Introduction

The Council's Food Resilience Policy established a bold vision for Christchurch to become the "best edible garden city in the world". A key role for Council in achieving this vision is to encourage community gardens throughout the city. These guidelines sets out roles, responsibilities and processes to support new and existing community gardens on Christchurch City Council Land.

Purpose

- 1. To support new and existing community gardens in Christchurch.
- 2. To acknowledge the many benefits community gardens provide our city.
- 3. To recognise and accommodate the full spectrum of community gardens.
- 4. To clarify roles, responsibilities and processes for creating and running community gardens on Council land.

What is a Community Garden?

The Council defines a community garden as land gardened collectively by a group of people for the benefit of the community.

A community garden is often a small scale, low cost garden in a neighbourhood setting managed by a group of people who primarily grow fruit or vegetables, for personal use of the garden volunteers or for the benefit of their community. A community garden may be on private or public land and have a charitable trust and management group overseeing the running of the garden.



Types of edible gardens in Christchurch
There are many diffident types of edible gardens that benefit the Christchurch
community.

- Allotment a collectively managed group of individual garden plots where a person can care for and harvest their own plots as they see fit (e.g. Smith Street Garden, Linwood).
- Community garden garden managed by a group of people (e.g. Strickland Street and New Brighton community gardens).
- Community orchard fruit trees managed by a group of people (e.g. Sunlea Orchard, Marshlands).
- Mark Home Garden fruit and vegetables grown at home.
- Institutional edible gardens garden facilitated or cared for by a businesses or organisation (e.g. C1 Espresso kitchen garden on High Street, Okeover Stream Community Garden Canterbury University or edible gardens within social housing or elderly person housing complexes).
- Food forest permaculture principles applied in an orchard / woodland setting (Biological Husbandry Unit, Lincoln University).
- Food foraging and wild harvesting food gathering from land, along rivers or coastal areas (e.g. picking apples from trees along the Harry Ell Walkway, picking watercress along waterways, collecting mussels, cockles or wild mushrooms).
- Guerrilla gardening informal planting on underutilised or vacant land.
- Mahinga kai sites traditional Maori gathering sites for food and materials like flax for weaving (e.g. Matariki Gardens, Bromley)
- Productive parks fruit or nut trees or edible gardens on neighbourhood parks informally managed by local people (e.g. Moa Reserve and Chesterfields Reserve in the central city, Mountord Park in Sydenham).
- School gardens edible gardens managed by students, teachers and the school community (e.g. Van Ash College or Cashmere High school)
- Surplus sharing sharing surplus food from private or public gardens (e.g. Nans for Jams who collect surplus fruit to make jams for charitable purposes)
- Urban agriculture and city farms larger scale market gardens often surrounding cities managed for the benefit of the local community, linked to local distribution networks, on a commercial basis (e.g. Christchurch Food Cooperative and Garden City 2.0).

Key benefits of community gardens

1. Health and well-being

People can more easily access low cost, healthy, fresh fruit and vegetables, and have more active lifestyles through gardening activities. Mental and physical health is enriched by healthy eating, but also through strong personal relationships and experiences enjoyed in community gardens and through community collaboration. The sharing of surplus food supports low-income households, food banks and community kitchens.

2. Close knit and self-reliant communities

Enjoying, growing and sharing food brings neighbours and communities together. Community gardens are community hubs that empower residents to solve local problems in many creative ways. Crime is reduced because the city's green spaces are activated and cared for by more connected self-reliant communities. Volunteering is encouraged and rewarded often with free food.

3. Lifelong learning

Practical knowledge of how to grow, harvest, prepare and enjoy locally grown food is shared among the community. School gardens enable children to learn where their food comes from and the natural cycles of life. At community gardens, people can learn how to grow food and compost at home, but also about traditional / cultural uses for plants, medicinal uses, weaving, art and a wide variety of recipes and cooking methods helps add delight and diversity to city life.

4. Thriving local food economy

New businesses opportunities and jobs are created by the community supporting their locally grown food economy. Pathways that lead to both paid and voluntary work are explored and encouraged. Entrepreneurs foster new business models such as local food co-operatives, boxed food delivery, farmers markets, and grower incubators and syndicates. Knowledge of how to sustain a diverse and resilient local food economy can be shared with other communities as part of a green knowledge economy.

5. Resilient and sustainable food system

A more diverse and localised food production and distribution system builds resilience and enables more sustainable production and distribution methods that reduce the environmental footprint of food.

6. Stewardship of public spaces

People are encouraged to care for edible plants and community gardens on suitable green spaces. This helps to maximise community value and enjoyment from these spaces, manage anti-social behaviour, but can also lower maintenance costs for the Council. Community gardens and allotments become useful responses for keen gardeners living in a denser city.

7. Celebrating our garden city heritage

Our natural and cultural garden city heritage is celebrated and physically demonstrated throughout the city. Weaving edible gardens into public and private spaces will offer a wider range of recreational opportunities and amenity, enriching the liveability and enjoyment of our city.

8. Growing a beautiful and bio-diverse garden city

Edible gardens enrich city life supporting bees, birds, butterflies and biodiversity. In many cases seedlings can be grown by communities to complement existing native and exotic planting throughout the city. Productive gardens will become an essential part of the city's green infrastructure.



Accommodating the spectrum of edible gardens

The Council aims to create a supportive framework to encourage edible planting in the city. Developing enabling systems and processes that are matched to the different types of edible planting is needed so small scale, low risk activities can easily progress and larger scale, potentially higher risk activities can be managed appropriately.

An indicative spectrum of edible planting and potential management approaches is provided below as a guide. However, the appropriate process to follow will be established by the Council on a case by case basis, taking into account the specific attributes of the proposal.

Indicative spectrum of edible gardens and processes to follow

Edible Garden		Indicative Process	Attributes
Community Garden, Orchard, Food Forest or Allotment	1	Full lease agreement needed	Occupies a large amount of space relative to the surrounding area. Potential impact on other users or neighbours. Type of land requires community consultation and special agreements. Long duration of occupation. Restricts access to some extent. Includes use of Council assets or funds.
Institutional garden	rum	Mid level process needed (e.g. licence to occupy or management agreement)	
Productive Park or Transitional Garden	spectr	 (e.g. Memorandum of Understanding) • Minimal impact on other users or neighbours. • Type of land permits activity. • Planting is transitional or temporary. 	 Occupies a small amount of space relative to the surrounding area. Minimal impact on other users or neighbours. Type of land permits activity.
Food foraging, Surplus sharing		No formal process needed	(e.g. through residents associations or an established organisation). Activities already managed by national, regional or city policies or regulations (e.g. harvest limits).



How to set-up and maintain a successful community garden on Council land

The Christchurch Community Gardens Association has developed a full guide for establishing and running community gardens (see www.ccga.org.nz). Below is a summary of particular relevance for gardens that are considering using Council land.

You will need to:

- 1. Create a management group
- 2. Establish your vision, purpose and operating guidelines for the garden
- 3. Grow support from your community
- 4. Choose a suitable location
- 5. Identify resources needed, budgets and funding options
- 6. Create or identify a host not-for-profit legal entity or trust
- 7. Prepare a written proposal to the Council
- 8. Sign a licence to occupy, lease or memorandum of understanding to use Council land

While this may sound daunting the Canterbury Community Gardens Association and Christchurch City Council can help.

1 Create your management group

You will need a core group of people who are actively committed to setting up and maintaining the garden over time. Initially you may need 3 or more people to set things in motion. This is an opportunity to socialise and enjoy great food, so make sure you have fun along the way. Consider how much time each person is willing and able to commit and break up the roles and tasks accordingly.

2. Establish your vision and purpose

Decide on a vision and purpose for the garden. Here are some questions you could ask:

- \$ What type and size of garden do you want to create?
- What will it look like when your garden is fully established and running successfully?
- § What will you grow fruit, vegetables, herbs, flowers, bees, native plants?
- § Who will benefit from the produce yourselves, community, schools, and food banks?
- § Who will help care for and enjoy the garden stakeholders, volunteers?

- § What surrounding community groups, gardens, schools, churches or businesses could partner with you?
- § How will you communicate with your community and volunteers?
- What activities could take place in the garden BBQs, food market, composting, growing seedlings, hand crafts, art, lessons on how to grow and prepare food?
- § Could individuals manage their own plot or tree allotment style?
- § How can the garden be self-sustaining garden co-ordinator, volunteers, and funds?

3 Grow community support

You will need a strong level of support from the surrounding community. Community engagement is essential to build support for establishing and maintaining the garden over the long-term. You will also need to provide written evidence of support to the Council before public land or resources can be committed.

Useful stakeholders in your area could include:

- § Resident or neighbourhood associations
- § Schools and early childcare centres
- § Church groups
- § Sports clubs
- § Environmental groups
- § Local businesses
- § Council Community Boards

You may also want to "buddy" with an existing community garden near you, who could mentor and support you through the process.

Choose a suitable location

Consider the following, when choosing a site for your garden:

- a) Community needs:
 - ✓ Strategic fit will the site meet your vision and purpose.
 - Community support can the surrounding community support the garden over the long-term.
 - ✓ Health and safety potentially polluted land or soil contamination need to consider the former use of land, has it been used for the storage of

- horticulture chemicals or been a former petrol station. Also consider wider hazards such as busy streets, steep slopes, river banks or waterways.
- Access is it easy and safe to reach the garden walkable, convenient and well connected for people, cycling, public transport and maintenance vehicles.
- Services services such as water is essential, toilets, buildings for meetings and storage is highly desirable.
- Amenity does the site have an enjoyable, sunny aspect, with some shelter from cold winds and pleasant spaces for gardening, relaxing and space for children.
- Compatible complements existing or surrounding uses and is able to manage issues such as noise, smells, fruit drop or traffic.
- ✓ Visible is it reasonably open to street, neighbourhood or surrounding homes because good visibility can enhance personal safety and reduce vandalism.
- Equity does the location give preference to high need communities.
- ☑ Clear of infrastructure not likely to disrupt underground pipes, wires, footpaths, sports or play equipment and other structures.

b) Growing needs:

- Water an adequate supply of water is readily available or can be accessed without too much cost.
- Soil quality soils support year-round productive uses, not flood prone, water logged, too sandy or rocky.
- Sunlight not too shady from buildings or in competition with large trees, need at least 6 hours of direct sunlight during summer months.
- ☑ Space Adequate space is available for the garden, sheds and composting etc, but also potential for future expansion.
- ✓ Longevity reasonable certainty is provided for the use and occupation of the land – will the land be needed in the future for other uses e.g. stormwater management, roads or buildings.

5 Identify resources needed, budgets and funding options

Your community will be able to contribute in many ways to the establishment and running of a community garden – time, labour, skills, materials and funds. A good place to start is to create a detailed list of the resources you need and set-up a skills and resource bank of your willing helpers and potential sponsors - then ask for help. Income can be created by the sale of food, seeds, seedlings or hand crafts etc provided funds are used for charitable purposes.

6 Create or identify a host legal entity for your management group A Community garden must have an established and legally formed management group for the Council to lease or licence land to. A new community garden can either find an existing host organisation or create their own charitable trust (see www.societies.govt.nz/cms/charitable-trusts).

Responsibilities of a Community Garden Management Group:

A group wishing to establish a community garden on Council land is responsible for any day-to-day management of the garden, including the following:

- a) Agree with the Council on the layout (an indicative landscape and site plan will be needed), access by people and vehicles for maintenance, and other conditions of the licence-to-occupy for a community garden.
- b) Undertake engagement with neighbours and surrounding community to determine how the community garden can benefit or impact upon the area. The Council Strengthening Community Advisors may offer support for this process.
- c) Ability to comply with requirements of the licence-to-occupy that will include legal accountability, financial obligations, public liability insurance, and compliance with local regulations, policies and bylaws and national regulations such as Hazardous Substances and Health and Safety laws.
- d) Manage and operate the community garden according to established operating guildelines.
- e) If an allotment style garden is applicable, ensure that plots are allocated to members of the local community through a fair and transparent process.
- f) Ensure gardens are maintained to a minimum standard and utilised year round.
- g) Ensure that produce is not sold for personal profit. Any sales may cover reasonable gardening expenses and be used for charitable purposes.
- h) Provide education and learning opportunities for garden users and the wider community such as offering training on how to grow, compost, cook and other related skills.
- i) Ensure the site is returned to an agreed condition should the garden be disestablished or the lease terminated.
- j) Explore opportunities to work in partnership with other organisations and stakeholders in the community.
- k) Establish a general public complains procedure.
- I) Maintain regular contact with the Council.

7 Prepare a written proposal to the Council

Prior to a new community garden being established, the management group must submit a written proposal to the Council. Council will assess the proposal on a case-by-case basis.

Please note:

- § Your local Community Board will need to approve the establishment of a new community garden on Council land.
- Public notification or consultation with neighbours may be needed under the Reserves Act 1977 or the Local Government Act 2002.
- § A licence to occupy, lease or memorandum of understanding to use Council land will need to be signed by a delegated representative from your management group and the Council.

Your proposals will be assessed based on the aspects described in the sections above and the following matters:

a) Community outcomes:

- § Vision and purpose of the proposed garden.
- § Benefit of the garden to the local community including who and how they will benefit.
- § Opportunities for links and synergies with local community organisations.
- § Written commitment from the surrounding community in support of the garden.
- § Clear understanding of how to establish and maintain the garden over the duration of the lease or licence.
- § Opportunities for the garden to demonstrate and educate the surrounding community about gardening, composting, water conservation, food preparation, and wider themes of community resilience and sustainable living.
- § Understanding of how the garden will complement the surrounding existing and future activities, users and neighbours, including how adverse effects will be managed.

Management

Information on how the management group will be structured and operated including:

- § Proposed legal and organisational structure.
- § Objectives of the management group and information to demonstrate that the group is viable.
- § Identification of a liaison person for the Council.
- § Skills and competencies of the management group.
- § Processes for decision making, problem solving, conflict resolution, training and induction of new members.
- § Budget, sources of funding and timeline for start-up and maintenance.
- § Hours of operation.
- § A management plan covering:
 - Organisational meetings and requirements.
 - Proposed gardening techniques.
 - Mowing and maintenance.
 - Weed and pest control principles.
 - Management of vandalism, security and safety.
 - Management of composting and organic wastes.
 - Health and safety, public liability.
 - Details of any proposed structures or buildings.
 - Details of any proposed signage.
 - Management and containment of noise and odour.
 - Storage facilities.

How the proposal fits with relevant legislation, Council, policies, strategies or management plans for the Council land proposed for the garden.

Design

 An aerial photograph (e.g. Google or web-map) and site layout showing the proposed extent of the community garden and any proposed locations for structures and storage.

How the Council can help you create or maintain a community garden The Council can help establish new community gardens and support existing gardens in many ways. This section provides a range of options; however, the extent and nature of support given will be entirely at the discretion of the Council.

Based on the numerous benefits community gardens provide to Christchurch, the Council, on a case by case basis and subject to long term and annual planning processes and resource constraints, may provide support in the following ways:

- In-kind and financial support provided to organisations that enable community gardens to be established and maintained in Christchurch such as the charitable trusts established by community gardens themselves, the Canterbury Community Gardens Association and the Food Resilience Network.
- 2. Proactively identify Council land potentially suitable for community gardens and making this information available to Community Boards.
- 3. Community Board funding of community gardens in their ward, at their discretion.
- 4. Pepper-corn rentals for Council land used by community gardens.
- 5. Council waving fees related to consent and approval processes.
- 6. Plant edible trees and shrubs in suitable parks or gardens.
- 7. Community Boards can hold Edible Garden Awards to encourage involvement, innovation and sharing successes.
- 8. Staff support for groups undergoing the process of applying to the Council for creating a new community garden. This could include support from Strengthening Community Advisors in community engagement processes and the Transport and Greenspace Unit providing understanding of the site, surroundings, husbandry and Council legal agreements and approval processes.
- 9. Promote and raise awareness about community gardening on the Council website and through the Council's networks and media channels.
- 10. Consider potential use by community gardens when the Council is investigation disposing of community facilities, assets or land.
- 11. Maintain a contact database for all community gardens and notify representatives when there are planned works that may affect the community garden operation.
- 12. Encourage the Council's 3rd party Parks maintenance suppliers to support and assist in the preparation of land for new gardens and understanding special requirements related to the management of community gardens (e.g. no spray areas, mulching or watering needs).
- 13. Assist with community garden based events (e.g. harvest festivals and celebrations of our edible Garden City).