



Taroona Neighbourhood Garden

A guide for members



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Cover photo taken in January 2025 by anonymous drone operator

Welcome to our Taroona Neighbourhood Garden. This booklet introduces plot holding members and Associate members to what happens in the neighbourhood garden.

Our Mission

TNG aims to provide a sunny open space for local residents and students to learn organic gardening skills, grow nutritious food and engage in healthy outdoor exercise.

The TNG will help to reduce carbon footprints and assist in protecting food security by growing vegetables, herbs and flowers locally.

The raised central beds

The central 'social' area is edged by raised beds labelled A-F. We generally maintain and sow/plant these beds out as a group at working bees, and share the resulting produce. We plant them out on a rotation plan.

The raised vegetable beds

Our raised beds are planted, maintained and harvested by our members, who share the produce.

What we grow each season is determined by our rotation plan.

Excess produce is placed on the Share Shelves outside the garden for anyone to take.



The shed

You will find tools for general use in the shed.

There may also be some stakes, wire or other supplies. Help yourself to whatever you need for use in the neighbourhood garden, but do return any tools that you use.

A thriving family plot

We have 57 family plots, each of about 6 square metres. With careful planting and maintenance, a substantial supply of vegetables can be grown all year round for the family table. Your allocated plot is yours alone to harvest from and to manage. You will need to visit the garden at a minimum of once a week to water, tend and harvest your produce.

Getting started in your family plot

You may have to clear out weeds and rubbish when you take over your allocated plot. When cleared you can supplement the soil with compost, worm castings and soil available in the garden, or bring in some of your own purchased resources. We usually have a pile of purchased garden mix by the compost bays for replenishing the soil in the plots.

The vegetable tribes

Our founder, Gardening Guru David Stephen recommended sowing and planting on a rotational system, which is possible even in the small plots. These are the 4 'tribes' which cover most vegetables. Try to plant members of each tribe in a different part of your plot each year.

1. Sweet corn and cucurbits (pumpkin/zucchini/cucumber tribe)
2. Alliums and root crops (onion tribe, carrots, beets, parsnips etc)
3. Brassicas and legumes (cabbage tribe and pea/bean tribe)
4. Solanums (tomatoes, capsicum, chillies, eggplant)

Seeds or seedlings?

Buying seedlings is a good way to get a quick start, but some vegetables and flowers are better sown as seeds. When choosing seedlings, you can be guided by what is available in plant nurseries, with a few exceptions. Seedlings of root crops such as carrots and radish do not respond well to transplanting, and large seeds such as peas and all beans are easy to sow and will germinate successfully in situ.

What to sow when?

Two Tasmanian seed growers, Southern Harvest Seeds and Veggie and Flower Garden Seeds, have useful seasonal charts on their websites.

<https://www.southernharvest.com.au/>

<https://veggiegardenseeds.com.au/>

There is also Tasmanian Gardening Guru's growing guide prepared by the late Peter Cundall on the ABC website.

<https://www.abc.net.au/hobart/peter-cundalls-year-round-planting-guide/10514064>



Seedlings ready to be planted in the shared central beds at a working bee.



Harvesting

Harvest vegetables as they become ready. If you have surplus, rather than letting it become over mature in the plot, give it away or place on the share shelves outside the garden.

With successive planting you can have some vegetables all year round. Harvest on time and remove plants as they over-mature or show signs of going to seed or harbouring pests such as aphids. You can then plant or sow new vegetables and production capacity is not wasted.

Diseases and pests can spread to neighbouring plots, and when plants grow tall and woody they pose a disposal problem. Our FOGO bins become over filled and woody material dumped in the compost bays slows the work of the compost team.

Here are some examples of what we DO NOT want to see in plots, and how to deal with them.



This lettuce plant has gone to seed. It will be bitter and inedible. Chop it up and put in compost bay or worm farm.



The kale has become tall and woody, and infested with aphids and powdery mildew. Leaves go in compost but woody stem goes into FOGO bin.



Diseased over mature kale infected with mildew and white fly. Leaves in compost bay, woody stem and roots into FOGO bin.



The silver beet has gone to seed. Compost the leaves and stem but the woody lower part must go in the FOGO bin

Disposing of vegetable waste

There are four ways to dispose of waste from your plot:

- in the compost bays - chopped weeds and vegetable waste
- In the worm farm - chopped weeds and vegetable waste, and your kitchen scraps.
- In the green lid FOGO bin – invasive weeds and plants, big woody stalks
- Take it home and put in your own FOGO bin.

Please follow the instructions on the signs.

The green lid FOGO bins

Kingborough Council has very kindly provided two FOGO bins. They should be used only for weeds and for woody stems and roots. Other vegetable waste should be chopped and placed in the compost bays so that nutrient is not lost to our garden.

Please be thoughtful. When all of your waste is stuffed into the FOGO bins, others cannot properly dispose of invasive weeds and woody material, resulting in them being disposed of in the compost bay. Then the compost team must sort it for you, or worse, weeds become embedded in the compost and eventually are distributed to other plots. FOGO bins split when overfilled and Council may no longer replace them for us (as they have had to in the past). The truck cannot lift a bin over 80 kg and it may be left unemptied. Be thoughtful also of the volunteer who places the bins out for collection each week. A heavy bin is very difficult to manoeuvre. BE A THOUGHTFUL AND HYGIENIC GARDENER!

The compost bays

We aim to 'recycle' as much garden waste as we can, turning it into good compost so that nutrients do not go off-site. Much of our vegetable waste can go into the compost bays. Please observe the instructions on the sign. Separate out invasive weeds so they are not propagated by compost distribution. Woody stems and roots cannot be processed, and their inclusion in the bays is an annoyance for the compost team. Chop waste first with the sharp spade provided. To avoid this task, pull out old plants **before** they grow huge and woody.

The good, bad and ugly of making compost

Only the good goes in here!

Vegetable waste and some weeds

Please chop before adding to bay.

Bin the bad!

Twitch/rope grass
Onion twitch

White weed
Oxalis
Mint and lemon balm

Comfrey and horseradish roots
Grass seed heads

and bin the UGLY!

Woody roots and stems

Worm farm

Green waste can also be recycled through our big worm farm if chopped into short pieces. You may also like to bring your kitchen waste from home to supplement the worms' diet. Follow instructions on the sign.

Harvest worm castings by opening the lower door and pulling the 'rake' handle back and forth to bring the processed material down into the lower chamber. Then scrape it into a bucket. It may have a few small worms in it, but that's no problem as long as it is not used around new sowings and planting (birds will work through it).

Our worm farm is vermin proof as long as the top and bottom covers are closed and latched when not in use. Please be sure to close and latch both openings.

Community Worm Farm



Our worms love...



chopped green vegetables and non-invasive weeds ✓



fruit peel and scraps ✓



vegetable peel and scraps ✓



Crushed egg shells, tea leaves and dry leaves ✓

Small amounts only of...




Citrus, onions and garlic

do not add...

- ✗ meat, bread, cake, pasta, dairy foods and foods high in oil and fat. Do not add plastic bags.
- ✗ Definitely no dog faeces. No teabags, mango and avocado pips (they take too long to break down).

they make our worms SAD



drawings by Emily Thomson


Kingborough
Kingborough Council is proud to sponsor the Tarooma Community Worm Farm

General Waste

General waste goes into the red lid bin as it does in households. This is the place to dispose of plastic plant pots as unfortunately they cannot be recycled

What shouldn't you grow?

Some plants are guaranteed to become invasive. Once established, they are almost impossible to eliminate. Please don't plant Comfrey, Horse radish, anything that grows into a tree or large shrub, all varieties of mint and lemon balm.



Lemon balm



Horse radish



Comfrey



Mint

The examples shown above are overtaking the entire plot, and forcing the structures apart with their vigorous roots. Each is a daunting task to eliminate. You are welcome to cultivate a Cape gooseberry, other fruiting bushes, perpetual chilli or rhubarb in the inner perimeter beds. Check first with a management committee member to identify a suitable space.

Weeds

Some weeds are very difficult to eliminate once established. They should be removed as soon as identified and disposed of in the green lid FOGO bins, NEVER in the compost bays.



Oxalis is present in several varieties but all have clusters of bulbs. Dig deeply below the green parts and remove the bulb cluster entirely. Handle carefully to avoid bulblets breaking off and getting lost in the soil.



Twitch, aka rope or couch grass, has long runners which spread rapidly below the surface. Pulling the green bits off the top only encourages it. Dig deeply, pull runners firmly to remove.



White weed or hoary cress (*Lepidium draba*) has a very long root. Pull it gently at soil level to remove the plant entirely, or dig deeply to dislodge it. White weed spreads by rootrunners and seeds. Remove it before it flowers.

Responsibilities of membership

- Work safely: Wear covered shoes and a hat. Be sun-safe with sunscreen, a hat and appropriate clothing. Gloves are recommended when working in the soil.
- Respect other members and their plots.
- Be friendly and welcoming to visitors
- Keep your plot tidy and productive. Your plot may be forfeited if it remains unworked for six months. The committee will usually send you a polite enquiry by email first.
- Harvest your produce as soon as it is ready. If you cannot use your produce, give it away to others in the garden or place on the share shelves.
- Contribute to the running and maintenance of the garden. There are many ways to contribute (see below)
- If you bring your dog into the garden, please keep it on a lead and tethered to a stake in your plot. Pick up any faeces your dog produces. There is a dog bag and disposal bin on the corner below the garden.
- Be water wise. Do not over water your plot and be sure to hang up the hose and turn the tap off tightly when you have finished.

Rights of membership

- To harvest from the shared plots and fruit trees
- To enjoy the shared experience of gardening
- To be part of our vibrant community group



Sharing afternoon tea after a working bee

Working bees

We are a COMMUNITY GARDEN and part of the plan is for each plot holding member to contribute by giving 5-6 hours of work each year to make the garden thrive.

One way to do this is to attend 3 or 4 working bees each year. A working bee is held each month, usually on a Sunday from 2-4pm, and is followed by a shared afternoon tea which is an opportunity to catch up with your fellow garden members in a relaxed atmosphere.

Another way to contribute is to join one of the teams described here. Of course you do not need to limit your voluntary work to a few hours or to one task! We welcome all contributions!



Our teams

The Compost Team

The compost team meets intermittently at a negotiated time. They process the vegetable waste in the bays into hot compost mix which steams away for a few weeks until ready to be spread on plots.

Mowing Team

Team members take turns to mow when it is convenient for them. Some bring their own mower, or they use the fuel mower which belongs to TNG and which is kept off site.

Infrastructure Team

The infrastructure Team meets to repair and rebuild plots and other structures. Plot repair is a constant ongoing process.

Whipper snipping Team

This task is necessary to keep the weeds trimmed around the edges of plots. Team members take turns to complete this task on a regular basis.

Management Committee

The committee meets once a month to manage the activities and finances of the organisation. Committee members order resources, apply for grants, manage membership and other enquiries, plan events, liaise with Kingborough Council and other organisations and respond to the many requests for information. Monthly meetings are kept short – max 90 minutes. Our AGM is held in March each year and new members are always welcome. Please consider joining the committee.

Adopt a place

Sections of the inner perimeter beds around the fruit trees are always in need of TLC, and members are welcome to adopt a section. Check with a committee member about where to adopt.

Tip run

We are always in need of people with a large vehicle who can take prunings, old structure materials and other rubbish which is not suitable for recycling to the tip.

The inner perimeter beds

The space around the inner perimeter is planted with fruit trees, rhubarb and ornamental plants (flowers). We generally share the fruit as it ripens, and depend on members at working bees or on a voluntary basis to keep them weeded. There is a watering system around the full inner perimeter. Please take care not to sever the pipes when working there. Take care not to damage the trunks and surface roots of the fruit trees as this causes suckering, among other problems.

We are proudly an organic garden

Our founder and gardening guru, David Stephen set up the garden on organic principles. TNG does not use toxic chemicals. He recommends the following

- Before putting the hose on your plot, finger test for dampness by poking a finger into the top 1-2 centimetres of soil. It may not always be necessary to water. Watering is best done onto the soil, rather than being sprayed around above the plants.
- Pests and diseases are not a big problem, and mostly managed by the birds and good gardening habits.
- Slugs, snails and caterpillars can usually be picked off and thrown to the birds, but as a last resort use Iron-based pellets against slugs and snails, and Derris against caterpillars.
- Practise garden hygiene by properly disposing of all vegetable plants and roots once they have passed their useful life.

The financial and admin stuff

Annual Subscriptions

Subscriptions are due annually in January. One sub per plot, whether held by a family, couple or single. Our administration is mostly paperless, so bank transfer payment is preferred.

Electronic Bank Transfer:

Name of Account: Taroona Neighbourhood Garden

BSB: 633000

Acct No. 157051541

Please put you name with surname first in as a reference so we know who has paid.

How we communicate with members

The blackboard at the garden is for any messages and news, the committee sends all-member emails about once or twice a month only. Check our website for more announcements:

<https://taroonatastas.au/neighbourhood-garden>

Email: tng@taroonatastas.au or tng.member.news@gmail.com

There is also a TNG Facebook site: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Taroonagarden>

How we are funded

Financial support is from your annual sub, grants, and some fundraising through local events that we organise.

We do not sell produce. We do not employ anyone and all work is done by our members who volunteer for specific tasks. Occasionally we need to hire a contractor for a specialised job such as fencing.

Taroona Neighbourhood Garden has a lease arrangement with Kingborough Municipality which is the land owner. We are incorporated.

The committee manages the finances, buying soil, straw and other supplies. A significant cost is for materials to maintain the plot structure. We pay fees for incorporation, and our membership of Garden Clubs Australia provides our public liability insurance.

Over the years we have been successful in applying for grants which have helped us with maintenance and development.



A short history

Taroona Neighbourhood Garden

In this sunny space, 50 local families grow their own food using organic gardening principles. They work together in monthly bees and enjoy related social activities.

The Taroona Neighbourhood Garden was the initiative of David Stephen, a local organic gardener. In 2007, on land made available by Kingborough Council, and with assistance from several local enthusiasts, David built the beds from re-cycled materials. The soil was improved with compost made by David.

A perimeter fence, fruit trees and shed completed the establishment of the garden. The greenhouse, compost bays, and pergola were added later.

The worm farm which processes local kitchen scraps, was purchased in 2020 with a Kingborough Council grant.

Our free food shelves and the refurbishment of the greenhouse were also funded by council grants.

We are grateful to David Stephen, our founder, patron and life member for his work and support.

You are welcome to wander and enjoy our garden and even to participate in monthly working bees.



TNG is a member of Garden Clubs Australia Inc.
Enquiries to tng@taroonatastas.au
See us on the web at:
<https://taroonatastas.au/neighbourhood-garden/>

David Stephen, organic gardener extraordinaire, our founder, patron and life member.

Researched and designed by Denise Brown

Foundation

2007: David Stephen started to build the garden. He built the original 34 plots with recycled materials, and used quite a lot of old roofing iron. This explains why the plots are generally not of a standard size. Our shed was constructed by volunteers from materials donated by Fair Dinkum Sheds early in the establishment phase and the greenhouse was built by TNG volunteers in a few years later.

David Stephen planted most of the perimeter fruit trees, but some others have been added in the subsequent years.

2008: A large grant enabled the perimeter fence construction, replacing the temporary wire and star picket fence constructed by David. About 15 more plots were added to the original 34.

2011: the first garden ramble was held, but just for members.

2012: Incorporation. Election of committee at first AGM as incorporated organisation.

2016: TNG was a large part of the Taroona Art Trail and held a 'mad-hatters tea party' in the garden. All of the community was invited.



The first sign in 2008

2020: A grant from Kingborough Council funded purchase of the Platinum Worm Habitat which was 'launched' by Kingborough mayor at the time, Dean Winter in 2020. Our free food shelves were installed.

2021: Seeds of Hope festival following on from Covid lock-downs.

2022: TNG was approached by the Jane Goodall Foundation who offered a small grant for us to develop a mud kitchen for small children in the unused top corner of the garden.

2023 Major redevelopment of the central 'social' area was done with raised beds and new gravel surface. The original ground level beds were weed infested and produced little, and the grass surface was muddy and uneven. The new beds were filled with fresh soil and planted out a working bee. We rotate the crops in these beds.

2023: to meet demand and reduce our waiting list, we added a number of pre-made Zinalume plots, positioning them into empty niches around the garden, bringing total to 52.

2023: Costa visits to read a twilight story to local children and sign his book

2024: young members Annabel, Pierre and Abbie designed and painted the mural on the shed door.

2024: TNG was part of Tarooma Expo organised by the Tarooma Community Association.

2025: the Corten gate, designed by young member Annabel, was installed at the Chiton Chase entrance

2026: the Street library was installed beside the food share shelves.

Notable trees

Most of the fruit trees in the 'ribbon orchard' were planted by David Stephen in early days of the garden.

The pomegranate was planted by Elise Archer, MHA in 2020 during our Seeds of Hope Festival. The plumcot was planted by Andrew Wilkie MHR when he visited in 2021. The walnut tree in the park outside the garden was planted by Tarooma Primary School children in 2021. They had raised money in a 'Tree Dress Day' at school, and asked TNG to plant a walnut tree. As it would grow too big within the garden, we planted it in the park.



Our place in the community

Our garden is situated in Taroona Park and surrounded by other community facilities; skate park, Scout Hall, Tennis Club, Bowls and Community Club, Community Hall and Cottage, Volunteer Fire Brigade and off-leash dog park. We do not lock the gates and visitors are very welcome to enter and enjoy the garden. We respectfully ask visitors not to pick produce, and to keep dogs on a leash.



Bio security monitoring

Bio security Tasmania has installed Fruit Fly traps on some of our fruit trees. These are 'sentinel' traps and they are regularly monitored by Bio security staff. Please do not disturb the traps.

Events

From time-to-time TNG holds community events. In the past we have invited both members and the community to workshops about gardening and food. We usually have one fundraising event each year with plant sales, a BBQ and cakes and drinks, and invite the whole community.



In 2026 TNG held the very successful Taroona Garden Trail, with three hundred tickets sold. This was followed by our garden festival with plant and food sales.

The Taroona crop swap has been held in the garden on the first Saturday of each month since 2022. See the Taroona Crop Swap Facebook page for details.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/677725793936553>