
The Erindale Community Garden

PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

Topics:

1. Vision
 - 1.1 Purpose of our community garden
 - 1.2 Objectives of our community garden
2. Management of site
 - 2.1 Managing waste on site - organic and non-organic waste
 - 2.2 Will our garden use organic gardening practices?
 - 2.3 Outline of our proposed organic gardening practices
 - 2.4 Water management
 - 2.5 Garden tools and storage
 - 2.6 Site safety
 - 2.7 Allocation of plots
 - 2.8 Management of shared areas
 - 2.9 Dealing with common objections to new community gardens
3. Management structure
 - 3.1 Roles in the community garden
 - 3.2 Code of conduct/gardeners agreement
 - 3.3 Decision making process
 - 3.4 Communication
4. Policies
 - 4.1 Access and acceptance
 - 4.2 Alcohol, smoking and drugs on site
5. Funding
 - 5.1 Fundraising activities
 - 5.2 Other
6. Contacts

Plan of management for ERINDALE WAYLEAVE COMMUNITY GARDEN

1. Vision

1.1 Purpose of our community garden

To be able to walk through a visually appealing parkland that has a beautiful arbour entrance that leads you through to healthy and aromatic garden beds flourishing with fresh vegetable, herbs and berries, flanked by an olive grove and exotic fruit trees, and beautiful ornamental plantings along the perimeters. You are able to take a seat in amongst the garden, perhaps with a nice glass of champagne in hand while observing the children riding their bicycles and scooters down the decomposed granite pathway wending its way from one end to the other and seeing other children playing on the playground equipment. A resident is showing some young children the worms that are at work in the worm farm whilst another parent with a young child is looking at the native bee hives observing them hard at work. Two more residents are tending to the three stage compost bins, whilst three brimmed hat residents are weeding the herb garden beds, and spraying white oil from the garden shed on the citrus trees. A young teenage girl is walking her dog through this dog friendly space, the King Charles Cavalier is drinking water from a fixed dog bowl located along the path. You have a feeling of being very safe and secure as you wander through in the evening as the strategically placed LED park lighting lights your way gently with the EUFY cameras casually watching on. Another diligent group are raising seedlings from the nursery for sale for the next fundraising effort, while another group are bundling the recycled bottles that have been collected from the community, also to purchase the next lot of potting mix and fertiliser.

1.2 Objectives of our community garden

The community garden will be established in incremental stages in order to spread the costs over a longer period, and to allow time to develop community interest and routines, allowing the proper care for the area to flourish. Each stage would coincide with the Body Corporate annual funding cycles due in August each year.

Stage 1

The easement will be cleared, levelled and scraped down to 20mm consistent with the natural fall and slope. Excess material will be removed from the site. Town water will be connected to the easement and an underground water reticulation system using 25mm poly water pipe and providing nine garden taps will be installed. A drainage system will be created using a French drain system preventing overflow to neighbouring blocks.

A pathway will be created using decomposed granite. Entry at the Wishart Road end, and exit through the arbour at the nursery end.

Birdies™ raised garden beds made of quality corrugated steel 900mm x 2100mm x 740mm will be purchased, assembled and installed. Initially eight garden beds will be set up. Beds will be filled with plant matter and good quality soil, and be planted with a variety of vegetables, herbs and flowers. Fruit and olive trees, as well as spreading vines such as watermelon, rockmelon and pumpkin will be planted in mound gardens. These will be arranged along the western boundary line and stepped off the boundary fence by 750mm.

A compost station will be built containing three compost bins. An area to leave recycling bottles and cans will be set up.

An arbour will be constructed at the southern entrance to the easement and will be planted with passionfruit vines.

Stage 2

Additional raised garden beds may be added to the community garden, if deemed necessary.

A garden shed will be purchased to house tools, equipment and chemicals.

A children's natural playground will be constructed including a worm farm, native bee hive, stepping stones marking the way through a herb and flower garden, junior potting bench. Seating for children and parents will be constructed. Edible and non toxic plants will be planted throughout the area. A bamboo teepee will be constructed that will serve as a garden structure for growing beans, peas or tomatoes, as well as a safe cubby house for children. The playground will have a small path winding through that will be suitable for scooters and trikes. A Kid's Gardening Club should be established, allowing the younger residents to feel a sense of belonging and ownership in the area. Children can be taught by volunteer residents how to grow plants from seed, help with planting, watering and cultivation. They should be shown how to feed kitchen scraps to the worm farm.

Stage Three

An enclosed off leash dog park will be created in a shady area, allowing interaction between owners and dogs in a secure environment. Some play components will be provided to develop skills such as agility, climbing, balance, jumping and crawling. A permanent water bowl will be set up, as well as a bin for composting any pet excrement.

Seating areas will be constructed allowing for residents to meet socially, or to sit and enjoy the surrounding area.

A covered barbecue area to be set up with a gas barbecue, table and seating.

Security camera and solar lighting will be installed.

2. Management of site

2.1 Managing waste on site - organic and non-organic waste

Organic Waste

All organic matter (except diseased plants and weeds) will be composted on site, either in the worm farm, or in compost bins. Waste that cannot be composed (or recycled) will be placed in Council rubbish bins.

Residents will be asked to bring their domestic kitchen waste for inclusion in either the worm farm, or compost bins. Children who live in the complex will be encouraged to bring suitable kitchen scraps from home to feed the worms when they come down to play in the area.

Worm Farm - Worms will eat up to 3-4kg of kitchen waste every week then turn it into worm castings (rich plant food) and worm tea (liquid fertiliser) that can be used to improve the health of the garden. Heat is the number one killer of worms, so the worm farm should be placed out of the sun, and preferably in full shade. It is possible to overfeed the worms, so as a general rule food may be added when about half of the previous feed has been eaten, and should be spread out in a layer of no more than 50mm thick. If the worms do not require more food, residents' food scraps can be placed in the compost bins. Cutting up food for the worms will allow the scraps to break down quickly before it starts to rot, which in turn will help avoid any unpleasant smells. Worms will eat most things that were once living, including:

- leftover vegetable scraps, fruit and vegetable peelings (see below for exceptions to this and these scraps may be placed in the separate compost bins);
- tea leaves/bags and coffee grounds;
- small amounts of leaves, weeds and grass cuttings;
- vacuum cleaner dust or hair clippings

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- torn up newspapers, egg cartons or soaked pizza cartons (these help keep the feed layer open and airy);

The following items should NOT be placed in the worm farm:

- dairy products including yoghurt, cheese and milk;
- crushed egg shells are better placed at the base of citrus trees as it is a time consuming process for crushing and drying them to a good level for the worms ;
- bread, rice, pasta, or processed foods (the worms do not like them, and they may go off, or attract pests);
- animal products, such as bones, meat, fish or shellfish;
- acidic foods, such as citrus, pineapple, garlic or onions;
- spicy foods, such as chillies, chives or curries;
- oils cannot be processed by the worms so may cause unpleasant smells;
- pet faeces can contain diseases, and it is better to not add them to the worm farm;
- chemicals should be avoided, so any material contaminated with toxic chemicals, such as sawdust from treated wood, or paper towels used with cleaning sprays, disinfectant wipes etc should to be fed to the worms.

Compost Bins - The following materials are safe for adding to the compost bins:

- grass clippings and tree leaves;
- vegetable food scraps including coffee grounds, and fruit and vegetable peels;
- black and white newspaper;
- printer paper;
- most disease free yard waste (ie if you are disposing of a diseased plant from your garden, placing it in a compost bin may transfer the disease to the community garden);
- cardboard;
- vegetarian animal manure, eg, from cows, horses, guinea pigs;
- wood shavings or sawdust.

The following items should NOT be placed in the compost bins:

- non vegetarian manure, ie, manure from animals that may eat meat, such as cats and dogs;
- noxious weeds;
- meat, fat and bones carry the risk for disease and attract undesirable animals;
- food scraps that contain animal products, ie, even small amounts of eggs, dairy or fat can attract rats or possums;
- colour newspaper or magazines (the wax coating can keep the paper from decomposing well).

Non Organic Waste

Non organic waste that is recyclable shall be placed in the appropriate Council bins. If something cannot be reused or recycled, it shall be removed from site using Council bins if the quantity is small. If the item is large, or if it is a toxic chemical, it shall be disposed of at the nearest Waste Transfer Station.

2.2 Will our garden use organic gardening practices?

Accepting and avoiding pests, diseases and weeds by good practice in cultivation methods, cultivar selection, garden hygiene and encouraging or introducing natural enemies will be the first line of control for the community garden. If chemical controls are used, they will only be used in a minimal and highly targeted way.

2.3 Outline our proposed gardening practices

Building healthy soil to reduce pest and diseases, use of practices such as crop rotation, companion planting, mulching, watering and promoting natural predators and parasites of pests and, where essential, using compatible chemicals.. Choosing plants well suited to the conditions and where possible that have innate resistance to problems. Providing good drainage and allowing sufficient space for plants should avoid some problems. Where problems do arise, hand picking of weeds, pests and diseased foliage, hoeing, trapping and even washing off pests with a hose can be sufficient to get acceptable control. Good practice in watering and feeding will promote strong disease resistant foliage.

Establishing good soil quality through the use of soil conditioners such as compost, manures, worm castings and liquid seaweed.

Use of castings and liquid from the worm farm should be utilised before purchased chemical products. The worm liquid can be collected at any time, and should be diluted to a ratio of one part worm liquid to ten parts water before applying to the garden. Worm solids can be made into a slurry by placing a couple of handfuls into a bucket and filling it with water. The slurry mixture can be applied anywhere in the garden. The worm solids can also be dug into garden beds prior to planting.

Other fertilisers may be used to establish healthy, disease and bug resistant plants and these include:

1. **Compost and Manures** - these encourage microbial activity but are relatively low in nutrients.
2. **Blood and Bone** - releases very slowly.
3. **Slow Release Fertilisers** - can be either organic or non-organic. They allow nutrient release over a longer period of time; however, can dissipate before making much improvement.
4. **Liquid Fertilisers** - these give quick results, and may need to be reapplied regularly. These are most suited to new seedlings and leafy vegetables.

Before using pesticides, consideration must be given to the aforementioned strategies, and whether treatment is necessary. If so, all pesticides must be lawful, and the label directions must be followed. Putting pesticides into unlabelled containers is not acceptable. Disposal of undiluted pesticides, spillages and empty containers must be in accordance with manufacturer instructions to ensure safety to the users and the environment.

Some organic or low toxic petroleum oil insecticides which are broad ranging and safe for beneficial inspections such as bees and lady beetles include Dipel (for eliminating caterpillars), Yates Pest Oil (for scale, aphids and citrus leaf miner) Neem (for fungus gnats and whitefly) and pyrethrum based products (for caterpillars, aphids and ants).

Effective and safe use of garden chemicals will be ensured by the following steps:

1. **Identification of the cause of the problem.** Inaccurate identification could result in the wrong material being used, if say weather damage was mistaken for disease.
2. **Application of the chemical at the right time.** Pests often have one or more stages in their life cycle when they are more vulnerable to chemical control; spraying at the

wrong time will give little or no control. Plants are to be inspected at regular intervals so that problems are tackled before heavy infestations have developed. Some pests and diseases may need a number of treatments at regular interval to achieve controls. To avoid drift and potential plant damage, pesticides will not be used in wet, windy or hot sunny weather. Spraying should take place early morning, or late afternoon in accordance with label instructions.

3. **Application of the chemical in the right way.** Apply pesticides thoroughly, diluted and at specified intervals. Spray plants thoroughly, including stems, buds and the underside of leaves but without excessive run-off or drift. Do not spray open blooms (including flowering weeds) because of the danger to bees, butterflies and other pollinators. Different chemicals may not be mixed together for simultaneous spraying unless the manufacturer's instructions state that this is permissible. Separate equipment should be used for applying herbicides and insecticides/fungicides.
4. **Safety for consumption.** When spraying an edible plant, the pesticide used must be suitable for that plant, and instructions must be noted for the period of time that must be left between treatment(s) and harvest, as well as the maximum number of applications permitted per growing season.
5. **Safety for the gardener.** Pesticides should be applied in strict accordance with the instruction labels. Gardeners should wear rubber gloves when applying pesticides and whilst handling concentrates. Avoid contact with exposed parts of the body, particularly the eyes and mouth. Avoid breathing in dusts or sprays by standing up-wind while treating. Do not smoke, eat or drink while applying pesticides. Wash after using pesticides. Make sure no children or pets are nearby when spraying and keep them away until the foliage is dry. Chemicals should be stored safely, preferably locked away where children and pets cannot gain access. Equipment should be cleaned thoroughly after use. Only a sufficient quantity of chemicals should be purchased and stored, and out of date pesticides should be disposed of in accordance with instructions.

2.4 Water management

A drainage system will be set in place at the southern end of the easement, using a French drain system.

A rainwater tank has been donated by a resident and will be put into place when an appropriate location is allocated.

2.5 Garden tools and storage

Initially, members will be asked to bring along their own tools to use in the garden, and when budgets allow, a collection of garden tools will be purchased and stored in the shed situated in the easement. Keys will be made available to the committee members and can be picked up by others if needed from the committee members' homes when pre-arranged.

Members are always welcome to bring their own tools to use in the garden, if they prefer.

Inventory	Quantity
Trowel	
Gardening gloves	
Watering can	
Small shovels	
Seasol	
Liquid fertiliser	

Inventory	Quantity
Blood and bone	
Neem concentrate garden insecticide	
Dipel	
Pyrethrum	
Yates Pest Oil	
White Oil	

Garden tools are to be cleaned and returned to the garden shed after use. Chemicals are to be checked that lids are secure.

2.6 Site safety

Members are to be responsible for their own well-being and that of others, while on the property. Members are to be careful and act safely at all times. Members are to practice safe manual handling, eg, bending at the knees rather than at the hips when lifting, and should wear hats, sunscreen and drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration.

Any potential hazards are to be reported as soon as they are found, to a member of the Community Garden Committee. Action must be taken as soon as possible, and the Body Corporate Committee advised. If any accidents should occur, details in writing should be reported to the Body Corporate Committee, and preventative action taken as necessary.

2.7 Allocation of plots

As a general rule, there will be no individual plots. Instead, the entire area should be available for the community, with establishment and maintenance undertaken by interested volunteers from the townhouse estate residents, and produce shared amongst all residents, in exchange for a gold coin donation.

2.8 Management of shared areas

The community garden will be maintained using a weekly roster system. The roster will be posted on a website (yet to be set up) with reminders issued by committee Secretary in the Residents Communication Page using the Signal social media application. Members should update the roster with any comments, including tasks carried out such as watering and weeding, or notification of upcoming maintenance required.

Working bees will be carried out approximately each month, or as required, to undertake cleaning and tidying of the areas, and any maintenance or new construction activities that would benefit from teamwork. The date and description of activities will be added to the website and communicated on the Residents Communication Page to enhance sufficient turnout. These working bees will conclude with a social aspect, eg, shared morning or afternoon tea, or late afternoon beer/wine and barbecue.

A Harvest Party may be organised if there is an abundance of produce available, and residents will be invited to join in picking fruit, vegetables and herbs to take home. The Harvest Party may be scheduled at the end of a working bee, or on a separate day. If the yield is limited, a notification will be placed on the website and Residents Communication Page detailing which plant is ready to be harvested, and any limitations per household that may be set.

2.9 Dealing with common objections to new community gardens

There can be a number of common objections raised to proposals for community gardens. They are likely to appear, if at all, during a public consultation phase before starting the community garden. Addressing these at the planning stage allows us to consider how we would deal with them.

How will we deal with:

Odours—these may come from poorly managed compost and the use of some organic fertilisers such as blood and bone.

A properly functioning worm farm or compost bin should never smell, apart from a sweet smell of soil.

If a bad smell comes from the worm farm it may be overfull and should be aerated by 'fluffing' up the top layers and mixing in lot of carbon matter - shredded cardboard, news-paper or leaves. If the worm tea smells bad, it should not be used, but instead added slowly back into the worm farm for proper digestion by the worms.

If the compost bin smells unpleasant it may be too wet and become anaerobic. This should be addressed immediately by adding some fast decomposing fine carbon material and contents turned over using a pitchfork.

Any gardening products such as blood and bone fertiliser can produce unpleasant odours when first applied, but this should pass reasonably quickly and should be endured.

Noise - It should be always kept in mind that the community garden is situated near residents' homes and as such, noise should be kept to a low level when working or socialising. Keeping in mind that the best times for gardening are before 10am and after 4pm, there is a risk that gardeners may be active when residents are asleep or relaxing. Should the affected residents feel the noise level is too high, they should calmly ask for the sound to be reduced and explain how the problem affects them. If unable to work on an amicable resolution together, the matter should be referred firstly to the Community Garden Committee, and then if not resolved, forwarded to the Body Corporate Committee.

Attraction of vandals and undesirables—Sadly, at some point the garden may attract vandals and suffer damage to the facilities or theft of plants. It is proposed that pathways are lit with solar lamps, and EUFY surveillance cameras be installed. Whilst this may not prevent a crime, it may act as a deterrent, or assist police with an investigation. Residents are to be reminded via messages in the Resident Communication Page throughout the year to report any acts of vandalism, small or large, to the Body Corporate Committee, and to the police if appropriate. Should the area be vandalised, a working bee will be established immediately to clean up any mess, eliminating vandals taking credit or emboldening their reputation with peers.

Poor aesthetics and unsightly or messy gardens— a strong objective of the Community Garden Committee is to design aesthetically pleasing gardens, that should be maintained to a high standard that residents should feel proud of. Each area should be easily accessible. Any complaints and suggestions about the appearance should be conveyed to the Committee for consideration.

Alienation of public open space - the community garden and easement area should be easily accessible and open to all residents to enjoy. Bonafide visitors to the complex may also use the area, but it should be considered closed to the general public.

Vermin – rats and mice can eat crops, leave droppings, spread disease and multiply quickly. They are attracted to poorly maintained composts; therefore improved composting procedures as detailed in this document are the best prevention. Natural methods of preventing an infestation are planting mint (which they dislike) throughout the garden, as well as basil, garlic and thyme. The area should be kept clean at all times. However, in the event of an infestation, rat traps will be set and captured rats disposed of humanely.

3. Management structure

3.1 Roles in the community garden

Roles in the Community Garden are equal and collaborative, rather than hierarchical. Tasks will be reviewed on an annual basis, or as required. The roles and duties are organic in nature and may change with the individuals who take them on, dependant on

their talents and strengths.

ROLE	FUNCTIONS
TEAM	
Community Garden Facilitator	Responsible for the coordination of the agreed development of the community garden and its effective operation. Representative spokesperson to the Body Corporate Committee; responsible for taking plans and supplier quotations for approval, as required. Organises meetings and gatherings; correspondence; administer website and Signal Resident Communication Page.
Treasurer	Manages community garden funds; collecting donations; collates supplier quotes ready for presentation to the Body Corporate Committee. Produces basic financial reports for meetings, for the annual general meeting.
Resident members	Residents who attend team meetings should support Facilitator and Treasurer at every opportunity to share the workload and responsibility.

3.2 Code of conduct/gardeners agreement

1. All members to respect each other, the purpose of the garden.
2. Gardening is to be carried out communally and no member should assume sole use of any section of the garden, nor are individual plots or areas to be designated to any group members.
3. Members are to avoid making key gardening decision on their own, but should run major ideas and plans by other group members, either verbally or through online means of communication. Own discretion may be used for low impact undertaking such as watering, weeding, some harvesting etc.
4. All members to dispose of waste appropriately and to help keep the garden clean.
5. No smoking or drinking in the garden while others are working.
6. Produce will be shared amongst the residents using the 'pick some, leave some' method initially and Harvest Parties when the garden becomes more productive.
7. Members will report damage or wear and tear of garden tools and general tool maintenance.
8. The garden is a shared community space and all members are to respect the rights of all other users of the space.

3.3 Decision making process

The committee will meet at least four times per year to discuss administrative issues, garden plans or maintenance needs and any other relevant business. Prior to the AGM of the Body Corporate, a group report will be prepared and submitted noting activities, achievements and requests for further changes and/or funding.

No major decisions may be made at a meeting unless a quorum of members is present. A quorum is four members. Each member is entitled to one vote. Decisions made should preferably be by consensus, but if this is not achieved, then the majority rule will apply.

Decisions should always be considered with the benefit of all Erindale residents at the forefront of mind, rather than a single individual. If a decision is unable to be arrived at, or no quorum possible, or a tied vote, then the issue should be referred to the Body Corporate for a final decision.

3.4 Communication

Internal —A communication group has been set up using the social media platform Signal for the committee members. Outside formal meetings, members will talk about smaller decisions using this avenue, or at working bees, through email or phone.

Residents — A website should be created where contact information, rosters, standard documents such as the Management Plan are stored for easy access. Photos of the site can be uploaded, and any other relevant information should be posted.

The website should include an online log book. This should include brief details of work completed at working bees, as well as an up-to-date To Do List. The regular roster should be set up, allowing members to note when the gardens were last watered and fertilised. Following each roster, the member should update work completed, and include any observations that may assist the next rostered resident. This logbook should be presented at the Community Garden Committee meetings.

Residents and participating gardeners should also be invited to an inclusive communication group via Signal. Alerts can be sent when extra help is needed for watering or when other gardening or social activities are scheduled, and when produce is available to harvest. Residents will be asked to bring kitchen waste to add to the composting system and regular reminders will be sent on the social media application detailing the correct items to place in either the worm farm, or the compost bins.

4. Policies

4.1 Access and acceptance

One aim of the Community Garden is to provide access for the disabled, the young, and old in the community, as well as those who do not use English as their first language. It is envisaged that all people and children are accepted and included.

4.2 Alcohol, smoking and drugs on site

No smoking or drinking is to be permitted in the garden while others are working. Drinking alcohol is permitted at social events, however disorderly behaviour will not be tolerated. Anyone disturbing the comfort of others will be asked to leave.

5. Funding

5.1 Fundraising activities

The Body Corporate will be asked to cover initial costs of setting up the garden (including constructing pathways, raised garden beds and providing access to water to the site).

The Community Garden Committee will need to supplement future spending, which may include:

- plants and seeds;
- top-up of soil/manure/mulch;
- garden tools and equipment.

Options for additional fundraising include:

- gold coin donation from anyone who uses produce from the garden;
- collecting suitable bottles and cans from residents and returning them to a recycling depot for 10 cents each;
- a sausage sizzle or selling coffee and cakes, selling raffle tickets or a pie drive;
- a donation from interested residents of specified plants or seeds, eg, fruit trees, or punnet of herb seedlings;

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- reducing cost of water usage by utilising of tank water when possible, and the encouragement to use water wisely;
 - reducing cost of rubbish disposal by requesting donation from residents of any unused Council waste disposal vouchers;
 - reducing cost of building materials, seeds and compost using a 'no waste' approach, utilising recycled material if of good quality, plant cuttings or seeds from residents, friends and other gardeners.

5.2 Other

The Community Garden Committee shall prepare and present an annual budget to the Body Corporate Committee, and this should be presented prior to the annual AGM for their consideration. Expenses must be contained to amounts approved for the year, together with funds raised in manners listed beforehand.

6. Contacts

Community Garden Facilitator - Melissa Rostagno

Regular Resident Members -

Caroline Calla
Leonie Hold
Li Jin
Jennifer Killian
Peter O'Reilly
Adrian Rostagno
Glenn Tadman