


- Broken down into an easy to follow monthly calendar format that details growing methods and seasonal tasks.


**FRUIT**

§ Glowinski, Louis (1991) *The complete book of fruit growing in Australia*. Lothian. (This is the fruit growers bible – a fantastic and comprehensive book.)
WATER

§ Van Dyk, Wendy (2000) *The water efficient garden*

§ McQuire, Stuart (1995) *Not just down the drain – a guide to re-using and treating your household water*. Friends of the Earth.

COMPOST


COMpanion PLANTING


CHOOKS


COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT


SEED SAVING

§ Fanton, Michael and Jude (1993) *The Seed Savers Handbook*. The Seed Savers Network. [www.seedsavers.net](http://www.seedsavers.net) Email: info@seedsavers.net

MANAGEMENT


- An excellent, straightforward reference book. Comprehensive introduction to good management for organising, co-ordinating or making decisions about a voluntary organisation or project.


- An introduction to the roles and responsibilities of management groups in community organisations, specific tasks of management group members. A must for people who work in or for community organisations.


- Full of most useful information for not for profit social action groups.

- Top selling manual to help organisations develop policies and procedures. Includes an PC disk to allow organisations to customise sample policies for their own specific needs.


**FINANCE**

VC OSS (1997) *Taxation – Legalities Victoria* VCOSS $6
- A guide to taxation information for community organisations.

- Explains basic financial management for not for profit organisations.

**COMPLIANCE**

VC OSS (1994) *Insurance – Legalities Victoria* VCOSS

VC OSS (1993) *Incorporation – Legalities Victoria.* VCOSS
- For groups who want to become incorporated as an association, co-operative or company.

**EMPLOYMENT**

- Will assist your organisation to manage its human resources.

**FUNDING**

- The most comprehensive reference for sources of philanthropic funding in Australia

Roberts, Jean: *Successful Submission Writing for Business and Non profit Organisations.* Philanthropy Australia.


**URBAN AGRICULTURE**

Smit, Jac (1996) *Urban Agriculture: food, jobs and sustainable cities.* UNDP (Published by City Farmer – Canada’s Office of Urban Agriculture, cityfarm@interchange.ubc.ca

Ableman, Michael (1993) *From the Good Earth* Harry N Abrams

Sustain (1999) *City Harvest* A report on the feasibility of food production in cities using London as an example. [www.sustainweb.org](http://www.sustainweb.org) e-mail: sustain@sustainweb.org

Sustain (1996) *Growing Food in Cities.* A report on the benefits of urban food growing. [www.sustainweb.org](http://www.sustainweb.org) e-mail: sustain@sustainweb.org
Sustain (1994) *Food Miles – still on the road to ruin.* [www.sustainweb.org](http://www.sustainweb.org) e-mail: sustain@sustainweb.org


### Journals

**Grass Roots** - Excellent self-sufficiency magazine. Available from Box 117, Seymour Vic, 3661


**Earth Garden** – Australia’s original magazine of self-reliance. Published quarterly since 1972, available from newsagents or by writing to RMB 427 Trentham, Victoria, 3455.

**Urban Agriculture** - Urban Agriculture is published three times a year, is distributed free and can be accessed through the RUAF website, [www.ruaf.org](http://www.ruaf.org) or e-mail: Ruaf@etcnl.nl

### Guides

Crouch, David, Sempik, Joe and Wiltshire, Richard *Growing in the Community* – a good practice guide for the management of allotments. LGA Publications (UK) Available from: IdeA Publication Sales, Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street, London EC1M 5LG
Appendix C - Websites

Community Gardens

www.cultivatingcommunity.org.au - Cultivating Community's site has information about what is going on in community garden world in Melbourne and links to other sites.

www.magna.com/~pacedge/ - This is the Pacific Edge Permaculture site, which has a good section on community gardens. It includes information on how to start community gardens and case studies. Good coverage of the Sydney scene.

www.communitygarden.org - The American Community Garden Association’s site. Excellent site that includes publications, a nation wide listing of gardens, upcoming events, information about their annual conference and a community garden list serve.

Urban Agriculture

www.farmgarden.org.uk - The UK’s National federation for City Farms and Community Gardens site. Another excellent site with a comprehensive listing of projects in the UK and wider links.

www.ruaf.org - Resource centre for urban agriculture based in the Netherlands. RUAF’s aim is to facilitate the integration of urban agriculture in the policies and plans of city authorities. Has an extensive list of publications covering a wide range of related topics and publishes a magazine online.

www.cityfarmer.org - Canada’s office for urban agriculture. A fantastic site – the most comprehensive on the internet about urban agriculture, community gardening and sustainable agriculture.

www.londonfarmersmarkets.org.uk - Information about the burgeoning local food market situation in the UK.

www.localfood.org.uk - The Foundation for Local Food Initiatives site in the UK.

www.communityfoods.com.au - Community network service for people interested in growing, eating, and/or buying local, healthy foods, featuring links to seed savers networks.

Volunteer Organisations

www.volunteeringvictoria.net.au - Volunteering Victoria’s website

www.ozvol.org.au - website for Volunteering Australia


Community Support Organisations

www.ourcommunity

www.vcoss.org.au

www.infoxchange.net.au

Government

www.ato.gov.au – Australian Taxation Office
Appendix D – Organisations

In Melbourne

Cultivating Community
Phone: (03) 9415 6580
Postal: PO Box 8, Abbotsford, Victoria, 3067
E-mail: info@cultivatingcommunity.org.au
Web: www.cultivatingcommunity.org.au
- A not-for-profit community gardens advocacy group. Produced the community gardens good practice guide, runs the summer vegetable garden and cooking project funded by Collingwood College and the Office of Housing.

Victoria Interpretation and Translation Service (VITS)
Address: 1st Floor, 371 Spencer Street Melbourne, VIC, 3000
Phone: (03) 9280 1941
Email: vits@vits.com.au
Web: www.vits.com.au

Community Garden Unit
Department of Human Services
Office of Housing 9th Floor, 555 Collins St Melbourne
Basil Natoli
Phone: 96167816 (Monday – Wednesday)
Email: Basil.Natoli@dhs.vic.gov.au
Web: www.housing.vic.gov.au
- Responsible for the development of community garden projects on public housing estates in Victoria.

Permaculture Melbourne
Address: 2 Minona Street, Hawthorn
Postal: PO Box 3079 AUBURN VIC 3123
Phone: 03 9819 5081
- Permaculture Melbourne sells publications, runs workshops and events and incorporates the Heritage Fruit Group (HFG). The HFG run a series of grafting workshops in Melbourne each winter. You can learn how to graft apple, pear, plum, apricot and other stock and heritage varieties of scion.

Heritage Seed Curators Association (HSCA)
- A state-wide organisation committed to the preservation of biodiversity.

Centre for Environmental Research and Education Strategies (CERES)
Address: 8-10 Lee St East Brunswick
Phone: 93872607
Email: info@ceres.org.au
Web: www.ceres.org.au
- A pioneer of Melbourne’s community environment projects. CERES has a Permaculture and Bush Tucker Nursery, an organic garden and weekly market, community gardens, a café, and is the base for the Alternative Technology Association.

Collingwood Children’s Farm (CCF)
Address: St Heliers St, Abbotsford, 3067
Phone: 94175806
Email: info@farm.org.au
- Melbourne’s first city farm. Has large community gardens, community orchards and vegetable gardens and a diversity of animals on a 7 hectare site beside the Yarra.
In Australia

Australian City Farm and Community Garden network  
www.magna.com/~pacedge/  
- Has state by state contact details

Community Foods  
- Community network service for people interested in growing, eating, and/ or buying local, healthy foods; includes links to seed-savers networks.

The Seed Savers Network  
Bryon Bay N.S.W  
www.seedsavers.net, info@seedsavers.net

The Diggers Club  
www.diggers.com.au  
orders@diggers.com.au

Overseas

American Community Gardening Association (ACGA)  
Philadelphia  
www.communitygarden.org

Federation of City Farms & Community Gardens (UK)  
The Greenhouse, Bristol  
www.farmgarden.org.uk

Sustain – the alliance for better food and farming  
London  
www.sustainweb.org

Resource Centre for Urban Agriculture (RUAF)  
The Netherlands  
www.ruaf.org

Foundation for Local Food Initiatives (FLAIR)  
Bristol  
www.localfood.org.uk

Canada’s Office of Urban Agriculture  
Vancouver  
www.cityfarmer.org
Appendix E – Making Decisions

Getting from discussion to decision

The following constitute the basic steps in making a decision with a group of people. It is the facilitators or chairperson role to guide people through this process.

Step 1 – RAISE ISSUE

An issue is brought to the meeting. If it is the form of a solution then retrace it back to the issue.

Step 2 – CLARIFY

What is the issue?
What are we trying to decide?
Do we need background information?

Step 3 – DISCUSS

Share how people feel about the issue
Pool ideas
Synthesise
Separate areas of agreement and disagreement –
Summarise areas of agreements and put them aside.
Focus the group’s attention on the areas in disagreement, doubt or confusion.

Step 4 - TEST FOR AGREEMENT

Develop a proposition and test for agreement. If the proposition is agreed to by all, the details of the decision can then be developed – document it, by whom, by when.

Source: Glen Ochre – Group Process specialist.
Appendix F – A Checklist for Effective Meetings

Before the Meeting

- have pre-assigned, prepared facilitators
- have a system for collecting agenda items
- are there any jobs that need doing before the meeting?
- ensure agenda is available well before the meeting
- ensure everyone knows the meeting time and place and agrees to it
- choose a comfortable environment – prepare the space, it helps to display the agenda on a white/blackboard clearly visible to all

In the Meeting

- welcome to new people
- start on time and on a positive note
- consider a 'catch up' where people briefly share how they are
- assign a minute taker, time keeper, facilitator / chair / vibes monitor
- review the last meeting's minutes
- review and, if necessary, build the agenda
- prioritise items – if necessary, assign realistic time limits to items
- leave time for a brief evaluation of the meeting
- finish on time and on a positive note

After the Meeting

- minutes to be distributed ASAP after meeting

A Sample Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes – questions arising from the previous minutes
3. Correspondence – table any that the group needs to be aware of
4. Reports – report backs to the group that do not require discussion
5. Agenda – the nitty gritty of the meeting
   e.g. 5.1 Site inspection
         5.2 Compost bins…

6. Announcements – allows information about upcoming events to be shared
7. Evaluation – record positives and negatives of the meeting in the minutes

(Adapted from Glen Ochre ‘A Meetings Map – Be Prepared’, Common Ground, 1995)
Appendix G – The Basics of Facilitation

Conventionally, it is the Chairperson’s role to facilitate meetings. This doesn’t have to be the case in your group. If several members of the group develop the skills, you can choose to rotate the facilitation role amongst the group.

What is facilitation?

To facilitate is, to translate from the Latin, “to make easy”. The facilitator thinks through the procedures and formats that enable the group to gather it’s cumulative insights, to order them, and then decide on a course of action that has consensus and commitment backing it. The facilitator is responsible to the group, not to individuals. Good facilitation:

- makes the most of the skills of the whole group
- encourages dialogue as opposed to debate
- promotes a group culture of co-operation and interdependence

Good facilitation needs:

- a degree of impartiality
- listening
- watching
- staying in touch with the group

Good facilitators know:

- people are moved by hopes and dreams
- that problems can be solved
- people find their fulfilment in taking responsibility, not avoiding it
- teams are tension filled

What good facilitators do

- attend to the space of your gathering
- celebrating significant milestones in the group’s journey
- acknowledge and reward effort
- model authenticity – you have to walk your talk

(Adapted from Common Ground Training Resources (1995) and ‘Facilitation from the inside out’ LENS International, Malaysia.)
Appendix H - Conflict Resolution

Essential ingredients and basic steps

In any group there will be differences. Diversity is the basis on which individuals, relationships and organisations grow and change. Difference needs to be acknowledged, expressed and discussed – it is a mockery to talk about ‘commitment to the community’ if people are unwilling to value everyone’s ideas, opinions and contributions. This does not mean everyone can always get what they want.

People need to recognise they are working together as a group. Within the group the individual sometimes has to do things they do not want to do or go along with decisions they do not fully agree with. If the group goes in a completely unacceptable direction to the individual, they need to sever their connection with the group. Your group needs to develop the skills to deal with difference and be able to identify and resolve conflict to prevent it undermining the performance of the group.

Essential ingredients for Conflict resolution

Find a quiet neutral venue and put aside some dedicated time. People need to:

- want to find a solution - a collaborative process needs to be created
- be willing to talk - each person needs to tell their story and express their feelings
- be willing to listen, hear and reflect back what they hear
- be willing to explore a range of solutions - not just their own
- be willing to accept a solution even if it does not meet all their needs and wants
- apologise as appropriate
- hear ownership of inappropriate behaviour and forgive
- feel that they have been forgiven

The steps for informal conflict resolution

- get agreement to negotiate
- get agreement about the process, rotating who will speak first
- listen reflectively to other's interests, needs and feelings without interruption or defence
- speak clearly from an ‘I’ position, stating your interests, needs and feelings
- define problems in terms of needs
- together generate possible solutions, look for mutual acceptability
- record and implement agreements to ensure that it is clear what is to happen next and who is to do what by when
- arrange a definite time for a follow up
- informally evaluate how the negotiation went – this can be done by simply expressing how you and the other party felt it went
- affirm the other party’s positive negotiation behaviour

(Source: Glen Ochre, Common Ground; and Just About Managing – Effective management for voluntary organisations and community groups by Sandy Adirondack, LVSC)
Appendix I - Pats on the Back

Ideas for acknowledging, rewarding and celebrating achievement

• Say thankyou – it is hard to over use the most basic one.

• Has your community garden got a life membership system?

• Do people have access to comfortable facilities? Can they have a nice hot cuppa when they need one?

• Do volunteers have a hat or shirt with a garden logo on it?

• Create time to look at and appreciate people's achievements – this could take the form of garden tours.

• Make the most of milestones – i.e. make public events of openings, anniversaries and celebrate where you have come from

• Hold social gatherings, e.g. barbecues, etc.

• Look back at where you have come from – utilise old photos, slides, videos, etc.

• Celebrate achievement through the arts

• Issue certificates where appropriate

• Place notes on newsletters recognising peoples contributions and achievements
Appendix J – How to Work with your Local Council

You need Council on side

Developing a constructive and supportive working relationship with Council is a huge advantage. It is important that your group understands how the council works, what its priorities are, and what help it has provided to other community and voluntary organisations. You are likely to want the Council to release land to you under a lease agreement, and give planning permission for a community garden, provide advice, help and support, and funding.

The Mechanics of Council

There are two important groups that make up the Council.

- First, the elected councillors (regardless of political allegiance.) Most important to your cause are the ward councillors (those who represent the area in which the proposed garden will be) and those who serve on the sub-committees relevant to your garden.
- Second, council officers – the Council’s paid staff. They advise Councillors and carry out Council decisions. Find out where power lies, who has influence and where decisions are made.

Plan and present

To approach Council effectively it really helps to prepare a well written and presented submission. This should contain:

1. a description of your group
2. your aims and objectives
3. the skills and competencies of your members
4. the characteristics and size of the land needed
5. your actual and proposed legal structure (eg incorporated association)
6. case studies of other community gardens
7. potential sources of funding
8. what you require from councillors
9. how you would manage risk
10. the benefits of community gardens to communities and councils (see Appendix K – Social and Environmental Benefits.)
11. a clear request for what you require (depending on your group – it could include access to land, funding to cover start up costs, staff advice / support, etc.)

Your proposal would be first viewed and assessed by a council officer then formally considered by the elected Councillors at their monthly public meeting. At this meeting the Council’s planning officer would speak to the proposal, outlining their recommendations. This is an opportune time for you to make a brief and convincing presentation to the Councillors. It is helpful if at least some of the Councillors are aware of your proposal prior to this meeting.
Sell the benefits

Put some thought into ways you can demonstrate that community gardens help meet the Council's service agenda and improve the amenity of the local area, e.g. sustainability, leisure and recreation, health, waste reduction (composting).

Be aware of the pitfalls

Try to anticipate Council's probable concerns. They are often based around:

- traffic – have you thought through the parking requirements of your plan?
- noise – will it disturb adjoining land uses?
- alienation of open space – you need to convince people gardening is a valid use.
- odour – how will your compost system be managed?
- vandalism - how will you deal with vandalism risks?
- liability – how you deal with risks generated by the site?

While these are all valid concerns, most turn out to be not real problems at all. For more detail, see Appendix L - Rebuttals of Common Concerns about Community Gardens.
Appendix K - Social and Environmental Benefits

Community gardens bring five main benefits to our communities. They:

- **build community** - a sense of community develops through participation in a common enterprise
- **improve nutritional health** – by increasing the production and consumption of fresh, organic, locally grown food
- **improve amenity** – by diversifying and beautifying public open space
- **reduce environmental impact** – by reducing food miles and recycling waste
- **create purposeful recreation** – by getting people growing food!

**Community Gardens build community by:**

- bringing people together – they provide a social focus. A garden is a non-threatening place for interaction among people of all ages, cultures and income levels developing neighbourhood pride
- encouraging capacity building and developing organising skills – such community capacity building outcomes have the potential to help address further community needs such as education, transportation, housing and food security.
- increasing volunteer and leadership opportunities for local residents
- increasing mentor relationships between adults and youth
- improving conflict resolution skills in local communities

**Community Gardens improve health by:**

- increasing the production and consumption of fresh, organic, locally grown food
- providing opportunities for family nutritional education
- providing exercises in an attractive outdoor nature setting

**Community Gardens improve amenity by:**

- by diversifying and beautifying public open space

**Community Gardens reduce environmental impact by:**

- reducing food miles – they result in food being grown closer to home
- recycling waste – both retail and domestic organic waste
- reduce the quantities of rubbish going to landfill (the majority of rubbish is compostable)
- bringing people closer to nature

**Community Gardens create purposeful recreation by:**

- providing a safe, attractive and nature based place to relax and exercise
Appendix L - Rebuttals of Common Concerns

**Aesthetics are important**

Although aesthetics do not affect the productivity of your garden – neighbours perceptions are real considerations. They can make or break the project going ahead. You will get on best with council and neighbours if you store materials tidily and maintain a high level of visually appealing aesthetics – the place should not look like a junkyard.

- **Parking** – (Have you thought through the parking requirements of your plan?) It is unlikely (except for some events) that there will be large numbers of people on site at any one time, so there should be minimal disruptions to parking in the area.

- **Noise** – Community gardens will produce very little noise and are unlikely to disrupt neighbouring activities.

- **Alienation of open space** – Community gardens actually provide a focal point for community activity, bringing life to what would otherwise be an empty or under-utilised space.

- **Odour from compost** – A well-managed compost system produces no offensive odour. Ensure that you follow through these claims with good practice. It may be necessary to run composting / worm farming workshops to inform your gardeners on the “how to” of composting.

- **Liability** – How will you deal with risks generated by the site? Ensure that you have adequate public and liability insurance cover to protect against the unlikely event of damage or injury caused by gardening activities in the gardens. Satisfy concerns of locals with evidence of this cover. (See Insurance section.)

Most of all reinforce the positive social, environmental and community-building attributes and benefits of community gardens. The most effective way to allay concerns of your project is to highlight the benefits. See Appendix K – Social and Environmental Benefits of Community Gardens.
Appendix M – The Site Hunters Checklist

When looking a site, you need to consider the following:

1. **Purpose** – what do you want to do with the land?

2. **Size** - is it a suitable size for what the group wants to do? Is there enough room for all your planned activities and future expansion?

3. **Location** – is gardening compatible with adjoining land use? Are the neighbours likely to be supportive of a community garden? Is it close to potential users / away from major roads and sources of concentrated air pollution / close to public transport? A highly visible public location means vandalism is less likely.

4. **Access** – is it or could it be made accessible? Is there access for trucks to drop off supplies? What parking space is their close by?

5. **Exposure** - how much solar access does the land get? Your site should be fairly open with six or more hours of direct sunlight a day. A northern exposure, with little shading from trees or buildings is ideal. How protected is the site from the elements, i.e. cold winter winds?

6. **Past uses** - is the land contaminated by a previous use? The soil might be contaminated with heavy metals, pesticides, etc. Get a soil test done.

7. **Present condition** - how good is the soil for growing plants? Dig down in several places to find out. Is there a problem with weeds, rubbish, rocks or existing vegetation?

8. **Slope and drainage** - the best sites are level. If it is more than a 20° slop, terraces or raised beds may be necessary. Be sure that soils will drain adequately - inspect the site after heavy rain to see if there is ponding.

9. **Services** - are there services on site or easy to access e.g. water, phone, electricity, gas, sewers, drains, etc.?

10. **Restrictions** - what planning restrictions are there? Are there any listed structures on the site? Are there any plants that should be conserved?

11. **Terms** – how long will the land be available? At what cost? Can you lease it and if so under what conditions – length, cost, etc.?
Appendix N – Sample Lease Agreement

Here is a list of items usually covered in a community garden lease. Specifics will vary in each case and any agreements should conform to your state’s legal requirements. Usually the landowner prepares the lease and presents it to the community garden group. However, we recommend before that happens you communicate your version of an agreement to the landowner. Use the points below to help you. Have a lawyer look over any agreement before you sign it.

- **List basic details** - names of parties, addresses, date of contract.
- Outline the general purposes of the agreement – i.e. these could be your aims and objectives such as ‘to provide garden plots for public use’.
- **Describe the property** including size and boundaries.
- **Detail the length of agreement** with start and finish dates.
- Include an option to renew at expiration of the lease for the same number of years. State how option is to be exercised (often by written notice 60 – 90 days prior to expiration date)
- **Consideration**: any rental fee or statement of rental waiver. This will usually state lessee’s obligation to fulfil a public purpose in lieu of rental. A schedule for improving the property may be noted here.
- **Detail prohibited uses**
- **Include subletting or assignment options**: lessee’s rights to rent plots or transfer lease.
- **Non-discrimination**: lessee agrees that in use of the property there will be no discrimination against any person in any way.
- **Taxes**: note who is responsible for taxes, assessments, charges, licences, rates etc
- **Maintenance and improvements**: detail each party’s responsibilities regarding site maintenance, borders, buildings and land. Mention permitted improvements. Gardeners must abide by rules regarding care of their plots and the site. Property must be returned in good condition at termination of the lease.
- **Utilities**: note parties’ responsibilities for water, electricity, gas, telephone, rubbish, etc.
- **Inspection**: landowner has right to enter property for inspection or rights of access to property.
- **Insurance**: note parties’ responsibility to ensure against damage, fire, general liability, replacement costs and indicate if landowner must receive a Certificate of Insurance. Be specific about the policy cover required.
- **Default**: 90 day written notice delivered if either party breaches the agreement. Usually a grace period is given to maintain stated agreements.
- **Option to terminate** before lease period is up exercised by written notice delivered a certain time before date of termination. If property is not used for stated purposes, landowner may terminate lease by giving written notice. State who owns improvements in case of lease termination.
- **Modification of lease**: option for mutually agreeable amendments documented by written memoranda. Amendments to lease shall be attached to lease.
- Document shall be **witnessed, signed, acknowledged and notarised**.
- **Additional attachments** such as legal property descriptions or property map.

Adapted from *The Community Garden Book – New directions for creating and managing neighbourhood food gardens in your town* by Larry Sommers.
Appendix O - Sample Community Garden Application Form

[This application form was written for the Collingwood Children’s Farm. You are welcome to adapt it to suit your circumstances.]

There can only be one garden plot for each household. Priority may be given to applicants who live closest to the Farm, or who have the least alternative opportunity to garden. This application form must be completed in English, and returned to Collingwood Children’s Farm. Before you apply make sure you satisfy the following criteria:

- Live in Abbotsford, Richmond, Collingwood, Clifton Hill, Fitzroy or Carlton
- Be prepared to pay an annual fee and contribute to communal upkeep of the gardens
- Be prepared to make the most of a plot (there is a long waiting list of keen gardeners)

Title: Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms

Given Names ………………………………………..Family Names ………………………………….

Address …………………………………………………………………………

Postcode ……………….

Telephone numbers
- home ................................ ........................................
- work ................................
- mobile ................................ ........................................

email …………………………

Contact telephone number and name of a family member or friend

Are you a pensioner or health care card holder?

First or preferred language? ……………………… Second preferred language? ……………....

What is your date of birth? ................................ ................................ ................................

day month year

How much space do you have to garden at home? (Number of metres, e.g. 6m x 4m)

Do you have any prior gardening experience?

Do you have any special physical needs for your garden plot?

☐ Yes ☐ No

When would you be able to attend garden working bees / meetings?

☐ morning ☐ afternoon
☐ evening
☐ Monday - Friday ☐ Saturday
☐ Sunday

I state that I live within the City of Yarra area described above. There is no other community garden plot allocated to my household.

Signature ………………………………………………………………………………………………..
Appendix P - Sample Contract

[The following Gardener Responsibility form was written for the Collingwood Children's Farm. You are welcome to adapt it to suit your circumstances.]

Collingwood Children’s Farm
St Heliers St (PO Box 80) Abbotsford Victoria 3067
Email: info@farm.org.au Phone & Fax: 94175806

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Given Names</td>
<td>..........................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Names</td>
<td>..........................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>........................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone: home</td>
<td>........................................ work ................................ ..........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile</td>
<td>.......................................................... e-mail ..........................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First or preferred language</td>
<td>........................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second language</td>
<td>........................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of birth:</td>
<td>........................................... Sex: ☐ Female ☐ Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plot Number:</td>
<td>........................................................................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have read and/or had read to me the Community Gardens Rules and Guidelines. I agree to abide by these Rules and Guidelines. I understand that if I breach the conditions, I may forfeit my right to have a Community Garden plot. I have been provided with a Community Garden key.

.......................................................... Signature of gardener

.......................................................... Name of interpreter Signature

.......................................................... Name of person signing for and on behalf of Collingwood Children’s Farm Signature

Date: / /
Appendix Q – Responsibilities

[The following Gardener Responsibility form was written for the Collingwood Children’s Farm. You are welcome to adapt it to suit your circumstances.]

Collingwood Children’s Farm
St Heliers St (PO Box 80) Abbotsford Victoria 3067
Email: info@farm.org.au Phone & Fax: 94175806

Gardener Responsibilities – what we expect from gardeners

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

1. Pay an annual fee

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

2. Help look after the garden’s communal facilities by

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

3. Support the Farm by

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

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

4. Abide by the rules and guidelines

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

The following Rules and Guidelines were written by Cultivating Community for use by plot holders in their Community Gardens. Feel free to adapt them to suit your circumstances.

Cultivating Community

Community Gardens

There are Community Gardens on Public Housing Estates in Richmond, Collingwood, Fitzroy, Brunswick, North Melbourne, Ascot Vale, Carlton, Windsor, Prahran and Elsternwick. The gardens provide the opportunity for public housing tenants to grow herbs, vegetables and flowers for personal use. Cultivating Community is funded by the Department of Human Services (Office of Housing) to manage these gardens. Principles of environmental sustainability and community participation guide the management of the community gardens. Community Garden Support Workers support tenants in the garden.

1. WHO CAN HAVE A PLOT?
   Public housing tenants living on a estate where the garden is located are eligible for a plot. Only one garden plot is available to each household. Preference will be given to tenants who do not have their own private garden. Other individuals or organisations may also be eligible for a garden plot at the discretion of the Community Garden Support Worker.

2. FEES
   There is an annual fee required for a garden plot. This fee will be collected by Cultivating Community staff each year, in the garden and will be used for garden supplies, maintenance, social gatherings for the gardeners and other costs as determined collaboratively by the gardeners and the Garden Support Worker.

3. APPLYING FOR A GARDEN PLOT
   Tenants wishing to apply for a garden plot must complete and sign an application form/contract. They must read or have read for them the Community Gardens Rules and Guidelines. Cultivating Community may check with the Office of Housing to make sure that any person applying is eligible for a garden plot.

4. MANAGEMENT
   Cultivating Community has a contract with the Office of Housing to manage the Community Gardens. Therefore, the responsibility and authority for managing the gardens rests with Cultivating Community. Cultivating Community will work with gardeners to establish ongoing tenant management arrangements.

5. ALLOCATION OF PLOTS
   If no plots are available at the time of applying, the applicants name will go on a waiting list and they will be advised when a plot becomes available. Allocation of plots will be based on:
   • date of application
   • physical needs of the applicant
   • type of plants that the applicant wishes to grow

6. KEYS
   All gardeners will be provided with a key to the garden at the time of plot allocation. Gardeners must not give their key to another person without the permission of Cultivating
Community. If a gardener loses their key, they need to inform the Community Garden Support Worker and pay for a replacement.

7. **FORFEITURE OF GARDEN PLOTS**

Plots are allocated to the person or persons named in the Community Garden contract. Plots are not transferable without the permission of Cultivating Community. Gardeners cannot give their plot to another person. If a gardener no longer wishes to maintain their plot or moves from the public housing estate, they must advise Cultivating Community and return their Community Garden key to them. The plot will be reallocated to someone who is on the waiting list. From time to time Cultivating Community will check gardeners’ ongoing eligibility with the Office of Housing.

8. **PLOT OWNERSHIP**

Each gardener is entitled to one plot. If there are vacant plots they may become available to gardeners if no waiting list exists. Gardeners must apply to the Community Garden Support Worker if they wish to have an additional plot. However, when a tenant is added to the waiting list they will be given priority and therefore gardeners with additional plots will be asked to hand back those additional plots at the end of the season with adequate notice.

9. **RESPONSIBILITIES OF GARDENERS FOR THEIR OWN PLOTS**

9.1 **General maintenance of plots**

Gardeners are responsible for the care and maintenance of their individual plots throughout the year, even during the winter months. It is the responsibility of gardeners to maintain their plot, the area around the plot, keeping it free of weeds, rubbish and any items that may be obstructing the pathways. The use of garden plots is strongly encouraged to control weed growth.

If a gardener is unable to tend a plot, temporarily leaves the estate due to illness or for the purposes of travel, work or emergency, for two months or more, they must discuss their situation with a Cultivating Community Support Worker.

9.2 **Climbing plants**

Gardeners should use stakes for climbing plants, such as tomatoes and beans. If gardeners wish to store stakes when not in use, they should be bundled at the end of the garden plot without obstructing pathways.

9.3 **Plot boundary fences**

Gardeners who want a border fence around their garden plot may do so using wire mesh to a height of no more than one (1) metre.

9.4 **Building and other materials**

Permanent structures must not be built on garden plots or on vacant areas of the Community Garden. Gardeners cannot use the Community Garden to store building or other materials.

9.5 **Additional planting space**

Gardeners who want planting space in addition to their allocated plot i.e.: polystyrene boxes, planter boxes and containers, must seek permission to do so from the Community Garden Support Worker. Each community garden has restrictions on the number of polystyrene boxes permitted depending on space and safety issues in the garden. Once permission is granted gardeners are asked to put their plot number on their boxes so that they can be identified. Those gardeners exceeding the permitted number will be asked to remove their boxes from the garden.

9.6 **Types of plants**

Community Garden plots are for growing herbs, flowers and vegetables. Trees and large permanent shrubs are not suitable for garden plots because they may block sun to other plots. However, it may be possible to allocate a plot that does not shade or affect nearby plots. Gardeners who wish to grow large plants must advise Cultivating Community before plots are allocated.
9.7. Soil
Gardeners are responsible for improving the condition of the soil in their plot. It is important that nutrients are put back into the soil after every season as plants use up the nutrients in the soil as they grow. This can be done by adding manure, compost and mulch. When a gardener hands back (forfeits) their plot, under no circumstances are they permitted to remove any soil from their plot.

10. GENERAL CONDUCT IN THE GARDEN
Gardeners and visitors should respect the gardens as community spaces. Gardeners and visitors must not remove any plants or equipment from another gardener’s plot without the gardener’s permission. Likewise, plants and equipment must not be removed from other areas in the Community Gardens without the approval of Cultivating Community. Wilful damage to any area of the Community Gardens will not be tolerated. Each gardener has the right to quiet enjoyment of the Community Garden. Threats or abuse of any form will not be tolerated. The consumption of alcohol or any form of substance abuse will not be tolerated in the garden. Gardeners are not permitted to enter the garden under the influence of alcohol.

11. DEALING WITH PROBLEMS OR CONCERNS IN THE COMMUNITY GARDEN
Dealing with garden related issues is the responsibility of Cultivating Community. If gardeners have any concerns about the garden or about other gardeners, they are strongly encouraged to contact Cultivating Community on this number - 04156580. Cultivating Community will deal with such matters efficiently and in a fair and reasonable manner.

12. MAINTENANCE OF COMMON GARDEN BEDS AND PUBLIC AREAS
All gardeners are expected to take responsibility for the care, maintenance and development of common garden beds and public areas in the Community Gardens. Cultivating Community encourages active gardening in the Community Gardens. This includes:

• Removing weeds along the border of garden plots and pathways adjacent to garden beds.
• Sweeping pathways.
• Picking up and disposing of rubbish around the garden.
• Participating in at least one Working Bee/Clean Up The Garden Day per year. This does not necessarily mean heavy labour. There are many simple ways of contributing to the communal nature of the garden. The Community Gardens Support worker will inform gardeners of the dates of these Working Bees/Clean Up days.

13. WASTE MANAGEMENT
There are compost bins and worm farms in some of the Community Gardens and all gardeners are strongly encouraged to use them as a means of reducing kitchen waste, e.g. fruit and vegetable scraps, egg shells, leftover rice, noodles etc. These recycling systems help to reduce household waste, and support the production of good compost for use in garden plots. Gardeners are encouraged to contact the Community Garden Support Worker if they need advice about using the compost facilities.

Gardeners are encouraged to place any suitable waste plant matter in the large composting bins/worm farms. Wood, plastic bags, tin cans or polystyrene foam boxes should not be added to the compost. Only waste that can easily decompose should be placed in the compost/worm farm. All other rubbish must be put in the rubbish bins provided. Gardeners are encouraged to chop up or break up any plant matter into small pieces, as this will assist in the composting process. Do not put meat, fish or chicken in the worm farms or compost bins.

14. WATER MANAGEMENT
All gardeners are required to adhere to the guidelines for water use outlined by Cultivating Community. These guidelines were issued in January 2002 to gardeners and are also displayed in the garden. All gardeners are asked to avoid wasting water in the garden. Hoses should be hand held and should not be left running unattended. The use of watering cans is strongly encouraged.
15. **CONTROL OF GARDEN PESTS**
No toxic chemicals for pests and weeds are to be used in the Community Gardens. Gardeners can use safe, environmentally friendly products such as garlic or rhubarb sprays.

16. **GARDEN TOOLS**
Gardeners must provide their own tools, e.g., hand trowels. Where there is a shed, larger Community Garden tools will be kept securely locked in the shed. These tools are for the communal use of the gardeners and to be used only in the Community Garden. Garden brooms are available for gardeners to sweep pathways. Garden hoses must remain connected to the tap and contained so that they do not lie across pathways. If any garden equipment is missing, gardeners should report this to Cultivating Community as soon as possible.

17. **CHANGE IN CIRCUMSTANCES**
Gardeners must advise Cultivating Community of:
- any change in their address or telephone number.
- if they are no longer eligible to keep their plot.
- if they are unable to tend their plot for two (2) months or more.

18. **OTHER MATTERS**

18.1. **Animals**
Dogs, cats and other pets must not be brought into the Community Gardens.

18.2. **Garden security**
Gardeners must close and lock the garden gate when they enter or exit the garden. Gardeners must lock the shed when it is not in use and when they exit the garden.

18.3. **Visitors to the Community Gardens**
All visitors to the Community Gardens are the responsibility of the gardener who has invited them into the garden.

18.4. **Children in the Community Gardens**
Children are welcome in the Community Gardens. Adults must supervise children at all times.

18.5. **Sale of Garden Produce**
Garden plots are available for personal use only. Gardeners are not permitted to sell plants that have been grown in the Community Garden. The use of garden plots for growing plants commercially is not permitted unless it is an Office of Housing approved project.
Appendix S – Tips for Finding It For Free

Don’t think you have to go out and buy everything. There is a lot of money to save and lots to gain from being resourceful. Tips for finding it for free or less:

- look for local resources going to waste
- turn wastes into resources
- make a problem for others a bonus for you
- try to integrate your project with the local community

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

- **lawn clippings** from local gardens or parks services or **leaves** from street trees
- **animal manure** – do you have a local race track and stables? Often owners are happy to get their stables cleaned out and you get all the good straw and manure.
- **fruit and vegetable waste** – this can include food scraps from restaurants or left-overs from fruit and veggie retail. If you develop a good relationship with these people they can ensure the material is sorted and suitable for composting. It can save them money too.
- **juice pulp** from juice bars is ideal compost or worm food

Plants – grow your own or get them donated

- **Save seed** — a great way to save that preserves genetic diversity and heritage varieties – see *The Seed Savers Handbook* in Appendix B – More Information
- **Take cuttings** from plants
- **Organise plant swaps** with other gardeners or community gardens
- **Craft your own** heritage fruit trees at the Heritage Fruit Group’s annual grafting workshops each August — see **Books and Journals**.
- **Approach local nurseries** — they may have some older root-bound stock that they could donate. Try for bare-rooted fruit trees at the end of the season (late August).

Building Materials – keep your eyes peeled

- make contacts with a demolition business – they may keep your needs in mind
- take a trip to your local tip and keep an eye on skip contents around the streets
- use re-cycled timber and bricks wherever possible
- make contacts with local street tree pruning businesses. Their chippings / mulch can make excellent path surfacing and it can save them time and money.

Water – it is free from the sky

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

Buy in bulk – it is cheaper

- Organise bulk deliveries – you can do this for things like manures, pea straw and lucerne bales, etc. Look in the local paper under the garden section
Appendix T - Potential Funding Sources

Charitable Trusts

Charitable trusts give millions of dollars each year, but remember the competition is fierce and large or recurrent donations are rare. *Philanthropy Australia* is the peak body for philanthropic trusts and foundations. They provide a range of information and services for organisations looking for funding. Their website has a good what’s on section (lists workshops and training programs), links to relevant sites, services and a publications listing.

- Get yourself a copy of the Australian Directory of Philanthropy ($49.50) – it is an invaluable tool for researching funding opportunities.
- Monthly two hour workshops provide grant seekers with an introduction on how to look for funding from foundations ($121 with a copy of the directory or $77 without).
- For $500 per year your organisation can subscribe to the Resource Centre which provides you with a range of services and free advice.

Website: [www.philanthropy.org.au/](http://www.philanthropy.org.au/)  Email: pa@philanthropy.org.au  Phone: 1800 334165

The Community Support Fund (CSF)

The CSF is the mechanism by which the State Government returns some of the states gambling revenue back to the community. Its stated goal is to make investments that build healthier, stronger and more sustainable communities. The CSF website provides all the information you need and includes eligibility criteria. Your group must be incorporated. Project areas relevant to community gardens that it funds include youth, sport or recreation programs and community advancement. It has a particular focus on innovative partnerships that build cohesion between community, all levels of government, business and the philanthropic community. Speak to other groups who have made successful applications.


An associated program of community building is administered by the Office of Community Building and Community Support. A booklet titled ‘Community Building - communities growing together’ provides details of the Victorian government approach to community building. It outlines the support available to community organisations and has links to other community building sites.

Public bodies

A variety of possible funding sources include:
- Your local council
- **Parks Victoria** – through their community grants program - [www.parkweb.vic.gov.au](http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au)
- **Vic Health** – grants of up to $25,000 to conduct community recreation projects with a physical activity emphasis – [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au)

Business

Local companies and local branches of major companies may be willing to support you. Think carefully about what strings are attached to the funding and what sort of recognition your group is prepared to offer. Remember - no one gives money for nothing.

See *Appendix D – More Information - Organisations* for more.