

# Community Garden Guidelines

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The background of the entire page is a photograph of a field of yellow flowers, possibly Helianthus, with tall green grass blades. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, and the grass is thin and upright. The overall color palette is dominated by yellow and green.

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# Introduction



These guidelines outline the process for starting a new community garden on land that is owned or managed by council. Our Community Gardens Policy outlines how we will support community gardens and how decisions will be made about the allocation of Council land for community gardens.

Each community garden will have a different approval process depending on the garden size, location, and features. We recommend completing your application in stages with assistance from our Community Gardens Coordinator, who will guide you through the process and provide relevant forms and templates.

For larger community gardens, there is a considerable amount of planning, design, approvals, fundraising and building that must be undertaken before a garden can begin. These steps are all important to ensure that community gardens are well designed and managed and supported by the local community.

Before you begin on the path of starting a new garden, you may like to look at existing community gardens in your area and consider whether you would prefer to join them. A list of current community gardens in the City of Marion is available on our website.

This document covers:

- What is a community garden.
- How we support community gardens.
- Community garden types and their requirements.
- Getting started including forming a group and expressing your interest.
- Site selection including site factors to consider, soil contamination, development approval.
- Engaging the community on your community garden proposal.
- Garden management including management plan, incorporation, insurance and safety, agreements.
- Sourcing funding.
- Application checklist.



# Introduction



## What is a community garden?

A community garden is a garden that is managed by the community primarily for producing food and creating a sustainable urban environment. It is a place for learning about sustainable living practices whilst building community and improving health and wellbeing of those involved. Community gardens on Council land are required to be open to the public on a regular basis.

## How we support community gardens

Where local residents have expressed commitment to establishment of a community garden, Council will support appropriately located, designed, managed, and resourced community gardens. Council will also foster a diverse range of community gardens and support community garden groups to run vibrant, inclusive community gardens. Once established, community garden groups are expected to be self-reliant and take responsibility for ongoing management, maintenance, and funding. We encourage you to liaise with our Community Gardens Coordinator early and throughout the process of establishing your garden. It is a good idea to appoint a Council liaison person who will act as a conduit between your group and our Community Gardens Coordinator. Contact us early to let us know your intentions and find out how we can assist. We may

be able to put you into contact with other residents who have expressed a similar interest in developing a community garden in your area.

We take a community development approach to community gardens where groups run community gardens themselves with support from us and other partners. Our intention is to develop strong partnerships with gardening groups and play a supporting role. We can provide the following support for gardening groups:

- Assess proposed community garden sites.
- Review and approval of community garden proposals.
- Facilitate engagement and consultation with the surrounding community.
- Input into garden planning and design.
- Guidance on developing management plans for community gardens.
- Promote community gardens to help build membership.
- Resources and building capacity of gardening groups.
- Contributing resources such as people, materials, and 'in-kind' support where possible.

# Introduction



## Community garden types

Different facilities will be required for different community garden levels and types. The below table outlines the three levels of community gardens in our Open Space Plan and the types of facilities that are included in each type. It is strongly recommended that gardens with individually leased plots are fenced with secure fencing to prevent theft of produce.

Community garden hierarchy	Potential facilities included	Examples	Space required (square metres)
<b>Small</b> A small community garden generally draws people from the immediate neighbourhood or suburb or is linked to a higher density development area (e.g. apartments). A small community garden can vary in size depending on the demand and site capacity. Whilst a small community garden should be safe and appealing, the level of infrastructure will not be as high as a local or regional community garden.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communal garden beds/plots</li> <li>• Water access and taps</li> <li>• Shade and seating</li> </ul>	Oaklands Community Garden, Morphettville Community Garden	50-300 sqm
<b>Local</b> A local community garden will generally be of good size and quality and include various garden features. This level of community garden has a strong focus on community involvement and will generally draw people from beyond the immediate neighbourhood and across one or two suburbs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garden plots (individual and/or shared)</li> <li>• Water access and irrigation</li> <li>• Shade and seating</li> <li>• Communal or sensory garden</li> <li>• Composting</li> <li>• Storage for tools and equipment</li> <li>• Toilet access preferred</li> <li>• Fence preferred (if individual garden plots are provided)</li> <li>• Propagation area (optional)</li> <li>• Fruit orchard (optional)</li> </ul>	Marino Community Garden	200-700 sqm
<b>Regional</b> A regional community garden will generally be significant in relation to size and scope and include diverse garden types and features. A regional community garden should aim to have a whole community focus through broad access or education. A regional community garden generally draws people from across or beyond the City of Marion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garden plots (individual and shared)</li> <li>• Communal or sensory garden</li> <li>• Water access, irrigation, and rainwater tanks</li> <li>• Shelter, shade, and seating</li> <li>• Fenced</li> <li>• Shed for storing tools and equipment</li> <li>• Area for educational workshops/events/meetings</li> <li>• Connection with community facilities and kitchen</li> <li>• Disability accessible garden beds</li> <li>• Toilet access</li> <li>• Carparking</li> <li>• Composting</li> <li>• Propagation area</li> <li>• Fruit orchard</li> </ul>	Glandore Community Garden, Trott Park Community Garden	500-1000 sqm



# Getting started



## Form a group and express your interest

Community gardens must have the commitment of a group of people working towards a common goal. A community garden can mean many things to different people which is why it is crucial to develop a shared group vision at the outset. Group members need to agree on the purpose of the garden to reduce disagreement as the project evolves. It is important to form a group that includes people with a variety of skills. The size of the group will depend on the size of the project. A smaller group may be easier to manage, while a larger group will provide more energy and input. We recommend keeping your group small during the early stages and increasing the size as you get closer to building your garden.

After you have formed a group, you will need to submit a short online expression of interest form outlining your intentions.



# Site selection



## Choosing a site

There are many factors to consider when deciding if a site is suitable for a community garden. You may already have a site in mind when you form a community garden group. To ensure the site is suitable, we will assess it in accordance with the factors listed below. Our Community Gardens Coordinator will coordinate a site assessment process, with input from various teams across Council. All applications will be considered, even if they do not meet all these factors. If we determine that the site is not suitable, our Community Gardens Coordinator will work with you to find an alternative site.

Council will consider the following factors when assessing community garden locations:

- Connection to community facilities
- Compatibility with surrounding land uses
- Minimal impact on neighbouring residents
- Appropriate land size
- Water access
- Suitable growing conditions including soil, sunlight, and orientation
- Favourable topography with minimal slopes
- Toilet access
- Vehicle access for deliverables
- Pedestrian and disability access
- Minimal impacts on biodiversity, water resources and trees
- Safety and security for members and visitors
- Storage for tools and equipment

Existing land uses, traffic and parking and proximity to existing community gardens are also considered. Some factors, such as toilet access and storage, may not be applicable for small community gardens.

## Testing the soil for contamination

In the interests of public health, soil must be tested for contaminants before edible plants can be grown in the ground. Soil testing is generally not needed if you plant edible produce in containers or tall raised beds. Soil in some areas has high levels of heavy metals and pesticides. Contamination is not necessarily obvious when looking at the site. It is best to assume most sites will have some contamination which needs to be managed. If you intend to grow edible produce in the ground, we will arrange for the soil to be tested by an accredited company and identify the previous use of the site to help determine the degree of contamination. At the end of the site assessment process, you will receive the soil test results along with recommendations on how to manage any contamination that is identified.

## Development approval

Most community gardens need development approval before the project can go ahead. This is in addition to Council's approval as landowner. Development approval is required for structures such as sheds or shelters and may be required for the garden itself, particularly if it is limiting public access in any way. Our Community Gardens Coordinator can assist you with your application. For more information about development applications visit the PlanSA website.





# Engaging the community



## Involving the local community

You will need to speak to the local community to gauge interest, seek support and find members and volunteers. Once you have chosen a site, we strongly encourage you to contact adjacent neighbours and overlooking residents early in the process. These residents are the most likely people to raise concerns about the garden and it is important to have their support. Neighbours also make great members of your gardening group!

## Consultation

Consultation helps prevent potential conflict and ensures the community has a voice. This will give the community garden project the best chance of success. In addition to any community engagement that your group will undertake, we will engage with the community about the proposed site and garden design in two stages:

1. Early engagement with immediate neighbours to seek initial feedback on the concept.
2. Consultation on the proposal, including consultation with neighbours, stakeholders, and residents in the wider area.

Some community members may raise concerns about the site you are considering. We will listen to all ideas and concerns and work with you to find solutions. The community garden consultation process will be consistent with our Community Consultation and Engagement Policy and a report on the consultation findings will be prepared for Council Members to consider. We will communicate to your group and the wider community about the consultation findings, responses to concerns and any decisions made.



# Sourcing funding



Funding is essential for the success of any community garden project. Larger gardens must develop a budget and consider where you will obtain the necessary funds for your community garden. Speak to our Community Gardens Coordinator to find out which costs can be covered by Council. The requirements for each garden will vary but most new gardens have the following costs:

- Irrigation and rainwater tank.
- Shed or tool storage.
- Tools and equipment e.g. hand tools, wheelbarrows, watering cans and hoses.
- Construction materials e.g. garden beds, paving, seating, fencing.
- Ongoing costs such as fertiliser, mulch, tools, seeds or seedlings.
- Incorporation fees and development application fees.

Plan your fundraising efforts carefully, ensuring that the money raised is worth the time and energy you spend. Community gardens can raise funds through a range of avenues including membership fees, grants, sponsorship by businesses, fundraising events and sale of seedlings or produce. Hardware or gardening businesses, such as Bunnings or Mitre 10, may also donate materials to community groups such as community gardens.

We encourage groups to apply for grants or sponsorship to assist with start-up costs, construction, or ongoing costs of new or existing gardens. Our grants webpage has details of our community grants program, and our Grants Officer can give you advice to make the application process easier. You can also speak to our Community Gardens Coordinator to find out which costs can be covered without applying for a grant and other funding opportunities.





# Application checklist



## Application checklist

The type of documents that need to be provided with your community garden application will vary depending on the scale of your community garden. The table below outlines documents required. Our Community Gardens Coordinator will provide templates for the management plan, safety plan, letter of support from auspicing organisation and proposed garden budget.

Documents required	Small Community Garden	Local Community Garden	Regional Community Garden
Management plan	•	•	•
Safety plan	•	•	•
Public Liability Insurance Certificate (Note: available at no cost from Green Adelaide)	•	•	•
Basic garden concept plan/mud map showing garden elements	•		
Garden concept plan/ design		•	•
Certificate of Incorporation or letter of support from auspicing organisation	•	•	•
Copy of Constitution			•
Proposed garden budget			•



## Starting a new community garden on council land

### Form a group

Form a working group to develop your community garden vision and start planning.

### Expression of interest

Submit a short online form to let us know of your intention to start a community garden.

### Choose a site

Work with our Community Gardens Coordinator to select a site.

### Site assessment

We assess the site to determine if it is suitable taking into consideration a range of factors.

### Submit your application

Prepare your community garden application and submit to our Community Gardens Coordinator for feedback.

We will provide feedback if the application is not supported. Alternative sites considered.

### Formalise your group

Become an incorporated association and obtain necessary insurances.

### Consultation

Council undertakes a community engagement process with local residents and stakeholders.

Your garden design may need to be revised following community feedback.

### Council approval

A report detailing the community garden proposal goes to a Council meeting for approval. This approval is subject to gaining required development approvals.

We will provide feedback if the application is not supported. Alternative sites considered.

### Development approval

Apply for development approval for the community garden and/or any planned structures or buildings.

### Agreement

A formal written agreement must be developed between your group and Council to outline roles and responsibilities.

### Build your garden

Once approved, you can source funding and build your garden.



# Useful links



## Useful links

List of community gardens in City of Marion:  
**[marion.sa.gov.au/community-gardens](https://marion.sa.gov.au/community-gardens)**

Community Gardens Australia:  
**[communitygarden.org.au](https://communitygarden.org.au)**

City of Marion Community Grants:  
**[marion.sa.gov.au/grants](https://marion.sa.gov.au/grants)**

PlanSA:  
**[plan.sa.gov.au](https://plan.sa.gov.au)**

Consumer and Business Services:  
**[cbs.sa.gov.au/sections/ACC](https://cbs.sa.gov.au/sections/ACC)**

## Contact details

Community Gardens Coordinator  
**T** (08) 8375 6832  
**E** [environment@marion.sa.gov.au](mailto:environment@marion.sa.gov.au)  
**W** [marion.sa.gov.au/community-gardens](https://marion.sa.gov.au/community-gardens)





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