

Sunnybank Uniting Community Garden **Operations Manual**

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Preamble

Sunnybank Uniting Church has created a community garden, on land between the car park and Carramar and adjacent to the Men’s Shed, as an activity of the Church. A Management Team, responsible to the Church Council, oversees the day-to-day operations of our Garden.

This document provides the management plan for the operation of the garden.

Why a Community Garden?

An increasing amount of research supports what community gardeners have long known – that community gardens are a great way to grow fresh food, foster good health, green the urban environments, support lifelong learning, and cultivate vibrant communities. In addition to the obvious benefits of production of fresh nutritious food, community gardens provide opportunity for recreation and exercise, from a simple stroll through the garden to the day to day work of maintaining it – exercise carried out in convivial company, with a real sense of satisfaction and purpose.

Type of Garden

A shared organic garden where the participants share the gardening and the harvest. The garden contains areas for vegetables, herbs, flowers, fruit and nut trees and berry fruit shrubs. No animals are kept in the garden other than worm farming and provision of habitat for native bees.

Garden design principles.

Development within the garden must be done with accessibility in mind. This includes raised beds; narrow enough to reach the centre without straining and paths wide enough for wheelchairs and prams. The garden development, once complete, will facilitate social interaction with areas for eating, chatting or just relaxing in pleasant surroundings.

What structures will be built in the garden?

Construction in place or planned includes a lockable shed for storing tools, seeds, etc., shade houses for plant propagation, rainwater tanks collecting water from the Men's Shed roof to irrigate the garden and a pergola for shelter from the sun and rain, workshops and a place for fellowship.

How does the garden support bio-diversity and sustainability?

Our garden reuses and recycles organic material through composting, worm farms, mulching and the use of recycled materials (e.g. railway sleepers for the construction of raised garden beds). Rainwater tanks, efficient irrigation practices and mulching conserve water.

Noise, odour and vermin control?

It is not anticipated that significant noise will be generated. The garden will only ever operate during daylight hours between Monday and Saturday.

Good composting practices, the careful use of organic fertilizers and good waste management will prevent undesirable odours.

In a well managed garden vermin, such as rats, will not be a problem but should any be encountered traps will be set in safe locations.

Area beautification.

Native shrubs, particularly ones indigenous to this area, have been planted in a strip along the western boundary of the garden to improve the attractiveness of the site from Hillcrest Street. This section of the Garden will remain a 'native plant only' area, designed to attract birds and butterflies.

Garden security?

Community gardens do encounter issues with security, both theft of plants or produce and vandalism. Residents of independent living units at Carramar have a good view of the garden and have been invited to alert garden management to any unusual activity. Members are to report any security matters to the Management Team.

Health and safety.

A site safety audit is conducted annually. Potential hazards are identified. The risks posed by those hazards, appropriate control measures and an action plan to remove them will be recorded.

The following, with particular reference to the safety of children and the elderly, are to be considered:

- poisonous or potentially allergenic plants
- insect and reptile bites
- trip hazards
- sharp or dangerous edges
- manual handling and heavy loads including the use of wheelbarrows
- use of sharp or dangerous tools
- handling of soils, compost, mulches and manures
- storage and use of poisons and pesticides.

Members are encouraged to use personal protection such as sunscreen, hats and gloves. A first-aid kit that includes a logbook for recording accidents and incidents is available in the Men's Shed.

Member's access.

Access to the Garden is from the Sunnybank Uniting Church car park in which parking is available. (Please Note: there will be occasions where this parking may have to be restricted when there are major Church activities such as large funerals.)

For those using public transport Translink bus stops on Hellowell Road and on Pinelands Road are within 200m of the garden.

As an activity of the Uniting Church our members have access to the Church building for hot water for tea & coffee and use of the toilets. Others use of the building must be respected.

How is the garden funded?

Sources of funding for our garden include:

- Membership fees
- Grants (A variety of grants are available from Council, Government and other bodies.)
- Sale of excess garden production and products produced from the garden (e.g. jams).

Community Partnerships.

Our garden strives to build collaborative and mutually beneficial partnerships with neighbors, local business (e.g. hardware stores and fruit shops), schools and Brisbane City Council through programs such as GOLD and GOLD n KIDS

Insurance

As an approved activity of the Sunnybank Uniting Church, the Church provides insurance cover, including public liability, for members of the garden.

Management structure?

The Management Team is responsible to the Sunnybank Uniting Church Council. This Team comprises:

- Two representatives of Sunnybank Uniting Church appointed by the Church Council.
- Two representatives of Sunnybank District Community Men's Shed Inc., appointed by the SDCMS Board.
- Three garden members elected annually by members.

The Management Team elects, from its members, an executive comprising the Team Leader, Secretary and Treasurer. The Team may discern a requirement for other roles from time to time and may appoint as appropriate.

Financial Management

As an activity of Sunnybank Uniting Church our garden does not operate a separate bank account but rather a separate fund within the accounts of the Church. The Garden Treasurer is responsible for presenting a quarterly financial report to the Team Meeting. This is obtained from the Church Treasurer. Day to day financial operation is based on three forms:

- A deposit slip that must accompany all moneys delivered to the Church Office for banking.
- A 'request for payment' form, delivered to the Church Office with a tax invoice, to arrange payment of the invoice or reimbursement.
- A petty cash re-imburement form to request reimbursement of small amounts from the petty cash float held by the Garden Treasurer.

Membership?

Membership of our garden is open to all regardless of age, gender, culture or religious beliefs. The membership fee is currently \$25 per person per calendar year, due each January. For members joining after 30 June the fee for that year is currently \$13. This will be reviewed at the beginning of each year. [Refer Appendix A for Membership Application.]

A Membership Register is kept with names and contact details plus a summary of the member's skills relevant to the garden.

All new members receive a Member's Code of Conduct [Refer Appendix B], a copy of this Garden Operations Manual and are to complete a short orientation process. This includes:

- Garden policies and procedures.
- Member's rights and responsibilities.
- Occupational health and safety.
- Skills assessment, training opportunities and mentoring as required.

Financial Members of The Sunnybank District Community Men's Shed Inc., are automatically honorary members of the Sunnybank Uniting Community Garden.

Training will be provided?

A wide range of gardening experience and expertise exists within the membership. These skills, and those brought by new members, are used to educate those new to sustainable gardening. The garden also offers, from time to time, workshops on compost making, worm farming, plant propagation, etc., to members, the public and to school age children.

Drug and alcohol policy.

No drugs or alcohol are allowed on the property and smoking within the bounds of the garden is not permitted.

Conflict Resolution.

Should conflict arise between members, the Management Team will engage a process of respectful conversation with those involved. Should this fail to resolve the issue, mediation, either internal or external, will be arranged. The Management Team, as a last resort, can revoke membership.

Promotion of our garden.

A range of methods are used to promote the garden to raise community awareness and encourage membership. These include:

- Members are encouraged to invite family and friends to join us.
- Articles in the newsletters of the Church and the Men's Shed and submission of articles to public media outlets.
- The production of our own newsletter for distribution to members and other supporters.
- A web presence, initially on the web site of Sunnybank Uniting Church.
<http://sunnybankuc.org.au/community-garden/>
- Our Garden is listed at the web site, www.communitygarden.org.au.

Internal Communication.

Our newsletter, web page and email are used to communicate Garden news to members. The notice board in the office provides information on coming Garden activities and tasks lists.

Appendix A

Sunnybank Uniting Garden - Registration Form

Name: _____ Gender: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Mobile phone: _____

Email address: _____

Date of birth: ___/___/___

Health or physical information relevant to gardening activities?

In case of emergency, please notify: _____

Relationship: _____ Phone: _____

What activities would you like to be involved with the garden?

[Tick as many as you like.]

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening | <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitating/leading workshops |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plant Nursery | <input type="checkbox"/> Promotion/publicity/media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Composting/worm farming | <input type="checkbox"/> Stalls/displays at events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working with School groups
(Do you have a Blue Card? Y or N) | <input type="checkbox"/> Organising events |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Research |

What would you like to gain from volunteering at the garden?

What skills, knowledge, and experience will you bring to the garden?

Membership is required if you wish to participate in the activities of the garden. Membership costs is \$25 per year or \$13 for those joining after 30 June. For more information visit our website at www.sunnybankuc.org.au.

I have read and agree to comply with the Code of Conduct.

Signed _____ Today's Date ___/___/___

The Garden is, at present, open from 8:30am to midday on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Appendix B

Our Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct is important in providing some common principles for all members to operate under. New members, by submitting an application for membership, acknowledge and agree to the Code.

- The garden is a shared Church community space. I will respect the rights and opportunities of all other users of the space.
- Gardening is carried out communally and no member may assume sole use of any section of the garden, nor are individual plots or areas to be designated to any group member/s.
- Members are not to make key gardening decisions on their own but should run major ideas and plans by the Management Team and other group members.
- Members are to dispose of waste appropriately to help keep the garden clean.
- No smoking, drinking or swearing in our garden
- Produce is to be shared among the members, using the 'pick some, leave some' method, and with people in need in the wider community.
- The only conflict in our garden should be with weeds and pests, which will be attacked biologically rather than chemically.
- If a dispute does arise, we will settle it through calm discussion and goodwill according to the grievance procedures of Sunnybank Uniting Garden. If the issue remains unresolved, we will accept the decision of the Management Team.
- I will always be aware of the safety of others and myself.
- I understand that participation is at my own risk. Sunnybank Uniting Church and the Management Team are not liable for any injury to me or to my invited family and friends or for the loss of any of our possessions.