



Moreton Bay Regional Council
Community Garden Guide

Considerations when choosing a site for your community garden

When you are choosing a site for a possible community garden, the following factors should be considered:

Safety

In selecting a site, consideration must be given to the safety of users, others accessing the balance of the public land and the general public. A major consideration is the provision of passive surveillance; for example the site should be easily seen from adjacent roads, other park facilities or nearby houses. Although not a mandatory condition, safe off-street parking should ideally be provided for the community garden users and visitors.



Accessibility

Site accessibility to the community garden area is a major consideration. Can the site be readily accessed for the initial construction, for regular maintenance activities and by groups and visitors?

Solar access

Sites need to receive sufficient levels of sunlight each day for healthy plant growth.

Size

What area do you need to accommodate the intended number of members? Does the preferred site meet current demand and have capacity for future growth if required? Items to be considered include the anticipated number of participants, the number and size of garden beds, composting systems, rainwater tanks, seating areas, equipment storage and areas for small scale community workshops.

Water

Sites should have access to an adequate water supply and, where possible, use collected rainwater.

Soil

What is the soil condition and is it suitable for the intended use?

Multiple uses

A community garden may be one of many uses within a much larger site. Consideration must be given to other existing or planned users and whether the community garden will impact on their activities or normal park use.



Land zoning and tenure

Appropriate site zoning and tenure arrangements must be in place for a community garden to be established. If you are unsure of the zoning or who owns the land at your proposed community garden site, please contact Council. Where community gardens are established on Reserve land, (land that is owned by the State but managed by Council) a Land Management Plan may also need to be prepared and lodged with the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. In these instances, Council officers will assist community groups by preparing the Land Management Plan and seeking to secure associated approvals.

What things to consider when managing a community garden?

After you have selected a potential site, it is essential that a Community Garden Plan of Management (POM) be developed as it will assist the group in preparing the required expression of interest document. A POM can also assist your community garden group in managing its garden and should include, although not be limited to:

- Having contact details for key persons in the management committee;
- Outlining the expectations of behaviour on site, by both members and garden users;
- Outlining decision making processes that are democratic, transparent and inclusive;
- How the site is to be secured, including fencing;
- Safety induction processes for users and visitors;
- Water supply and storage;
- Managing relationships with other users and activities on the site, including impacts on flora and fauna;
- Budget and finances for starting-up and maintaining the garden and group;
- A dispute and conflict resolution process;
- Risk assessment processes, public liability insurance and Workplace Health & Safety obligations;
- Maintenance requirements and rosters covering who will be responsible for maintenance;
- Expected number of gardeners and proposed arrangements for allocation of individual garden beds;
- Clarification of ownership of any produce grown on the site;
- Environmental considerations such as chemical usage, water testing and runoff management;
- Safe storage area for gardening equipment and supplies;
- Possible community activities including educational activities;
- Preparation of a detailed design plan for the site and possible future expansion;
- Identifying timeframes for reviewing the management, operation and participation of the community garden and decommissioning;
- How the site will be reinstated to its original condition if the gardening group disbands.



What are some key ingredients to growing a successful community garden?

Community gardens that are successful and sustainable generally exhibit the following key attributes:

Good management:

- A clear plan of management;
- Simple rules that everyone understands and follows, that allow the opportunity for individual expression and personal choice for selecting produce;
- Marketing and communications within and beyond the garden;
- Democratic and inclusive approach to management and decision making, including gardener participation;
- Good management systems and processes;
- An effective process for dealing with conflict; and
- Security of tenure - a permit or lease may be required by Council to operate the garden.



A diverse range of members and garden users:

- A focus on social aspects of the garden;
- Providing a communal meeting space, preferably undercover;
- Mix of ages, cultures and skill levels;
- Development of interpersonal relationships;
- Gardener commitment;
- Allowing gardeners to adopt specialist roles in the garden;
- Involving people from the outset;
- A broad support base;
- Time spent in leisure as well as work; and
- Provide training for gardeners.



Good site planning:

- An appropriate location;
- Good garden design;
- Understanding drainage and storm water management;
- A balance of communal and individual garden areas meeting needs of both gardeners and visitors; and
- Composting and rubbish collection areas to help keep the garden neat and tidy with regular maintenance.

Groups interested in developing a community garden on Council owned or controlled land are required to complete and submit an expression of interest application.

