



Murramarang Community Garden

Growing Food Together

A member's guide to the aims, policies and practices of our community garden

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1. Background

1.1 Purpose of this guide

The purpose of this members' guide is to outline the aims, broad policies and practices of the Murramarang Community Garden (MCG). It is intended to serve as a general orientation and overview for members, particularly new ones.

It has been developed with reference to the formal documentation which detail how the MCG operates. These documents are all available on the [MCG website](#) and include:

- MCG Constitution and Plan of Management
- Australian National University License Agreement
- Australian National University Site Guidelines.
- Work Health and Safety Plan

To gain a more detailed sense of how the garden operates, there is no better way to learn than by participating in communal activities.

1.2 Aims of the MCG

The MCG aims to:

- Provide opportunities for the local community to grow and share healthy produce from individual plots, communal planting beds and the orchard.
- Share gardening knowledge and skills.
- Provide a shared space for individuals and diverse groups to regularly meet, relax and enjoy gardening together in an outdoor setting.
- Use biological and sustainable gardening methods that are organic, low input, productive and water-wise.

2. MCG Management

The MCG has a Management Committee that is appointed by the MCG Members on an annual basis. Its task is to run the MCG, and to consult and collaborate with the Australian National University (ANU), the Community and other bodies as necessary.

Apart from the standard office bearers (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer), the MCG Management Committee each year appoints one or more Garden Managers and an Infrastructure Manager.

More information about the MCG's management structure can be found in the *MCG Constitution and Plan of Management*. All members are encouraged to read these documents. Members should also read the *Site Guidelines* and the *Work Health and Safety (WHS) Plan*. All documents are available on the website.

2.1 Finances

The upkeep and development of the garden infrastructure requires resources that mainly come from:

- Annual Membership Fees.
- Annual Plot Rental.
- Produce sales at markets and to restaurants.
- Grants for funding of identified projects.

2.2 Australian National University (ANU) Relationship

The MCG is a tenant on the ANU Kioloa Campus property. Its tenure on the site is formalized through a License Agreement and Site Guidelines. While the MCG seeks to operate as independently as possible, it is sometimes subject to specific ANU directives and therefore needs to inform the ANU about any matters out of the ordinary at the MCG that may not be covered by the licence or guidelines. Contact between the MCG and ANU is usually through the MCG President and the ANU Site Manager.

The ANU Site Guidelines sets out the parameters of MCG's use of the garden site. Two important rules set out in this document are:

- The MCG site can only be accessed between 8am and 7:30pm, or sunset (whichever occurs earlier); and
- Pets are not allowed anywhere on the ANU property.

There are many additional rules in the Guidelines document and all members are encouraged to read it. It's not a long document.



Aerial view of the Marramarang Community Garden in the late afternoon, looking north.

3. Membership and Participation

MCG members come to the garden with different backgrounds, levels of gardening experience, availability and ambitions, all of which make for a vibrant gardening community. Some members participate extensively in developing and maintaining communal areas, while others are mainly interested in tending to their own plots. It is expected that everyone regularly participates in some communal activities, such as working bees, fund raising events and other activities planned to develop and maintain the garden. There are always jobs to be done and participating in communal activities is a great way to meet your fellow gardeners, pick up some gardening tips and learn more about how the MCG runs throughout the year.

Any person gardening at the MCG must be a financial member, which is an insurance related requirement. Members may bring visitors to the garden, although they may not participate in gardening activities. Children who are accompanied by an adult member may participate in suitable activities while supervised.

Independence Living Ulladulla is an NDIS supported group living together at Davenport Cottage, Ulladulla who visit the garden twice a week to work on their three plots. The clients are intellectually disabled adults who are welcomed to the garden by members who assist them with planting, maintaining, and harvesting their crops.

3.1 Communication with members

Members are kept informed about what goes on at the garden through weekly emails from the Secretary. These emails contain important news and instructions, as well as information about what needs to be done each week at the garden. Contact details for all office bearers are available on the MCG website.

The website also has a wealth of information about the garden history, maintenance and events.

3.2 Saturday working bee

Saturday working bees are an MCG institution. They begin at 10am and finish about 12 noon. While some participants come earlier and others stay later, they usually finish with a cup of tea or coffee in the 'tea shed'.

The focus of working bees is the communal growing areas, although participants usually spend some time looking after their own plots while at the garden. There is no better way to develop a practical sense of how the MCG operates than to participate in working bees. This is where most

decisions are made about what will be grown where and when. Produce grown in the communal area is often harvested and distributed at the working bees.

3.3 Distribution of communal produce

The distribution of produce from the communal growing beds and orchard is managed by the Garden Managers, but also involves an honesty component. The general principle guiding access to produce is that members who do not actively contribute to communal areas should limit themselves to harvest from their own rented plot(s).

Some crops, such as garlic, are sometimes grown specifically as cash crops for sale. These crops are generally not available for harvest by members but may be purchased when made available by garden managers.

3.4 Suggestions

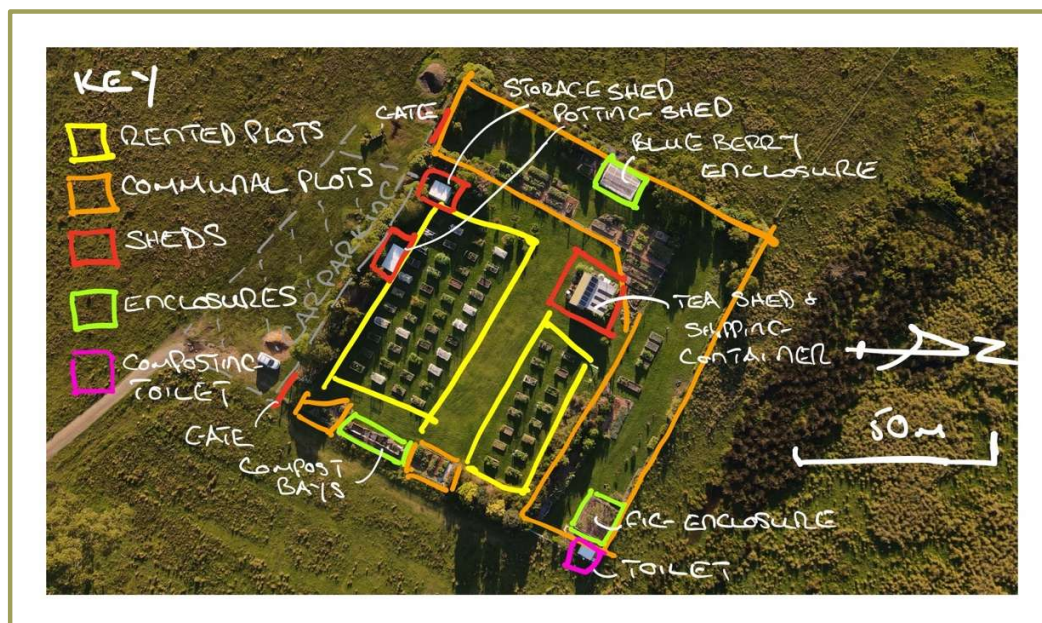
The Garden Managers and the Management Committee always welcomes suggestions. Please remember that the MCG is a collective of volunteers, so any suggestions usually need to be accompanied by an offer to help implement them. Similarly, there is no point complaining about something without at the same time volunteering suggestions and help on doing it better.



4. Garden infrastructure

The MCG site includes a range of infrastructure that needs to be maintained and sometimes developed further. The Infrastructure Manager maintains a register of repairs and development projects. Expenses and budgets are approved by the Management Committee. The following are main components of the garden infrastructure:

- Individual rented plots located in the inner area of the garden.
- Communal growing beds, mainly located in the outer area of the garden
- Potting shed, which is mainly used as storage of gardening equipment
- Storage shed (often referred to as 'Sandra's shed'), containing equipment, communal garden consumables and some herbicides. This shed has a combination lock with the same code as the main gate.
- Steel shipping container containing garden maintenance machinery. This shed is locked, and keys are only available to those with specific maintenance tasks.
- 'Tea shed', which is a lean-to off the side of the steel container.
- Covered Blueberry enclosure
- Covered Fig enclosure
- Compost bays



4.1 Equipment

MCG equipment falls into two main categories:

1. Hand tools and equipment that can be used by all members. This includes, hoses, spades, shovels, rakes etc and wheelbarrows
2. Power tools that are used only by members who have had an orientation on these. This includes, mowers, line trimmers, chain saw and hedge trimmer. Almost all MCG power tools are electric and charged by the solar panels on the 'tea shed' roof and battery storage, although a petrol mower and line trimmer are kept as back-up.

The MCG also has a trailer for transporting bulk materials.

4.2 Individual rented plots

MCG Members may rent an individual growing plot. Each member may rent one plot, or two plots per household. Plot rental includes a raised structure 1.2m by 2.4m, soil for top-up and compost (to the extent available). All other inputs for individual rented plots are the responsibility of plot renters. All individual growing plots are located in the inner garden area and are numbered from 1 to 60.

4.3 Communal growing beds

The communal growing beds are mainly located in the outer garden area and are marked by letters. A map of all communal and individual growing plots/ beds is available on the whiteboard in the tea shed.

The main needs for managing the communal growing beds are appropriate crop rotation and supply of crops at the right times to meet the requirements of members and market sales. This is mainly planned by the Garden Managers.

Vegetables are either planted as seed, or seedlings raised by members at home. All members are encouraged to raise seedlings for planting in communal growing beds. Talk with the Garden Managers, suggestions from members are always welcome.

4.4 Composting

Compost bays and their rotation are managed by key members who volunteer to do it. Signs on individual compost bays shows what goes in which bays, and which bays are 'active' and which are 'dormant'. Ready compost is available for all members to use while it lasts.

In addition to compost bays, there are worm farms along the side of the shipping container.

4.5 Water

Water is supplied from a dam up the hill to the west of the garden and is usually plentiful. There is one line supplying the inner area and another supplying the outer area. These have separate main valves that must always be turned off when the last person leaves. In times of drought ANU dam water is used sparingly, with only handheld hoses used to irrigate crops.

The dam water is non-potable. Rainwater is available from the small tank in the 'tea shed' and from the tank adjacent to the toilet although water quality cannot be guaranteed.

4.6 Pest Control

Pest control is usually done by one or a small number of designated people. Individual members may be asked to participate in specific pest control initiatives, such as fruit fly baiting. The more specialist pest control tasks involve the control of:

- Fig Beetle, which removes the leaves of the fig tree.
- Rats.
- Bowerbirds and Ducks.

4.7 Weed Control

The major weeds in need of control are Kikuyu, Camelina and runaways, such as mint and passionfruit. Regular mowing of grass areas, heavy mulching of walkways and around trees and poisoning of edge areas generally keep these at bay. Individual Plot Renters also need to keep their plots weeded, with mint being a common problem.

As with pest control, weed control with poisons is usually done by one or a small number of designated people. If you are unsure on what's a weed or not, and most importantly what to do with it, it's always good to ask one of the Garden Managers or a fellow gardener.

4.8 Windbreaks

The MCG is protected by windbreaks on almost all sides. From time to time, these need pruning and supplementary planting to replace unsuitable and damaged trees and bushes. Invasive weeds also need to be kept out.

4.9 Site Security

Theft has occasionally occurred at the MCG, involving both small and large items. The main security measures in place are for members to always lock the entry gate (on Murramarang

Road) when last to leave. The sheds containing more valuable equipment are locked with padlocks.

4.10 Toilet

A composting toilet is available in the north-eastern corner of the garden. Please don't throw anything other than toilet paper and the sawdust provided into it and keep the lid closed when not in use.

4.11 Access and parking

Access to the garden is via the eastern most gate adjacent to Murramarang Road. Never use the main gate (facing west) into the ANU property. Always close the gate and lock it if you are the last to leave.

A generous parking area is available just outside the south-eastern end of the garden site. Do not drive into the garden unless unloading/ loading heavy materials or tools. After heavy rain, the site often becomes water-logged, when driving on the grass creates deep ruts.