

# GARDEN GUIDELINES



## Planting

We plant non-genetically modified species and prefer those adapted to local conditions. Members can plant what they like as long as they do not become pests in the natural environment. Sowing seeds a few at a time and regularly ensures continuity of crop supply and reduces the waste of seed when conditions are not quite right. Watch the planting guide for the right season, position and soil condition.

## Watering

The garden is working towards sustainability. We collect water and recycle whenever possible. Because we rely on volunteers and work days are only a couple of days a week, we cannot always apply best practice especially when plants are young and tender. We try to apply the following conservation measures:

- Water before 10am and after 3 pm
- Avoid watering in full sun or when windy to avoid excessive evaporation
- Water the roots not the foliage and avoid blanket spraying
- Water as infrequently as possible to build up drought tolerance
- Fix leaks and run off immediately
- Mulch all exposed soil
- Put hoses away and do not leave them in the sun longer than necessary
- If hose fittings are damaged, fix them or let someone know

## Recycling

All organic matter can be recycled so please do not waste it by putting it in the rubbish bin.

Weeds, grass clippings, forest mulch, manures, plus kitchen scraps can all go in the compost. Large matter (twigs and grass clumps) that takes a long time to break down are to be broken up and put in piles. Pest weeds are to be put in the blue (weed tea) drums to be drowned. They must not be put in the compost bays or tumblers. This includes nut grass, wandering jew, singapore daisy and other pests, if in doubt ask.

## Composting

Composting takes time and is a job that all gardeners are expected to participate in. Please use it sparingly on new plantings to revitalize flagging growth and to regenerate depleted soil.

Making compost requires a variety of organic matter, including carbon (dead matter) and nitrogen (green matter) moisture and oxygen. Piles must be at least 1 metre deep and wide to be effective. Oxygen can be replenished within the compost pile by rotating it in a tumbler or turning it.

## Mulching

Bare soil is dead soil, especially in hot dry, conditions. All soil should be covered to reduce moisture loss. Mulching can be performed using a variety of materials including:

- Compost or well rotted grass clippings around tender new plantings and where seeds are growing;
- Straw or sugar cane mulch around growing vegetables;
- Forest mulch around trees and shrubs, and at least 10cm deep on paths to kill weeds.

Forest mulch is a great choice as it is available for free but it can damage soil that is under cultivation.

Sugar cane mulch has to be purchased and the garden's supply must only be used on communal areas unless plot holders pay for it. Long grass from along the creek can easily be cut and used as well.

## Weeding

Weeds create seeds so they spread and make more weeds which depletes the soil, crowds out natives and compete with crops for nutrients. Weeds are also an essential ingredient for composting. Before you weed, decide what you will do with the cleared soil, plant it or mulch it or the weeds will just come back. Pest weeds are difficult to get rid of and must be disposed of carefully. Make sure you put your weeds in the right place.

## Tools and Equipment

Tools and equipment are available on work days but are often in short supply so please put them back in the shed, clean as soon as you have finished using them.

## Machinery

Machines are only to be used by those who are trained / experience in using them. Operators must use appropriate personal protective equipment (safety goggles or glasses, hearing protection, boots). Cleaning and essential maintenance must be performed by the operator and any damage or unserviceability reported.

## Safety

Safety is everyone's concern and you are responsible for ensuring that you do not allow yourself to be injured by anyone or anything. Wear closed in shoes or boots, a hat and sun-screen, gloves and eye and hearing protection where appropriate. Be mindful that other people also use the garden so do not create hazards. Avoid leaving tools about, machines unguarded and any object that may lead to a trip or fall unattended.

## Membership

Fees are due in July each year, if you join after December you get a 50% rebate on the current years membership fee. Members can vote at meetings and influence the way that the garden is run.

## Additional guidelines for allotment holders

Allotment holders must be members of the garden and allotment fees must be paid in advance. Allotments must be maintained and it is an allotment holders responsibility to keep weeds under control in and around their allotment.

Non-organic chemicals must not be used within the garden area.

## Ownership of produce

The garden works on the principle that those who do the work share in the produce. If there is an abundance of produce in communal areas it is to be shared by all. Allotment holders are the only ones who are permitted to pick from their allotment but are encouraged to make their excess produce available to other garden members.

As a rule of thumb pick no more than 1/3 of what is there and do not pick plants that are marked with a ribbon which designates that they are assigned for seed saving. Picking is best done early morning.