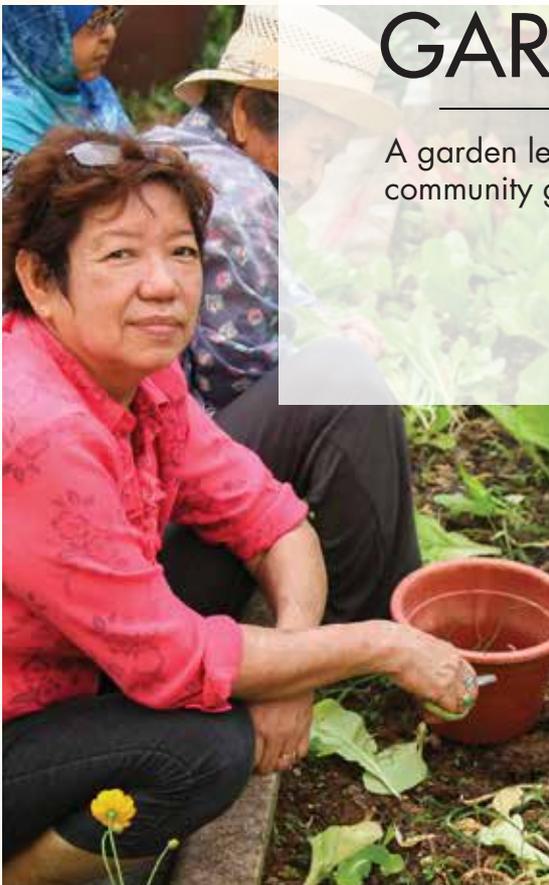




PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATE

# GROWING COMMUNITY GARDENS

A garden leader's guide to  
community garden projects

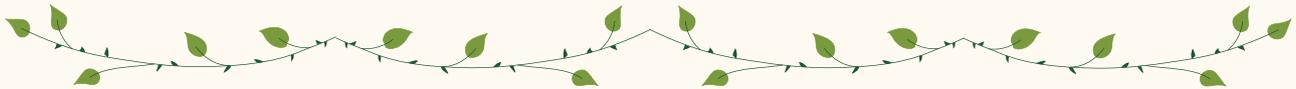


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## **Acknowledgements**

Special thanks to the following Community Gardens:

- Ayer Rajah Zone 1 Residents' Committee
- Bukit Batok Zone 2 Residents' Committee
- Jurong Central Zone D Residents' Committee
- Punggol Coral Residents' Committee
- Thomson Sin Ming Gardens Residents' Committee
- Tampines Starlight Residents' Committee (Harmony Garden)



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National Parks Board, 2018

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# INTRODUCTION



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# INTRODUCTION

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## Community Gardens

Community gardens are where people come together to nurture, develop and sustain a lively green space in their estate. They give communities a sense of ownership and belonging and can be found throughout the world.

Such gardens reflect the purpose they serve: engaging, educating, building and strengthening relationships among neighbours in a significant way. They inculcate values such as cooperation, volunteerism, respect for diversity, and ecological awareness.

## About This Guide

This guide aims to help residents and volunteers start and manage gardens that will bring out the best in their communities. Like a person, each garden is unique. While tips offered here will start you off on your gardening journey, each plot of land will grow to have its own personality. Hence, beyond getting the right mix of soil or using the right tool, the following points may be useful to consider:

1. Good projects are a reflection of our community and help to improve it.
2. Diversity adds strength; strive towards being an inclusive group.
3. A successful community garden is built by empowered individuals.
4. The most important word in “community garden” is community.
5. The best community gardens are always evolving.



### Support From NParks

NParks supports community gardening through the Community in Bloom (CIB) programme. CIB aims to promote a gardening culture among Singapore residents by encouraging and facilitating gardening efforts by the community. It is a programme based on collaborative partnership between both public and private sector organisations, and volunteer groups to promote gardening. As part of this island-wide community gardening initiative, NParks provides guidance and advice, such as:

- Choosing a suitable site for gardening.
- Assistance with the garden layout.
- Recommendations for selection of plants.
- Sharing of gardening skills and tips.

For residents of public housing estates, NParks works with the Residents' Committee, Neighbourhood Committees, and Residents' Associations to provide support.

If you are interested in setting up a community garden, contact NParks early as it takes approximately three months for a community garden to be launched from its inception to construction.

**Website:** [www.nparks.gov.sg/cib](http://www.nparks.gov.sg/cib)

**Email:** [CommunityinBloom@nparks.gov.sg](mailto:CommunityinBloom@nparks.gov.sg)

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# ABOUT COMMUNITY IN BLOOM

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Community in Bloom (CIB) is a programme that was launched by the National Parks Board (NParks) in 2005.

It aims to nurture a gardening culture among Singaporeans by encouraging and facilitating community gardening efforts. It is also an opportunity to build community bonds and strengthen social resilience in our City in Nature.

**Visit our website to find a community garden near you:**

[www.nparks.gov.sg/cib](http://www.nparks.gov.sg/cib)



**GET INSPIRED**

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# GET INSPIRED

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## Award-winning Community Gardens

A community that plants together grows together. As there are no set rules in gardening, the garden model may differ according to location and the community's needs.

The pictures below are a compilation of award-winning community gardens cultivated by residents in common green spaces within public housing estates.

### Ayer Rajah Zone 1 Residents' Committee



Ayer Rajah Zone 1 Residents' Committee



Photo credit: Ayer Rajah Zone 1 Residents' Committee



**Bukit Batok Zone 2 Residents' Committee**



Jurong Central Zone D Residents' Committee



Punggol Coral Residents' Committee



Thomson Sin Ming Gardens Residents' Committee



Tampines Starlight Residents' Committee (Harmony Garden)





GETTING STARTED



# GETTING STARTED

Planning is the key to building a strong foundation when starting a community garden. Successful community gardens are often those where gardeners take the time to plan and design right from the start.



*Regular meetings are held among gardeners to facilitate planning and upkeep of the garden.*

## Steps For Success

Starting a community garden is hard work and requires time, energy and commitment. To achieve a successful garden, learn to prioritise the following tasks:

- Develop a strong and committed gardening group that will share the responsibilities.
  - Conduct adequate research and site visits to other community gardens to learn important tips.
  - Work as a group to achieve your objectives.
  - Plan and create a roadmap that prioritises achieving the shared vision.
  - Design the garden with the vision in mind.
- Before starting, it is important to ask yourself the following questions:
- Are there enough interested and committed people within the group to sustain the project in the long term?
  - Would joining an established community garden be a better way to achieve your aims, while also strengthening and enhancing that garden?
  - Is there an appointed leader (or co-leader) to oversee the gardening project and activities?
  - Are there candidates with “green fingers” and those with specialised skills?
  - How will the group raise funds to start-up and sustain the garden?
  - Has the team allocated adequate time to plan garden details?



**STEP 1: GET PEOPLE**

## STEP 1: GET PEOPLE



Before starting a community garden, it's important to make sure that there are people who share the same interest as you and are willing to support and sustain the garden.

### Form A Gardening Group And Get Support

- Gather interested participants from among your neighbours and form a gardening group.
- Appoint a leader for your gardening group.
- Get support from your estate's Residents' Committee (RC) for your community garden.
- Inform your Town Council or RC to obtain support and approval.

### Tips To Get People Interested

- **Share benefits:** inform interested participants of the health, environmental, educational and social benefits of community gardening.
- **Word of mouth:** promote the garden to neighbours and ask them to spread the word.
- **Partner with established organisations:** talk to groups such as community centres, schools, clubs and businesses in your neighbourhood about getting their members involved.
- **Promote internally:** create simple posters that list contact information, meeting times, and upcoming activities and post them at your garden entrance or on social media. Consider making a simple flyer to give out during community events in your neighbourhood.



*Social media platforms such as Facebook are a great way to promote and inform the community of upcoming activities.*

## A Simple Checklist

### 1. Forming a gardening group

- Is there interest in the community for a garden?
- Do you know who will be using the garden?
- Are there at least four to five interested participants?

### 2. Assigning roles and responsibilities

- Are there volunteers willing to take on the different roles?
- Who is the appointed leader(s)?

### 3. Identifying participants and their skills

- Gardening experience?
- Landscaping experience?
- Other types of beneficial skills and experience e.g. project management

### 4. Selecting the site

- Is the site easily accessible to the participants?
- Does the site have favourable sun, shade and wind conditions?
- Are amenities such as a water source nearby?

## Organise A Sharing Session For Participants

It is a good idea to hold a sharing session to discuss the potential community garden and to recruit participants if they have not already been identified. At this session, share who will be involved in the garden, who it will benefit, and what kind of garden it will be. Send invitations personally or through friends to interested individuals who may be keen on participating.

- Organise a sharing session for residents for NParks staff to share ideas on setting up garden plots and tips on good gardening practices.
- Recruit more participants for the gardening project through the session.
- Visit established community gardens in other estates to learn and exchange tips.

## Sample Agenda For First Garden Meeting

Below is a sample agenda for your first meeting and a list of tasks to accomplish.

### Welcome and introductions

- Welcome residents and participants as they arrive
- Do an icebreaker activity by asking the group to share their names and reasons for their interest in community gardening

### Garden project overview and update

- Provide background information on the garden project, and explain how the idea originated
- Explain what has been done so far and the purpose of the meeting

### Brainstorm and discuss the garden project

Some of the key questions to be discussed during this session include:

- What is the purpose of the garden and who is the garden for?
- Who will be in the garden committee?
- Will gardeners be charged a fee and what resources will they receive in return?
- What is the best way for the group to stay in touch?
- How will garden duties be split and allocated?
- What will be the name of the garden?
- How will money be raised to support the garden?

### Next steps and wrap up

- Create a list of action items (planting, watering, propagation, etc) and ask people to sign up as leads for these items
- Follow-up promptly after the meeting by distributing the meeting minutes and the list of actions required, as well as key contact information.

## Tips For Active Leadership – Resolving And Avoiding Conflicts In Your Community Garden

### #1 Promote an open culture

Keep the garden accessible and let visitors explore the garden freely. Your community garden belongs to the community. Let people know they are welcome to be involved in activities that they are interested in.

### #2 Shared leadership

All participants should have a sense of ownership towards the garden. Allow them to take the lead in an area of their interest. Everyone has something to offer; tap on their strengths. The garden's sustainability and success depends on a core group of leaders, not just one or two individuals.

### #3 Turn the 'ME' into 'WE'

A community garden is a collaborative effort. Working towards consensus should be a core principle in how things get done. Have garden meetings where opinions are respected. It is important to understand what motivates each individual's participation.

### #4 Be open and flexible

Listen and be open to the ideas each participant brings. Keep an open mind; some gardens had brilliant ideas contributed by young gardeners. Be responsive, act on all suggestions. Let participants try out their ideas and allow their creativity to grow.

### #5 Acknowledge all contributions

A little appreciation goes a long way. Always say 'thank you'. Give credit when it is due and acknowledge all efforts, big or small.

### #6 Setting guidelines

Garden guidelines are an excellent way to ensure that everyone understands how the garden will operate and what is expected of them.

### #7 Community building events

Celebrate and enjoy the garden as a group. The more time people spend together the better they get to know and understand each other. Encourage participants to bond and socialise by organising potlucks or other events that build understanding and community morale.

### #8 Be inclusive

Be sensitive to cultural differences. Food can either bring people together or tear them apart. Respect each other's cultural preferences. Encourage gardeners to grow ethnic foods. This can provide a learning opportunity for the whole group.

Highlighting and observing gardeners' ethnic and cultural celebrations also go a long way towards making participants feel like part of a group.



## STEP 2: PLANNING YOUR GARDEN



## STEP 2: PLANNING YOUR GARDEN



*Draft sketches of your garden layout to help visualise how your garden will eventually look.*

It is important to have a garden plan and site design before actual planting. Community gardens should be developed for communities to gather and grow together in the long term.

The needs of every gardening group is different. Thus the garden plan should be designed according to the group's needs. Through initial community meetings and public outreach activities, the group should have an idea of the type(s) of garden that best meets their objectives.

### Identify A Suitable Site For The Garden

Contact NParks to help you select a suitable location for the proposed community garden. The following points should be considered when selecting a gardening site.



#### **Location of nearby residential blocks –**

Locate community gardens in places with high human traffic to generate interest and encourage participation.



#### **Accessibility –**

The site should allow for comfortable mobility for participants, easy movement of soil, plants, tools, water and access to other common amenities (space for vehicle access, loading area, etc).



**Water source** – Water is key. Look around the plot area to ensure that there is a water source nearby. If there is none, have the Town Council install a water point to make it easier for watering.

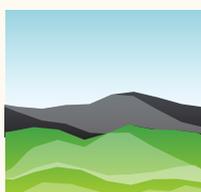


**Amount of sunlight that the site gets** –

It is important that the site gets adequate sunlight for a variety of plants to survive. Observe the site at different times of the day to determine whether it receives adequate sunlight and whether there are any potential obstructions in the form of large trees or buildings.



**Plot size & shape** – Determine the size and the shape of the plot. This will influence the number and size of plants you can grow. It will also influence the space for structures that your group will require, such as a storage shed, rest and play areas, compost area, etc. Remember to make allowance for the garden to grow.



**Level or sloping ground** – While levelled ground is preferred for a gardening site, it is also possible to create beautiful gardens on sloping ground. A terraced layout lined with wooden or stone frames can add a special touch to a garden. Avoid sites with inherent ground conditions e.g. waterlogging.



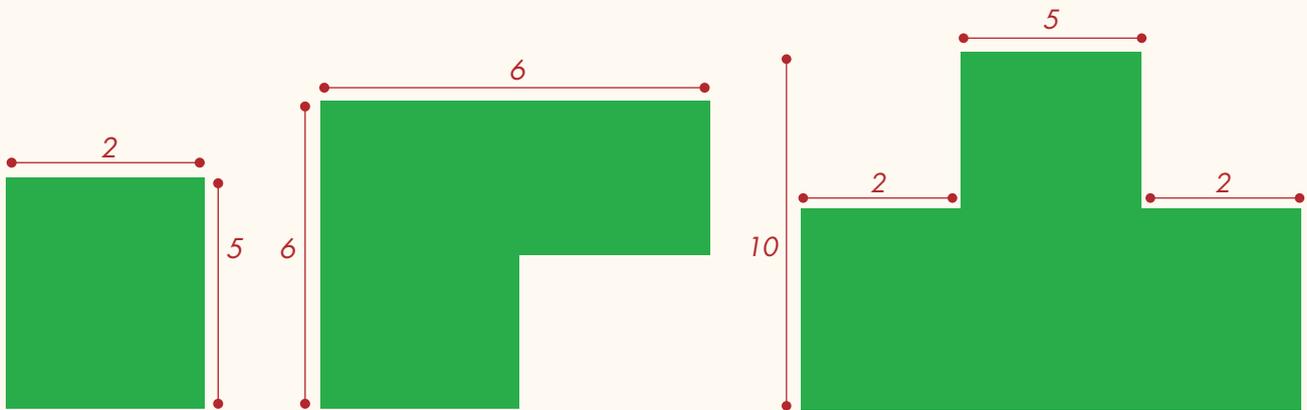
**Air circulation** – All plants need good air circulation to stay healthy and prevent pests and diseases. However, sites that get strong wind are not recommended.



**Other safety considerations** – Site should be away from the main road or heavy vehicular traffic. Check for electrical cables and gas pipelines that may be buried under the soil surface; existing lamp posts, electrical boxes or other markers on site are indicative of their presence.

### Getting The Scale Right

Keep the garden plan simple and manageable for the first year. Once the garden is established, there will be lots of opportunities to add new elements. For gardens that are medium and large in size, allocate groups to work on specific plots before moving to other areas. Below are some examples of different plot sizes.



*Small – 5 to 10 sqm*

*Medium – 10 to 50 sqm*

*Large – above 50 sqm*

### Selecting A Garden Theme

Gardens can be designed to any style or theme, with each having its own beauty and character. Choosing a style can help you decide on the type of plants, patterns and garden features to have.

Community gardens can include a combination of themes such as vegetable and herb gardens, butterfly and bird gardens, children and seniors gardens. Your gardens will be as unique as the community tending it.

Themed gardens are designed around specific ideas, such as particular plant groups or purposes. They are characterised by an overall concept, and plants with similar growing requirements are grouped together to form unique collections or landscapes.

**Herb and spice gardens** focus on planting a variety of herbs and spices.



**Ornamental gardens** are designed to increase the aesthetic value of an area.



**Fruit gardens** are gardens that grow a variety of seasonal and tropical fruits.



**Bird and butterfly gardens** focus on planting specific biodiversity-attracting plants which provide food and shelter to sustain biodiversity growth.



**Edible gardens** encourage the community to grow their own food. This includes vegetables and other edible varieties.



*Photo credit: Ayer Rajah Zone 1 Residents' Committee*

**Kitchen garden** is one that is designed for and by people who love to cook using fresh ingredients.



## Design Considerations For New Gardens

It is useful to speak to other garden leaders and obtain professional guidance from NParks when designing a community garden. Where possible, try to recruit a permaculture or landscape designer into your group.

### Design for:

**Low waste** – Build a compost area for onsite management of organic waste generated by the garden.

**Sustainability** – Use recycled and local materials in construction. Where possible, install energy and water saving systems. For example, solar energy can be used to power the timers for sprinklers while rainwater harvesting can help to conserve water.

**Water management** – Maximise opportunities for rainwater harvesting and efficient irrigation. On sloped sites, use swales, terraces or beds that run along the contour of the slope to catch water.

**Integrated pest management** – Include a range of plants that provide shelters for small birds, frogs, lizards and predatory insects. Also include sources of water such as ponds and bird baths.

**Windbreaks** – Planting native trees and shrubs on the perimeters will protect the garden and reduce evaporation of valuable moisture in the soil.

**Biodiversity** – When carefully designed, community gardens can be part of a citywide network of local native bird and animal habitats.

**The senses** – A garden designed to engage the senses will be a place where people want to be. It will also enable your garden to ‘speak’ to a wider cross-section of the community, including children and the disabled. Try to include scented plants, colour, public art and auditory elements such as wind chimes.

**Learning** – Think about how groups will be accommodated; design for outdoor learning areas and paths with nodes that allow a group to pause for discussion. Create opportunities for experiential learning, demonstrations and practical small-group activities.

**Accessibility** – Narrow pathways will make it difficult for participants to move equipment around. Trellises should be easy for gardeners to maintain and harvest fruits from.

**Cultural diversity** – Include plants and cultural traditions of various cultural groups who make up your neighbourhood. Invite participants of various cultural groups to participate in the design.

## Plant Selection

Place plants with similar growth requirements (e.g. watering and light requirements) in the same planting bed or area. This makes it easier to water and maintain. Consider companion planting (a form of polyculture) for pest control, pollination and space maximisation. The following are some recommended plants that you can begin planting with.

### Plant Care Requirements



Prefers full sun



Prefers semi-shade



Prefers full shade



Prefers little water



Requires moderate amount of water



Requires abundant water

### Vegetables/Leafy Greens

Vegetables need lots of sunlight, water and fertiliser. Most are non-woody plants.

#### Choy Sum

*Brassica rapa* var. *chinensis*



#### Lady's Finger

*Abelmoschus esculentus*



#### Chinese Spinach

*Amaranthus tricolor*



#### Lettuce

*Lactuca sativa*



#### Cekur Manis

*Sauropus androgynus*



#### Long Beans

*Vigna unguiculata*  
subsp. *sesquipedalis*



#### Eggplant (Brinjal)

*Solanum melongena*



#### Sweet Potato

*Ipomoea batatas*



#### Kang Kong

*Ipomoea aquatica*



#### Radish

*Raphanus sativus*



## Herbs and spices

Spices and herbs are aromatic plants used for flavoring food. Some have medicinal properties. Most are small, non-woody (herbaceous) plants that need full sun and regular fertilising.

### Chilli

*Capsicum annuum*



### Curry Leaf Tree

*Murraya koenigii*



### Chinese Parsley

*Coriandrum sativum*



### Basil

*Ocimum basilicum*



### Fragrant Pandan

*Pandanus amaryllifolius*



### Sawtooth Coriander

*Eryngium foetidum L.*



## Vibrant Flowers

These are plants grown for their brightly-coloured flowers. Most of these need full sun, lots of watering and frequent fertilising.

### Canna

*Canna hybrids*



### Hibiscus

*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis cultivars*



### Flaming Beauty

*Carphalea kirondron*



### Star Cluster

*Pentas lanceolata*



### Heliconia

*Heliconia cultivars*



### Periwinkle

*Catharanthus roseus (L.) G. Don*



## Biodiversity-attracting Plants

Having these plants in your garden will invite birds, bees and butterflies.

**Cape Honeysuckle**  
*Tecoma capensis*



**Orange Jasmine**  
*Murraya paniculata*



**Common Lantana**  
*Lantana camara*



**Pagoda Flower**  
*Clerodendrum paniculatum*



## Ground Cover

Ground cover plants are small shrubs that spread quickly to cover the area where they are planted. The following ornamental plants help prevent soil erosion and growth of weeds.

**False Heather**  
*Cuphea hyssopifolia*



**Red Flame Ivy**  
*Hemigraphis alternata*



**Japanese Rose**  
*Portulaca grandiflora* cultivars



**Yellow Peanut Plant**  
*Arachis pintoii*



## Naturally Fragrant

These plants give off a scent when they flower, filling your garden with a lovely fragrance.

**Angelonia**  
*Angelonia angustifolia*



**Wild Water Plum,  
Water Jasmine**  
*Wrightia religiosa*



**Cape Jasmine**  
*Gardenia jasminoides*

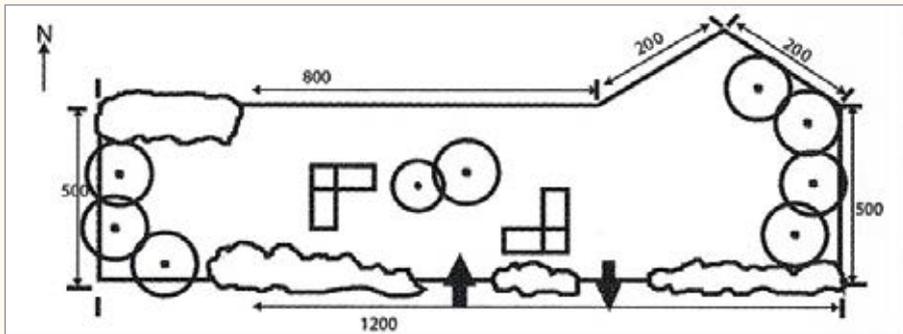


**Yesterday-Today-  
and-Tomorrow**  
*Brunfelsia pauciflora*



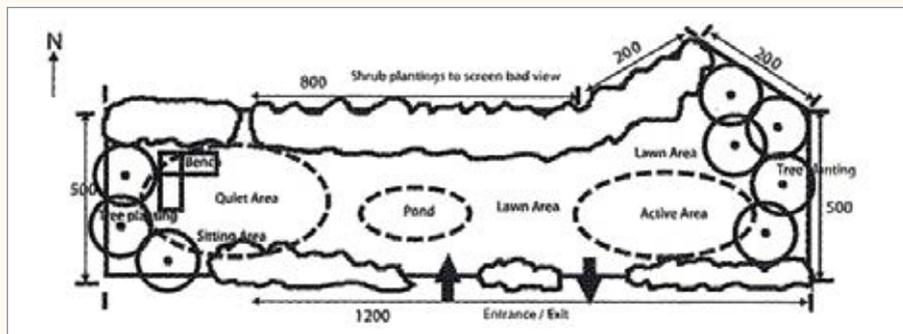
## Drawing Your Garden Design

Drawing out your design can help you plan your garden better.



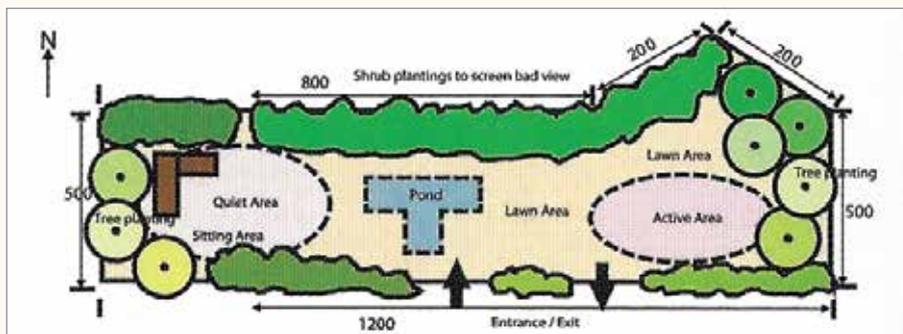
### 1. Make a scale drawing

Include measurements, physical conditions, boundaries, existing plants and built-up structures.



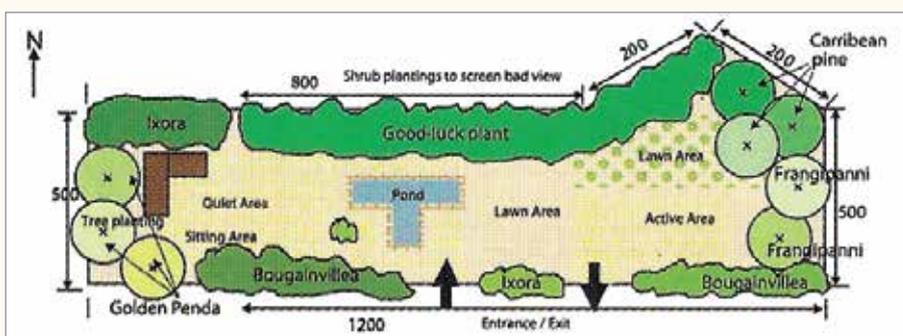
### 2. Create a few designs

Make a few copies of your scale map and try different designs. Use different shapes to represent plant beds or areas occupied by trees or large shrubs.



### 3. Evaluate and finalise the design

Incorporate the best features into the final design.

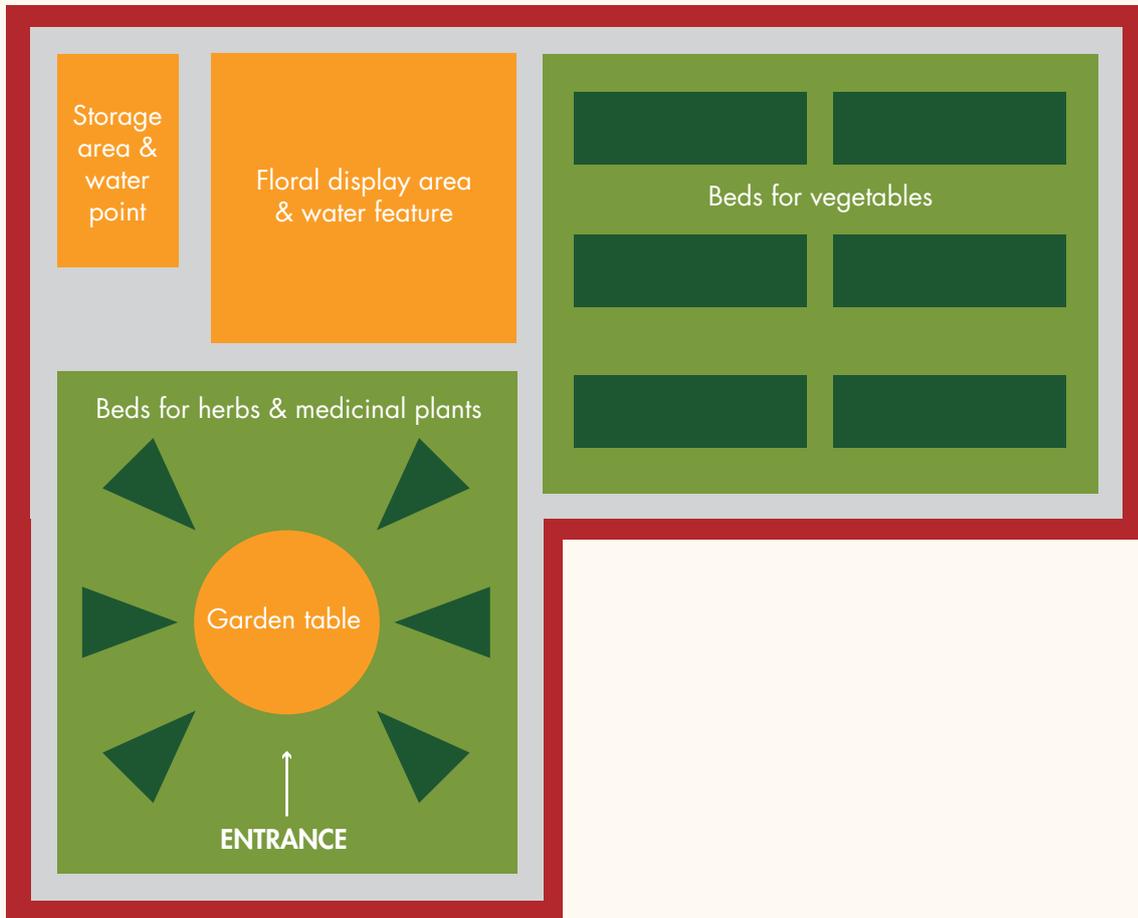


### 4. Fill in the details

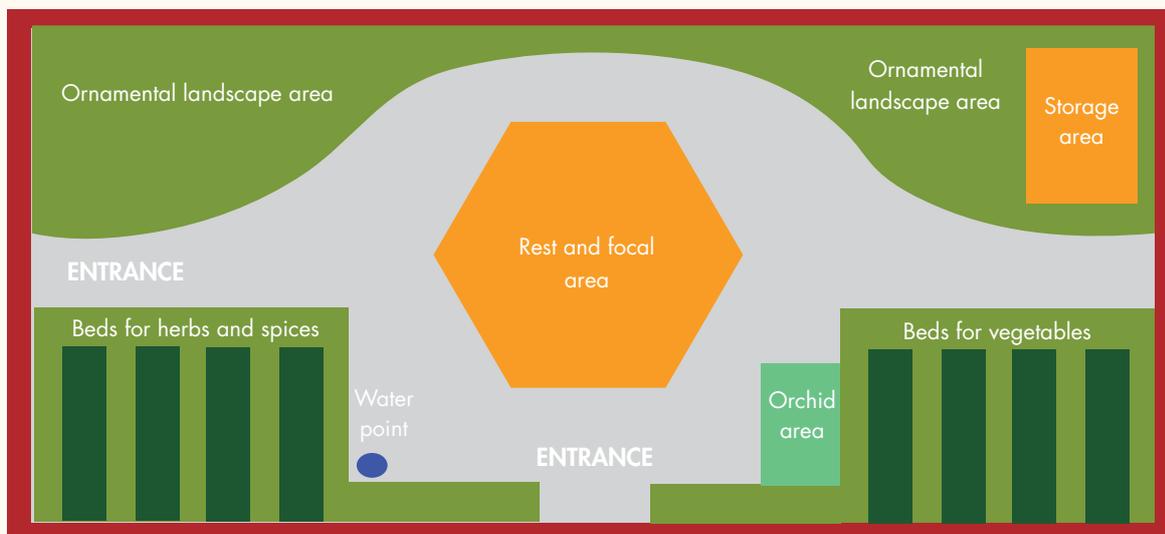
List the selection of plants, materials to be used, and types of garden decorations.

## Examples Of Garden Design Layouts

### Example 1 - Design for an L-shaped site



### Example 2 - Design for a rectangular site





**STEP 3: PLANT YOUR GARDEN**



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## STEP 3: PLANT YOUR GARDEN

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### Preparing The Groundwork

Once the garden plan is endorsed by the Town Council, prepare the groundwork with the committee members or by engaging a suitable contractor.

There are four key stages to constructing the garden, which can occur at the same time or separately depending on time and available resources. It is important to be organised and to work collaboratively with members during these stages:



Stage 1: Prepare the site



Stage 2: Build and install garden infrastructure



Stage 3: Plant the garden



Stage 4: Garden maintenance

### Purchasing Gardening Materials and Tools

Always plan before you purchase. Ask what you will need to start and run a garden. Figure out what you already have and make a list of the skills and resources available from your own community.

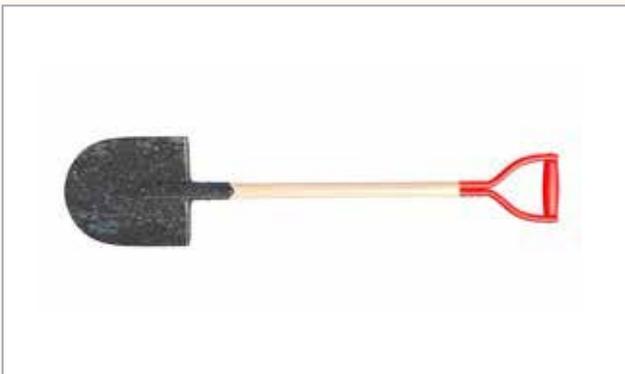
Here is a list of some basic gardening tools for any gardener:



**Spade** – to dig in transplants and remove small weeds.



**Gloves** – essential to prevent blisters and protect you from thorny plants.



**Shovel** – comes in many types and used for breaking ground, moving soil and more.



**Watering Can/Hose** – for ease of watering plants.



**Rake** – useful for gathering leaves to use as mulch.



**Secateur** – used for pruning and clipping.



**Wheelbarrow** – used to move heavy objects such as soil and large plants.



**Digging Fork** – good for loosening hardened soil and dividing perennials.



**Shears/Loppers** – are a larger, two-handed, long-handled version for branches thicker than secateurs can cut.



**Changkol** – available in different sizes for moving small amounts of soil, weed control and digging.

The infrastructure that is installed will depend on garden design and needs of the group. Keep in mind that not everything needs to be completed in the first phase, and that projects can be added as the garden develops. Some of the items you can consider installing include:

- Raised beds
- Pathways and ramps
- Composting bins
- Garden shed
- Fences and gates

- Trellises
- Irrigation systems
- Rest areas
- Play areas
- Art and feature areas

In the first few years of gardening, it is important that gardeners have successful yields and enjoy eating what they grow in order to build confidence and enthusiasm. Consider planting a mix of both ornamental plants and vegetables to allow participants to have a choice of activities.

Depending on experience and timing of planting, the group may choose to plant the garden from seeds, seedlings or young plants that are transplanted into the garden, or a combination of both. Start gardening immediately to avoid hardening or erosion of the soil.

## Checklist For Community Garden Projects

The checklist below is a useful guide for garden leaders to determine their aims and objectives before starting on a community garden.

### 1. What type of community garden?

- A shared garden where participants share the gardening and the harvest
- An allotment garden where participants garden their own plot and share the maintenance of common areas
- A garden with both allotments and shared gardening space

What is the size of the shared and allotments spaces?

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How long can allotments be held while they are not being used?

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### 2. What will be the purpose of the community garden?

- A place for people to garden together and get to know each other
- A place for people to relax and get closer to nature
- A place where parents can bring their children
- A place that provides access to fresh, nutritious food
- Others: \_\_\_\_\_

Will the garden be open to use and/or visitation by surrounding community groups and schools? Yes  No

### 3. How will we garden?

- Organic gardening? Yes  No
- Container gardening? Yes  No
- Raised bed gardening? Yes  No
- In ground gardening? Yes  No

Other methods: \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons: \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. What structures should we include?

- Rest areas to sit
- Lockable shed for storage
- Compost area
- Nursery for plant propagation
- Educational signs
- Others: \_\_\_\_\_

**6. What training do we need?**

- Gardening skills
- Design skills
- Basic construction skills
- Education on plants
- Others: \_\_\_\_\_

Are any of these skills available within the group? Yes  No

**7. How will we manage waste?**

- Create own compost
- Mulching
- Recycle materials
- Others: \_\_\_\_\_

**8. How will we conserve water?**

- Mulching
- Hydro-zoning
- Irrigation systems e.g. Drip irrigation, Soaker hose
- Plant low-water-use plants
- Others: \_\_\_\_\_

**9. How will we fund the garden?**

- Sponsorships and donations
- Membership fees
- Grants from your RC
- Others: \_\_\_\_\_



MANAGEMENT TIPS



# MANAGEMENT TIPS

## Administrative Matters – Keeping Records and Handling Funds

If your group is seeking to raise funds or solicit donations, you will need a secure place to put the funds where they can also be monitored. Check with your RC on how to manage this process. It is recommended that the group elect a treasurer and create a bookkeeping system for accountability and transparency for the allocation of funds.

As your group grows, it will be essential to keep records of achievements, expenses, maps of the garden design and individual plots, projects, an up-to-date list of participants, their respective leadership roles and their contact information. Take regular photographs of the project's progress and significant events for use in promotional material.



A photo wall is a simple and easy method to display past projects and achievements.



Keep a journal of past video clips and newspaper cuttings of the garden being featured in the press.

A simple notebook or spreadsheet is useful for recording contact information. Below is an example of an application form to collect basic information of participants.

### Gardener Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Paste  
photo  
here

Other household members:

Relationship to member	Name	Age	Gender

Please sign up for at least one of the garden jobs/roles listed below:

- Garden coordinator
- Administrator
- Grounds
- Maintenance
- Composting
- Events
- Treasurer
- Communications
- Outreach and community relations
- Horticulture advisors
- Safety
- Garden committee
- Others: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are a new gardener, would like an experienced gardener to help you? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If you are an experienced gardener, would you like to help a new gardener? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Photo permission: From time to time, gardeners, garden leaders and the media will take photos of the garden.

- Please check here if you are not agreeable to having your photo taken. If you encounter photographers in your garden, please let them know you are not agreeable to being photographed.

Phone and email: All gardeners are required to share their phone number and email address with garden leaders. In addition, a gardener phone and email list is shared with all gardeners.

- Please check here if you do not wish to share your phone number and email with all gardeners.

*By signing below, I agree that I have read and understand the Gardener Guidelines and plan to abide by all of the garden rules. I understand that neither the garden group nor owners of the land are responsible for my actions. I therefore agree to hold harmless the garden group and owners of the land for any liability, damage, loss or claim that occurs in connection with use of the garden by me or my guests.*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Responsible Gardening – Health And Safety

### Health and safety

A responsible gardener practises personal safety and considers the safety of others. By anticipating problems before they occur and implementing systems to avoid or minimise them, you will protect both the community from injury and your project from costly and potentially damaging allegations of negligence.

Conduct a simple risk assessment that considers the following, with particular reference to the safety of children and the elderly:

- Poisonous or potentially allergenic plants
- Trip hazards
- Sharp or dangerous edges
- Manual handling of heavy loads, including the use of wheelbarrows
- Use of sharp or dangerous tools
- Use of soils and manures
- Poisons and pesticides



*Always use gloves when handling soil, sharp tools and garden chemicals.*



*Beware of trip hazards; demarcate work areas to make them visible.*

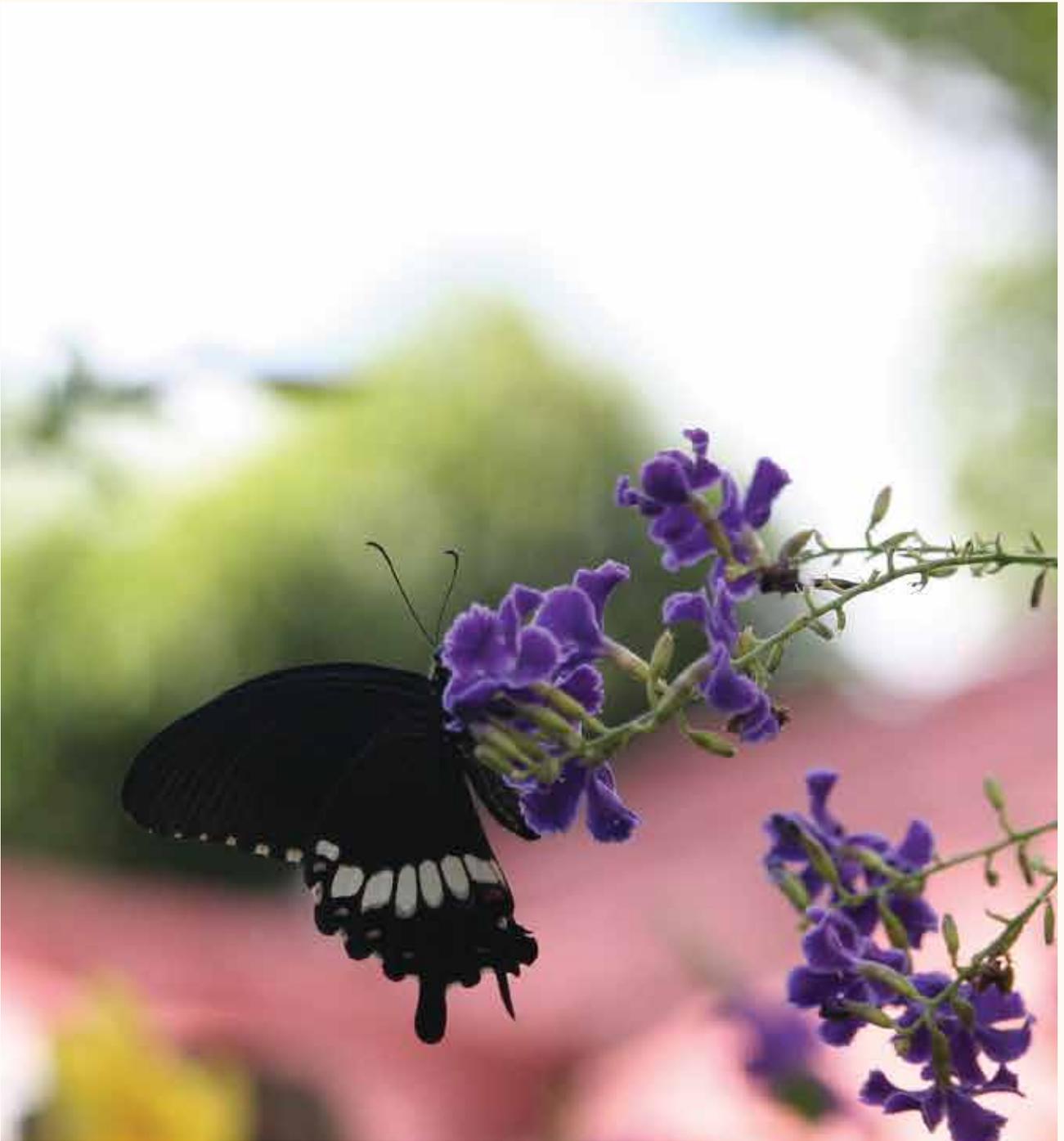


*Maintain and store your tools and equipment in an orderly manner.*



Be careful not to collect water and breed mosquitoes in your garden:

- Keep unused containers upturned and stored away.
- Keep drains and gutters clear of leaves.
- Always have fish in ponds and water features.
- Check pots and plant dishes for stagnant water.
- Clean and scrub the inner sides of plant dishes thoroughly to remove mosquito eggs.



# SUSTAINING INTEREST



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# SUSTAINING INTEREST

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## Activities

Maintain the long-term interest of your participants by creating ongoing activities and learning opportunities.

### Attract new participants

- Engage nearby residents by running short, practical workshops.
- Hold open days, events and celebrations.
- Make your garden interesting and inviting by including musical and artistic elements; art in the garden can be a source of fun and amusement.
- Create a simple brochure to promote your garden during community events.
- Design and install attractive graphical signage to reach out to children as well as those who might not be fluent in English.

### Orientate and retain new participants

- Conduct a simple induction and introduce new participants to the group. Match participants' tasks with their skills to keep them interested.
- Ensure new participants are familiar with the garden and its rules.
- Consider setting up a mentoring system. Mentor and share gardening knowledge with new students by pairing them up with skilled gardeners.

### Commission special projects

- Create sculptures from recycled materials to stand out and make a bold statement.
- Challenge your participants with new or creative projects to sustain their interest. For example, research and install an efficient irrigation system or create a vertical garden feature as a team.

### Create opportunities for learning

- Organise or facilitate garden education activities for all ages.
- Arrange gardening workshops, talks or sharing sessions presented by skilled gardeners, or bring in an expert to build capability within the group on a range of related topics.
- Co-ordinate visits to other gardens to exchange ideas; invite other community gardeners for networking and information-sharing sessions.

### Community building

- Organise and celebrate the harvest party as a community event by inviting nearby residents. Harvest parties can be organised as educational events where gardeners participate in a workshop on harvesting techniques for crops that have been planted in the garden.
- Fruits and vegetables harvested can be shared among the participants and residents living near the garden.
- Host simple social events such as potlucks and breakfast meets to encourage social interaction among the participants.
- Promote the garden through public announcements over local radio, television, newspapers, free local publications, as well as via websites, blogs, and social media platforms.

## Garden Rules

Everyone involved in the community garden should be aware of the rules and policies that underpin the project. Doing so would ensure participants understand their responsibilities and rights. It is also important to consider every individual's inputs when drafting these rules and policies.



The following are some guidelines on garden rules and policies:

### #1 Garden organically

Gardens are part of a diverse ecosystem and we should use organic and natural methods to encourage plant diversity, attract beneficial insects, and create conditions for healthy plant growth. Chemical fertilisers and pesticides are not recommended. Observation and good soil fertility are the best defences against pests and diseases.

### #2 Ensure regular attendance

The garden survives only through the dedicated efforts of its participants. Remember: many hands make light work.

### #3 Conduct regular garden maintenance and inspection

Keep the garden weeded and trimmed. Paths should be kept level and clear to allow visitors to access. A well-tended area where vandalism is immediately reported has been observed to be a big deterrent to further destruction.

### #4 Care for common tools

Treat the shared tools and equipment with care. Clean the dirt off tools and wind hoses before storing them. Keep sheds and storage boxes locked except when removing or replacing tools, and never leave personal valuables unattended. Double-check before you leave the site to ensure that all tools have been locked away.

### #5 Do not smoke in or around the garden

The garden is a place where the community can enjoy nature and be committed to a healthy way of living. Keep the air fresh for fellow gardeners.

### #6 Have a zero-tolerance policy for inappropriate behaviour

The garden is a place where everyone should act in a respectful manner. Disrespectful and abusive language, destruction or any behaviour deemed inappropriate will not be tolerated within the garden grounds.

## Growing An Inclusive Community

### Make your garden elderly friendly:

- Incorporate raised beds where possible.
- Pathways should be made wide enough for wheelchairs to pass.
- Plots should be made narrow enough for participants to reach the center without straining themselves.



*A narrow plot makes it easier for everyone to reach the crops.*

### Include participants from different races and cultures:

- Assign shared lots to people of different cultures and races. This will encourage them to share their skills and knowledge related to gardening, cooking, nutrition and health. This will also allow them to learn about other traditions and practices.



*Here's an example of a plot where gardeners get to grow herbs and spices commonly used by the Malay community.*

### Learning opportunities for youths:

- Community gardens provide youth with a place to explore and get close to nature. Residents can also bring their children to the garden, and invite neighbouring schools to organise garden tour for their students.

## FEATURE GARDEN 1

**Bukit Batok Zone 2 Residents' Committee**

**Location: Open area next to Blk 106 Bukit Batok Central S(650106)**

**Theme: Cozy Garden**

First established by ex-farmers, the once empty plot of land under the block has evolved from a hydroponics growing area to a bonsai garden to the current gold award community garden.

The garden is beautifully landscaped, with a flowing water feature as well as fish ponds filled with brightly-coloured koi – a hit with the children. Chengal wood trellises with overhanging fruits shelter a tiled walkway, providing much needed respite from the daytime heat. A curtain of long, reddish creeper aerial roots from the Javanese Treebine (*Cissus nodosa*) hang down from these trellises, creating an effect much like a dense lacy curtain.

Plots are divided into sections according to ornamental types, herbs, vegetables and attractions, and the garden uses natural pesticides and fertilisers to stay organic.

A cozy corner for meetings and interactions has been thoughtfully crafted with relaxation and serenity in mind. Members also use the herbs in the garden to make their own herbal teas for themselves and guests.

Residents are proud to invite their foreign guests to the garden, and it has had visitors from around the region, Europe and America.



*The garden's theme is displayed on a signboard and located at the entrance of cozy corner.*



*A green arch with Mexican Creeper (*Antigonon leptopus*) adorns the pathway leading to the ornamental garden section.*



*The Javanese Treebine (Cissus nodosa) is a species of woody vines in the grape family (Vitaceae). It produces an abundance of long reddish aerial roots to form a dense lacy curtain and is traditionally used for its medicinal properties.*

### Tips From The Gardeners

- The leader of the garden should have some basic background in planting or gardening.
- A team made up of strong leaders maintain the garden and help to well-maintained and helps to sustain participants' interest.
- Use intensive gardening methods if you wish to harvest the most produce possible in a given space.
- A proper garden tool shed is essential for proper maintenance and storage of tools and equipment.

“

In community gardening, the word 'My' is replaced with 'Ours'.

**Garden Leader – John Hou**

”



*Vegetables and herbs are planted in neatly arranged raised beds that are surrounded by defined pathways for easy access and planting.*



*Keep fishes in the pond to prevent mosquitoes from breeding.*



*A garden shed is an ideal solution for storing potting supplies, fertilisers, seeds and gardening tools.*

## FEATURE GARDEN 2

### Jurong Central Zone D Residents' Committee

**Location:** Next to Blk 337 Jurong East Ave 1 S(600337)

**Theme:** Garden to Kitchen

What started out as two community garden plots was initially reduced to just one plot when land was acquired to build a new block of flats. The garden members then requested for a second site and were granted a location atop the open-air rooftop of the multistorey carpark. They transformed this area into a unique sky garden – the first rooftop community garden in Singapore with raised beds.

When the group first started work on their garden, the plots were divided into rectangular beds, with only one or two types of vegetables grown. After some neighbours commented that this made the garden look like a graveyard, the group was motivated to improve the garden's image. They added ornamental plants and other varieties to spruce up the garden, making it more welcoming. The garden also boasts a island lychee tree (*Pometia pinnata*) that started to produce over 600 fruits every eight months, after five years of nurture.

Mdm Kamisah, the garden leader, is also an excellent cook; she uses the fresh garden produce to whip up jams, desserts and delicacies. The 'Garden to Kitchen' theme is a big hit with residents and has helped build interest within the estate.

To show their support, some residents who travel abroad would bring back different plant and fruit species for the garden committee to grow and cook more delicacies.



*Sky Garden@ Jurong Central is located above the multistorey carpark.*



*New growth and developing fruits atop the island lychee tree. When ripe, the fruits turn dark red and tastes smiliar to longans.*

To sustain interest, the group often participates in gardening events, as well as collaborates with the Eco-clubs of nearby primary schools to share their knowledge and help set up the schools' gardens. The group also participates in gardening competitions as the pride of winning an award is able to motivate participants to do more.

Besides sharing and distributing the harvest to needy residents, the group is collaborating with its Residents' Committee to encourage unemployed residents to join the community garden project to earn points for services provided, which can be redeemed for grocery and food vouchers.



*Decorate your garden to make it beautiful and welcoming.*

### Tips From The Gardeners

- Waist-high raised beds are elderly friendly solutions as it provides accessibility during gardening.
- Where possible, site your community garden near common amenities e.g. toilet, water cooler, etc.
- As a garden leader, your participants would often look towards you for various matters e.g. distributions of harvest. When making decisions, always keep community spirit as a priority.
- Do not be disheartened by failures; persevere as a group and you will soon see the fruits of your labour.



*The harvest is collected and distributed among the participants and residents in the community.*

“

Our community garden is not just a garden, but a platform for us to serve our community.

**Garden Leader – Mdm Kamisah bte Atan**

”

## FEATURE GARDEN 3

### Punggol Coral Resident's Committee

**Location:** Next to Blk 126D Edgedale Plains S(824126)

**Theme:** Ornamental Garden

The story for this garden began when Mr Goh, a flower lover, first decided to scatter flower seeds on an empty patch of soil at his block. When the flowers started to bloom, this pretty patch drew the attention of a fellow Residents' Committee member who approached Mr Goh to start a community garden.

When Mr Goh began working on this community garden, Mr Lim, who was drawn to it, joined him; these two gentlemen became the founding fathers, working tirelessly to nurture it.

Plant artworks are the special features of this garden – from a large heart-shaped Spanish moss ornament centrepiece that lights up at night, to 'toilet art' installation, and even a tree sculpture with Staghorn ferns. These unique works have contributed to the garden's three CIB awards won over the years.

Accentuating the artworks is a wide variety of vegetables, fruits trees, ornamental plants and flowers, a lily pond and an orchid shed. They are also an invaluable source of education for the children of a nearby kindergarten.

Fortnightly, the group invites guest from a nearby elderly centre for morning karaoke sessions in their garden rest area, built amid the garden's beauty and serenity.



*Children from the nearby kindergarden feeding the fishes.*



*These discarded toilet bowls get a new lease on life as an art installation.*



*The garden boasts an amazing collection of airplants including Spanish moss (tillandsia usneoides) – an epiphyte which absorbs nutrients and water from the air and rainfall.*

### Tips From The Gardeners

- Rules are essential to maintaining order and structure within a community garden.
- Avoid planting thorny plants and herbs if you wish to allow children to roam freely.
- Stone pavers add a unique touch by creating a fun pattern of intersecting pathways that lead visitors around the grounds.
- Keep a slight gradient inside your garden to prevent waterlogging during the rainy season.

“

Thank, recognise and celebrate with participants who have contributed to the success of the garden to keep them motivated.

**Garden Leader – Mr Lim**

”



*Mr Lim, one of the garden leaders posing in front of a curtain of Spanish moss (*Tillandsia usneoides*).*



*The beautiful nature of water lilies has led to their widespread use as ornamental plants*



*Winding stone pathways make the garden a fun place for a leisurely stroll.*