

# ALTONA COMMUNITY GARDENS INC RULES AND GUIDELINES



The rules and guidelines which are outlined below must be followed by all individual gardeners, community groups and visitors.

**Altona Community Gardens Inc.** Our aim is to establish and maintain a community garden, take advantage of open spaces to grow fruit and vegetables and provide access to nutritionally rich foods grown using organic methods and sustainable practices. We do this whilst enjoying the added opportunities for physical and social activities.

To help us do this we share and grow our knowledge, we demonstrate support and respect for each other and create a safe, fun environment.

## Vows for Plot holders and Friends of ACG

- I vow to always respect my plot neighbours and other garden users and never interfere with their rights and opportunities.
- The only conflict initiated by me will be with weeds and pests, which I will attack with natural means rather than chemical.
- If a disagreement does arise, I pledge to settle it through calm discussion and goodwill according to the grievance procedures of ACG. If the issue remains unresolved, I will accept the decision of the ACG Committee.
- I recognise that my involvement in the ACG and the opportunity to use my plot is a privilege, not a right, and as such I must use it or lose it. Plot inactivity of more than 3 months will result in the ACG Committee reassigning the plot.
- I understand that if I do not pay my plot fees (as set by the Committee) on time I will forfeit the use of my plot.
- I understand my participation at ACG is at my own risk. Hobsons Bay City Council, and members of the ACG Committee, are not liable for any injury to me, or to my invited family and friends, nor for the loss of any of my possessions.
- I will contribute to at least three working bees each year for general site

maintenance of communal areas and I happily agree to share what I can with the garden community. If I am unable to contribute to working bees, I will participate in at least three fundraising activities.

- I abide by the OH&S guidelines of the ACG and vow to take responsibility for my own health and safety by working within my own limitations.
- I will work towards achieving a Zero Waste ACG by reducing, reusing and recycling at every opportunity.
- I appreciate that unsupervised children will be given an espresso and a puppy.
- I have read, appreciated and will abide by the spirit of the ACG Guidelines, with the best of intentions for the greater good.

# RULES AND GUIDELINES

## 1. Opening hours and noise restrictions

### Opening hours

The main gate to the garden is not locked and is therefore open 24/7.

**Noise restrictions** No loud noise before 9am and after 8pm. Keep the noise within the garden at a level that does not disturb neighbours or other gardeners. Be respectful of neighbours at all times.

Please note that the closest public toilet facilities are located at Harrington Square Maidstone Street.

## 2. Security and access

The main gate to the garden is unlocked and accessible to all. The gates used for delivery purposes are kept locked unless a Committee member is present.

**Combination padlock for tap.** All individual and community plot holders will be provided with the combination padlock code to the water tap at the time of induction. Members are not to give the code to anyone else.

The Garden storage container is only open during events such as working bees. Driving into the garden area is restricted to delivery of goods. Users of the garden need to be mindful of parking and should not obstruct driveways or footpaths. Only park in designated areas.

There is designated bike parking at the entrance to the garden.

### 3. Membership and plot

#### Fees Types of membership:

- **'Friend of the Garden' Annual Membership** A necessary requirement before becoming a plot holder. An annual membership fee is required (refer to application form). This membership allows access to the communal plots after an induction has been completed at the garden.
- **Individual plot holder** In addition to annual membership, an annual fee is required for a dedicated garden plot (refer to 'New Membership' form and 'Annual Membership Renewal' form with schedule of fees).
- **Community group plot holder** (e.g. school, local organisation, business etc). An annual fee is required for a dedicated garden plot in addition to annual membership (refer to 'New Membership' form and 'Annual Membership Renewal' form with schedule of fees).

Other types of Memberships e.g. life membership may be approved from time to time by the Committee.

**Annual membership** Membership and plot registration begins when the membership form and fees are received. Annual Membership Renewal forms and full fees are due 30 November each year.

Should a plot holder experience difficulty paying fees, please contact a committee member to discuss options, including alternative arrangements to cash payments.

All funds raised will be used for garden costs such as insurance, infrastructure, supplies, maintenance and social gatherings for the gardeners as voted and approved by the ACG Committee.

**4. Applying for a plot** People wishing to apply for a garden plot must complete and sign an application form. They must read and agree to the Altona Community Gardens Rules and Guidelines.

- One plot per household.
- Community groups and organisations will be allocated a maximum of two plots or a larger plot if available.

If no plots are available at the time of applying, the applicant's name will go on a waiting

list and they will be notified when a plot becomes available.

**Initial Plot Allocation** The allocation of garden allotments is determined by the ACG Committee which will take into account the following considerations:

- Applicants to fulfil the basic selection criteria.
- If no plots are available, applications are to go on the waiting list in order of application. (First come, first served).

### **Basic Selection Criteria**

- Residents who live or work in Hobsons Bay City Council area.
- Commitment to attend working bees/fundraising activities.
- Commitment to abide by garden rules.

### **Compulsory requirements to maintain plot ownership:**

- The applicant must be a financial member of the Community Garden at all times.
- The applicant must pay their allotment fee every year and in advance. The allotment fee will be reviewed by the ACG Committee every year.
- The applicant must agree to uphold the Community Garden code of conduct (vows) at all times.
- The applicant must actively participate in furthering the purpose and objectives of the Community Garden. This could include but is not limited to: offering skills; helping at working bees; volunteering in communal areas; getting involved in fundraising; nominating to become a member of the management committee or subcommittees when opportunities arise.
- The applicant must show activity in the garden plot within 14 days of signing or allocation. If no activity in the plot occurs for longer than a 3 month period at any stage the ACG Committee will contact the owner to review ownership.
- Attend at least three (3) working bees/fundraising events each year.

**Managing the waiting list** The next available plot will be allocated by the Committee to

the member who has been on the waiting list the longest, and who meets the eligibility requirements.

**Allotment Renewal** A member with an existing allotment will be eligible to renew their application for the same plot, or an alternative plot, for a further year, provided they continue to comply with these guidelines and they continue to be actively involved in the garden.

**5. Plots Individual plots** Plots allocated to individuals. Plots must be cultivated throughout the year, including the winter months. Gardeners are to minimise pests and weeds in their plot and surrounding paths to reduce spread to the rest of the garden.

**Communal plots inside the garden fence** The garden has communal plots for members to grow fruit, vegetables, herbs and flowers. The harvest will be shared amongst members who have tended the plots and other communal areas.

### **Building materials:**

- **Plot construction** No individual is to construct their own plot. Plots will be provided by the Committee.
- **Plot boundary fences** No individual is to build a boundary fence.
- **Trellises and other structures** Trellises and other structures solely used for support of produce are permitted. This should be done respecting other gardener's solar access and in consultation with neighbouring plot holders where possible.
- **Permanent structures** Permanent structures must not be built on garden plots or on vacant areas of the Community Garden. Gardeners cannot use the Community Garden to store building or other materials.

### **Plantings:**

- **Climbing plants** Gardeners are to use a thoughtful approach to planting so as to not overshadow another plot. Gardeners can use stakes for climbing plants, such as tomatoes and beans. Gardeners are not to store stakes and other gardening equipment at the garden.
- **Large shrubs and trees** Gardeners wishing to grow large shrubs or trees must discuss with the Committee. Plant selection and location is to be approved by the

Committee.

**6. Forfeiture of Garden Plots Change in circumstance** If a gardener no longer wishes to maintain their plot, is unable to tend a plot, temporarily leaves the garden for two months or more due to illness, travel, work or emergency, they must discuss their situation with the Committee.

**Plots are not transferable** Plots are allocated to the person or persons named in the community garden form and are not transferable to other people. Vacated plots will be allocated according to the rules.

**Inactive plot** If a gardener's plot appears to be inactive for three months or more, they will be contacted asking them if they wish to continue with the use of their allotment. If a member fails to respond within one month, they will be deemed to have surrendered their allotment and it will be reallocated by the Committee. If the member does respond and indicates that they wish to give up their allotment, it will be reallocated by the Committee.

**Outstanding fees** If membership and plot fees remain outstanding longer than 30 days from the due date, the member will be advised in writing and given 14 days to pay or make other arrangements with the Committee. If no payment or other arrangement is made within the 14 days, the Committee may advise the member that the plot has been forfeited and will be reallocated to a person on the waiting list.

**Refunds** If a plot is forfeited, the gardener is not entitled to a refund of their allotment or membership fee.

**7. Health & Safety** Participation at the garden is at the gardener's own risk. Altona Community Gardens is not liable for an injury to the gardener, invited friends, or for the loss of any gardener's possessions. Members are expected to comply at all times with the ACG Health and Safety Policy Manual. Available on [www.altonacg.org](http://www.altonacg.org)

**8. Maintaining Common Areas of the Garden** All members are to contribute to a minimum of three (3) Working Bees/Fundraising in the garden per annum. There are many easy ways of contributing to the communal nature of the garden. The Committee will inform gardeners of the Working Bee/Fundraising Activity dates on the notice board or by email.

All gardeners are to take responsibility for the maintenance, care and development of communal garden beds and public areas in the Community Garden throughout the year.

All gardeners are to maintain the pathways around their plot, keeping it weed-free and ensuring there is no rubbish or items causing obstruction or trip hazards.

All plant materials must be disposed of in designated composting areas; refer to composting guidelines displayed next to compost bins. A green bin is available for weeds and waste with seeds. All other recycling and waste must be taken off site.

All gardeners must help keep composting systems in healthy condition so they do not attract vermin or produce unpleasant odours.

All gardeners must notify a Committee member if vandalism or theft occurs.

**9. Garden Tools** Gardeners should provide their own tools, e.g. hand trowels. Larger Community Garden tools will be kept securely stored in the secure storage shed. These tools are for communal use by all gardeners and are only to be used on site. Borrowed communal tools must be cleaned and returned to the storage area. No tools are to leave the site, please consider your fellow gardeners.

Garden hoses must remain on reels and are to be stored away securely after use. If any garden equipment is missing or damaged, gardeners should report this to the Committee.

**10. Garden Pest management** Organic principles are to be practised in the Community Garden. No toxic chemicals for pests, diseases or weeds are to be used in the Community Garden. Gardeners can use safe and environmentally friendly products as approved by the Committee. Companion planting and organic principles are encouraged to maximise beneficial critters and reduce the need for bought in products.

**11. Water management** Water restriction regulations must be complied with. Water usage should be minimised and water saving practices encouraged. Taps should



be turned off after use as trigger nozzles can burst and leak overnight as water pressure increases. The use of watering cans is encouraged. Notify the Committee of any water leaks in and around the garden. Gardeners are to ensure that any water leaving the garden via the drain or ground is not contaminated by sediment, fertiliser, manure or excessive organic matter that could pollute the surrounding environment.

**12. Waste Management** Take all your rubbish home. If you carry it in, you carry it out! No rubbish of any kind should be left at the site.

**13. Compost** Composting is encouraged with the use of garden greens, leaves, grass clippings, fruit and vegetable scraps from home. (Refer to composting guidelines displayed next to compost bins). Gardeners should break up any plant matter into small pieces, as this will speed up the composting process. Gardeners are to refer to compost signage of what materials are acceptable. No meat, dairy, eggs, pet waste, plastic bags, elastic bands, metal, wood, plastic, polystyrene or other material that does not readily decompose are to be used.

**14. Soil** Gardeners are responsible for enriching the soil in their plot. As nutrients are used after each growing season it is important that gardeners enrich their soil by adding compost, manures and mulch as approved by the Committee.

**15. General Conduct in the Garden** Gardeners and visitors should respect the garden as community space. Gardeners and visitors must not remove any produce, plants or equipment from another gardener's plot without permission. Children are welcome in the Community Garden and must be supervised by adults at all times. Dogs (with the exception of guide dogs), cats and other pets are not allowed into the Community Garden. Smoking is not allowed in the garden.

**16. Communication** If you have any questions, suggestions or complaints, please contact one of the Committee Members.

**Email** [altoncommunitygardens@gmail.com](mailto:altoncommunitygardens@gmail.com)

**Facebook** [www.facebook.com/altoncommunitygardens](http://www.facebook.com/altoncommunitygardens)

**Noticeboard** For garden related purposes

**Meeting minutes** Available on request

Members (including the Committee) of ACG should not use social media platforms (including ACG sites) on behalf of or representing the group. Individuals are free to use platforms privately as they wish. The same applies to requests such as signing of petitions.

**17. Dealing with problems or concerns** If gardeners have any concerns about the garden or about other gardeners they are strongly encouraged to contact a member of the Committee who will deal with such matters efficiently and in a fair and reasonable manner. If an incident occurs on site, members are to complete an 'incident report form' located in the shipping container. A separate document detailing conflict resolution processes will be distributed to plot holders.

**Decision making process** The decision making process, although led by the Committee, will aim to include all members on a consensus basis. If consensus cannot be reached by the group, the Committee will make a decision by majority (with a quorum 4) and members are expected to abide by these decisions.

## **18. Change in Circumstances**

**Members must advise the Committee**

**of:**

- Any change in their address, e-mail or telephone number.
- If they are no longer eligible to keep their plot.
- If they are unable to tend their plot for three months or more.

Your compliance with the above regulations will help everyone have an enjoyable and prosperous garden. Failure to comply with the above regulations may result in a loss of future garden privileges.