



Whakatāne District Community Gardens Guidelines

*Ngā aratohu mō ngā māra hapori ā-rohe
o Whakatāne*

whakatane.govt.nz



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Introduction *Kupu arataki*

These guidelines set out roles, responsibilities and processes to support new and existing community gardens on Whakatāne District Council (Council) Land.

Purpose

1. To support new and existing community gardens in Whakatāne.
2. To acknowledge the many benefits community gardens provide our district.
3. To clarify roles, responsibilities and processes for creating and running community gardens on Council land.

What is a community garden?

He aha he māra hapori?

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. The garden is 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.

Allotment	A collectively managed group of individual garden plots where a person can care for and harvest their own plots as they see fit.
Community garden	A garden managed by a group of people such as a trust.
Community orchard	Fruit trees managed by a group of people such as a trust.
Institutional edible gardens	A garden facilitated or cared for by a business or organisation.
Food forest	Permaculture principles applied in an orchard / woodland setting.
Mahinga kai sites	Traditional Māori gathering sites for food and materials like flax for weaving.
School gardens	Edible gardens managed by students, teachers and the school community.

Benefits of community gardens

Ngā hua o ngā māra hapori

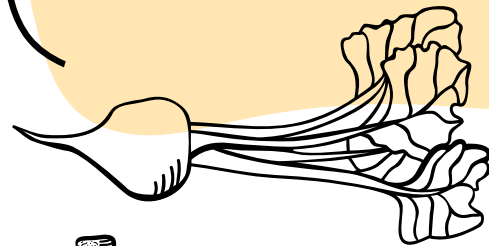
Stewardship of public spaces

Community gardens maximise community value and enjoyment of public spaces, and help to manage antisocial behaviour.



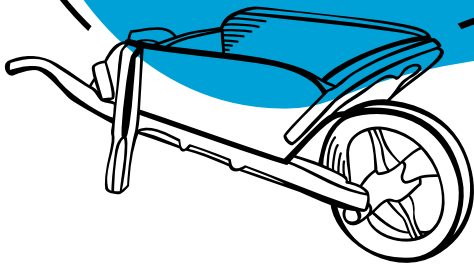
Health and wellbeing

Experiences enjoyed in community gardens lead to positive mental and physical health. The food produced is healthy and fresh for whānau.



Community wellbeing

Enjoying, growing and sharing food brings neighbours and communities together. Knowledge of how to grow and harvest food establishes lifelong learning.



Thriving food system

Localised food production and distribution systems help to build resilience and are more environmentally sustainable than commercial systems.



Growing biodiversity and culture

Our natural and cultural heritage can be celebrated through the planting of cultural, native, edible and medicinal plant varieties that not only can be used for communities, but also for improving the environment around us.





How to setup and maintain a successful community garden on Council land

Me pēhea te whakatū me te tiaki i he māra hapori angitu i te whenua o te Kaunihera

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 Council
8. Sign a licence to occupy, lease or memorandum of understanding to use Council land

While the above checklist may look daunting, Council are here to help facilitate the process of setting up and maintaining a successful community garden.

1. Create your management group *Whakaritea tō rōpū whakahaere*

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 three or more people to set things in motion. This is an opportunity to socialise and enjoy great, healthy 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 *Whakaritea tō matakitenga, tō aronga, me ngā aratohu mahi o te māra*

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

- What type and size 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, 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 *Whakawhanaketia te tautoko o te hapori*

For your garden to be successful, 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 community 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, who could mentor and support you through the process.

4. Choose a suitable location *Kōwhiria he wāhi pai*

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

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** – consider if the land could be polluted or if the soil is contaminated. Think about the former use of land, i.e 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? Consider if the site is convenient and well connected for people to walk, cycle, or use public transport to and from. Also consider how maintenance vehicles will enter the site.
- **Services** – services such as water are essential. Toilets, buildings for meetings and storage are 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** – consider if the site complements existing or surrounding uses and if issues such as noise, smells, fruit drop or traffic can be managed.
- **Visible** – is it reasonably open to the street, neighbourhood or surrounding homes. Good visibility can enhance personal safety and reduce vandalism.
- **Equity** – does the location give preference to high need communities?
- **Clear of infrastructure** – ensure the site will not disrupt underground pipes, wires, footpaths, sports or play equipment and other structures.



Growing needs:

- **Water** – ensure an adequate supply of water is readily available or can be accessed.
- **Soil quality** – ensure the soil supports year-round productive uses, isn't flood prone, water logged, too sandy or rocky.
- **Sunlight** – position your garden so it is not shaded from buildings or in competition with large trees. The garden will need at least six hours of direct sunlight during summer months.
- **Space** – have adequate space available for the garden, sheds and composting etc, but also potential for future expansion.
- **Longevity** – ensure this is reasonable certainty about 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

Tirohia ngā rauemi, ngā mahere pūtea me ngā kōwhiringa pūtea

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 or for the wages of garden supervisors.



6. Create or identify a host legal entity for your management group

Hangaia he rōpū ture mō tō rōpū whakahaere

A community garden must have an established and legally formed management group for the Council to lease or licence the land to. A new community garden can either find an existing host organisation or create their own charitable trust.

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.
- c) Comply with requirements of the licence-to-occupy. This includes 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 guidelines.
- 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, supervisor wages, 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 or other related skills.
- i) Ensure the site is returned to an agreed condition should the garden be disestablished or the lease terminated.

7. Prepare a written proposal to Council

Whakaritea he tono ki te Kaunihera

Prior to a new community garden being established, the management group must submit a written proposal to Council. Council will assess proposals on a case-by-case basis. A licence to occupy, lease or memorandum of understanding to use Council land will need to be signed by your management group and the Council.

Your proposals will be assessed based on the following matters:

Design / Te whakaahuatanga

- 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.

Community outcomes / Ngā hua hapori

- 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 / Te Whakahaerenga

- Proposed legal and organisational structure of management group.
- Objectives of the management group and information to demonstrate that the group is viable.
- Identification of a liaison person for the Council.
- Budget, sources of funding and timeline for start-up and maintenance.
- How the proposal fits with Council policies, strategies or management plans for the Council land (this Information available on request).
- Hours of operation.
- A management plan covering:
 - » Proposed gardening techniques.
 - » Mowing and maintenance Schedule.
 - » 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 Council can help you create or maintain a community garden

Me pēhea te Kaunihera e āwhina i a koe ki te whakatū me te tiaki i he māra hapori

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, 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:

1. Identify Council land suitable for community gardens.
2. Provide Community Board funding of community gardens within their ward, at their discretion.
3. Provide licences to occupy or leases for Council land used by community gardens.
4. Potentially waive fees related to consent and approval processes.
5. Support the planting of edible trees and shrubs in suitable parks or gardens.
6. Provide support for groups undergoing the process of applying to the Council for creating a new community garden.
7. Promote and raise awareness about community gardening via the Council website and through the Council's networks and media channels.



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Kia Whakatāne au i ahau

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