

TAROONA NEIGHBOURHOOD GARDEN

MANAGEMENT PLAN 2010

INTRODUCTION

The Tarooma Neighbourhood Garden (TNG) is a demonstration Permaculture garden with established vegetable garden beds, fruit trees and herb beds. TNG is a teaching and learning centre for people to acquire the fundamentals of organic gardening. It also functions as an information and produce exchange for gardeners in the Tarooma community. A small market garden has been incorporated to grow staple crops, available to Tarooma residents at low cost. This is useful to the Tarooma community as the last shop in the suburb recently closed. Educational programs include regular workshops on seasonal food production, soil science, compost making, pruning, seed collection and Permaculture. The TNG is actively involved with the local community and has garden beds for the local Play Centre (Possums) The two local schools have developed beds in the school grounds following their involvement with the gardens.

TNG was established in 2008 on council land in Tarooma Park. The project is modelled on the successful Creek Road Community Garden (Lenah Valley, established in 1997). It is a not-for-profit community enterprise which includes 50 raised beds, large community beds, four large composting bays, earthworm farms, a storage shed, a greenhouse, a children's play area with sand pit and picnic table.

RAISED BEDS

At TNG the advantages of boxed-in beds, made from recycled materials are demonstrated:

- Perfect drainage on clay parkland
- Deep soil profile for bigger yields
- Crops are protected from animal predation
- Reduced maintenance and good accessibility without the need to step onto the soil.
- When irrigated by hand-held hose, we use less water
- Small hand tools can replace more expensive long handled tools
- Encourages inclusion of the elderly and physically disabled.

1. VISION

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

To provide a sunny open space for local residents and students to learn organic gardening skills, gain good nutritious food and engage in healthy outdoor exercise. TNG is a place for learning and sharing about growing food and sustainable living practices, and for actively building community through shared activities. It provides a valuable recreational activity that contributes to the health and well-being of the wider community and promotes environmental, social and educational benefits. The TNG will help to reduce carbon footprints and assist in protecting food security by growing vegetables, herbs and flowers locally. This includes:

- knowledge and understanding of growing and enjoying organic produce
- waste minimisation through composting and mulching
- building a sense of community.

TNG is a non-political and non-sectarian organisation, and while diversity of opinions and beliefs are respected, matters not related to this primary purpose cannot be promoted through the neighbourhood garden.

TNG has a mix of member and public access and an outreach program where members and supporters take part in social and educational events as well as being provided with early access to food surpluses.

TNG has an open door policy to the garden when people are working there (during daylight hours - it is closed at night to discourage possums and vandalism)

2. MANAGEMENT

The TNG is managed by a committee. Committee meetings are held bi monthly. Committee members represent working groups which include education and training, funding, composting and social activities. Decision making aims to be democratic, transparent and inclusive. The management committee is accountable to the members, funding bodies and the Kingborough Council.

The garden holds regular education and training sessions for the benefit of members and the community, including sessions on onion and garlic growing, seed collection, winter tasks and cooking demonstrations. TNG also holds communal seasonal events.

3. COMMUNICATION

The management team will communicate with members through the web site, <http://taroona.tas.au/neighbourhood-garden> and an email list. A data base is kept to store membership details and waiting lists. In promoting sustainable practices we advocate the reduction of printing. The Management Plan and induction kit are posted on the TNG website. We could ask that all members aim to have an email address for news and notices and check the shed and noticeboards once a week for news. All information will be displayed in the shed in one printed document to read on site for those without email.

4. FEES

An individual family or group must be a financial member to garden on a plot.

5. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMUNITY GARDENERS

Members are requested to keep their plot tidy, free of seeding weeds and ugly crop residues and structures.

Gardeners are responsible for ensuring that:

- All tools should be returned to the shed after use.
- Noise levels within the garden are maintained at a level that is not disturbing to neighbours.
- Manures, compost systems and fertilisers do not produce overly unpleasant odours.
- Compost and worm farming systems are maintained so as not to attract vermin.
- Lawn areas are regularly mowed and garden beds kept tidy.
- Any materials delivered to or stored at the garden are maintained so as not to create an unpleasant environment for other residents in the community.
- Visitors are welcomed to the garden, and members of the public can access the community garden during daylight hours.
- Tall or voluminous plants must not grow over pathways or impede the mowing of the verges..
- Tall grass growing close to the perimeter of a plot will hide slugs and snails. It is the responsibility of each gardener to keep these edges weed free and short
- Pets are not brought into the garden. They are potential disease vectors.

During the active growth season, plots should be visited regularly for maintenance.

TYPES OF PLANTS

Plots are for growing herbs flowers and vegetables. Trees and large shrubs are not suitable for plots because they may block sun to other plots. NO invasive weeds are to be planted in the gardens. No herbs such as mint and comfrey should be planted as they have the potential to escape into the surrounding reserve.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

The only plant matter that should leave the garden is the fruit and vegetable harvest. All gardeners are encouraged to use the earthworm farms as a means of reducing kitchen waste and creating compost for the garden plots. **All material should be cut finely.** Avocado and mango seeds and sweet corn husks take too long to break down and should not be added to the worm farm. Waste plant matter from the beds should be cut or mown over and placed in the compost bay which will be marked for garden waste. Twitch roots and weed seeds should be drowned in the bucket provided to make compost tea.

Similarly, external garden waste should not be brought into the community garden. It may harbour pests or diseases which could be hard to eliminate once established.

RIGHTS OF COMMUNITY GARDENERS

Community gardeners have the right to:

- Develop their own organisational procedures and plan of management in their plot in accordance with the garden plan.
- Be consulted with regard to any decision that may affect the project.
- Be treated with respect by other gardeners, local residents and partnering organisations.

All members are invited to attend working bees and to contribute approximately **a day of work per year** to general garden duties not specifically related to their plot. Working bees are set at the beginning of the year so that members can plan to attend. A job list will be placed on a board so all can see what needs to be done.

Organic practices apply throughout. No poisons are to be used in the gardens. Some recommended products are:

- Bicarbonate of soda as a preventative spray against fungal diseases
- Iron-based pellets against slugs
- Pyrethrum against flying insects
- Derris against caterpillars, or pull them off. Often easier with a torch at night!
- Vinegar and salt solution against stubborn weeds.

SALE OF GARDEN PRODUCE

Garden plots are for personal use only. Gardeners are not permitted to sell plants that have been grown in the community garden. Excess plants can be made available to the community who are invited to make a donation in the community garden donation box.

A locked suggestion/donation box is cleared regularly by the treasurer.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Community Gardens should aim to promote an environment that is tolerant and caring. Within a group sometimes people have to go along with decisions they do not fully agree with. However, it is inevitable that conflicts may sometimes arise, either within the garden group or with external stakeholders such as local residents. In the event of a conflict situation arising, steps should be taken immediately to support resolution, including telling a committee member. The committee will propose a conflict resolution strategy.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Minimise the risk of accidents by wearing personal protective equipment such as gloves, sun hats, covered shoes, a shirt with covered shoulders and long trousers for mowing.

Report damaged tools and equipment.

USING THE MOWER

- Check mowing area for hidden objects
- Ensure others are out of range.
- Ensure you wear protective clothing, ear muffs and safety glasses.

FIRST AID

There is a first aid kit in the shed. Please record any incident in the incident book with the first aid kit. This enables the committee to follow up and investigate accidents and be aware of potential safety issues in the gardens. Sun screen and spare hats are also available in the shed.

DISCLAIMER

While the community garden manages safety issues through annual audits and subsequent remedial work, members accept that gardening is a potentially hazardous activity that may involve personal injury. Members are expected to take personal responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others at all times.

7. NEW MEMBERS

APPLYING FOR A GARDEN PLOT

Taroona residents wishing to apply for a garden plot must complete an application form and contract and agree to abide by the policies and procedures of the garden. If no plots are available the applicants name will be added to the waiting list and will be advised when a plot becomes available. Waiting lists are reviewed at committee meetings.

INDUCTION

When new members are allocated a garden bed the member will be issued with an induction kit and will be allocated a mentor who will take the new member on a garden tour and explain the workings of the garden. The mentor will be available to the new members to ask any further questions and be the first point of contact with any concerns or difficulties.

FORFEITURE OF GARDEN PLOTS

A plot will be forfeited by the holder if it is neglected for 6 months or more. In cases of absenteeism, inform a committee member or leave an explanatory water-proof notice on your plot. Gardeners who no longer require their plot should notify a committee member so that the plot can be reallocated to waiting gardeners.

If a plot is not maintained and becomes overgrown, the committee will ask the holder if they would like to relinquish it so that another person can use it.

7. HOUSEKEEPING SUGGESTIONS

Untangling hoses can be a nightmare. After watering your plot, coil the hose around the tap stand and make sure the water is fully turned off at the tap.

Communal fruit picked from perimeter fences (fruit, apples, pears, raspberries, strawberries etc.) will be available to members at nominal prices. Look for the 'Harvest Now' green flags on crops available for picking. Take what you need and leave a donation in our donation box near the shed.

ORGANIC GARDENING TIPS

To help reduce our carbon footprint, members are discouraged from driving long distances every day to spend 2 minutes applying water when another regular neighbouring gardener could do help out. Request help by leaving a flyer on the notice board.

Spent crops make good compost when blended with matured stable waste. Long stems (broad bean, sweet corn etc.) should be **chopped into short lengths** while still soft and sappy. It is every gardener's responsibility to process their own crop residues and weeds and place them in the compost tank. Please remove soil from roots at the source. Also remove plastic ties, string etc.

WATERING TIPS

A dry surface is not the best medium to apply masses of water. Dig under the surface layer (the finger test) to check for moisture first! Spraying water through a hose fitting often leads to surface crusting and runoff. Avoid this by first applying a fine mulch of grass hay, immature compost, pulverised manure, or shredded Taroona seaweed. Irrigating at dusk is not the best time as it encourages fungal diseases unless it is done carefully at ground level, leaving the foliage above dry.

CROP ROTATION ADVICE

Crops most susceptible to soil borne diseases should not be grown in the same spot year after year. They are the onion family, the Brassica family (cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, swede etc) and the nightshade family (tomato, potato, capsicum and chilli). Well fed and watered plants are less likely to succumb to pests and diseases.

SOIL MAINTENANCE

The mix for raised beds is 1/3 native clay, 1/3 coarse sand (or sandy loam), 1/3 compost. This does not include separate dressings of essential organic fertilisers. For easy digging and healthy crop growth, annual dressings of compost (7-10cm) and dolomitic limestone are the compulsory soil conditioners.

CONTROL OF GARDEN PESTS

No toxic chemicals for pests, weeds or fertilisers are to be used. Gardeners may use safe environmentally friendly products. Recommended fertilisers and mulches:

- Pulverised dry animal manures (low analysis)
- Blood and bone meal (Nitrogen, Phosphorous, Calcium)
- Seedmeal (layer mash, canola meal etc)
- High analysis mature compost or vermicast
- Lime (dolomitic limestone, gypsum, rock dust etc)
- Complete organic fertiliser (as per recipe found in Steve Solomon's book, "Growing Vegies South of Australia")
- Readily available on site is composted stable litter which has a high proportion of sawdust. Use this as a mulch or fork it in as soil conditioner. \$4 per barrow load. (or free to members for use on site when advised by a sign).
- with concessions (\$20) available for the unwaged, students or those on benefits.

Taroona Neighbourhood Garden Committee

28 October 2010