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# **New Member Induction Guide**

## **Version 1.0**

*We acknowledge the Yugambah language people, the traditional custodians of the land on which the Beenleigh Community Garden stands, and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise their connection to Country and role in caring for and maintaining Country over thousands of years. May their strength and wisdom be with us into the future.*

Thank you for your interest in the Beenleigh Community Garden (BCG).

The BCG was born into existence through a collaboration between Beenleigh District Community Development Association (BDCDA) and the community. BDCDA has delegated the day-to-day operation of the BCG to the BCG Steering, with BDCDA retaining overall ownership and management rights.

The purpose of this project was to create a living green space within the Beenleigh CBD. Community gardens are known to bring together people from all walks of life, backgrounds, and ages to foster a lively and connected community.

### **BCG Aims and Objectives**

- The BCG is a space where the local geographic community will be afforded the opportunity to connect and develop community.
- Most growing activities in the BCG will relate to fruits, vegetables, herbs, and flowers.
- The BCG will provide the community with a venue in which to experiment with, participate in and promote sustainable practices.
- The BCG will encourage the development of strong neighbourhood relationships, providing a meeting place for local people and opportunities for hands-on learning for students and community members of all ages.
- The BCG, on a small scale, will reduce green waste, pressure on landfill, as well as the 'food miles' associated with the food we eat.

- The BCG will encourage people to work together as a community to develop a practical relationship with and an understanding of our interdependence with the natural environment.
- The BCG will allow for the opportunity to demonstrate different growing and farming practices, using permaculture and organic farming principles.

### **Access and Acceptance**

All persons wishing to engage in any gardening activities are required to hold and maintain BCG financial membership.

The garden is configured in a communal format, whereby individual residents or groups maintain and harvest. All produce will be divided amongst members and/or donated to the community.

### **Opening Times and Access**

Access to the BCG is via a locked gate located at 10-12 James Street, Beenleigh. For security reasons, the BCG is only accessible by BCG members. Non-members will be admitted only at the discretion of the BCG Steering Committee.

The BCG is ordinarily accessible to members from sunrise to sunset on selected weekends, public and school holidays.

Members are only permitted to access the garden only when their BCG membership application has been approved and they have been provided with a safety induction and introduction to garden practices.

Members of the garden are permitted to have guests accompany them in the garden only at the discretion of the BCG steering committee. Guests will be issued with a copy of this document and will be required to adhere to the code of conduct and sign the guest register upon arrival to the garden.

All children (under the age of 18) are required to be accompanied by a supervising adult.

Non-members and guests not accompanied by a member are welcome to visit the BCG during open days. Open days (and similar public access events) be advertised within the Beenleigh Community Garden Facebook Group ([facebook.com/groups/beenleighgarden](https://facebook.com/groups/beenleighgarden)), BCG members mailing list, Beenleigh Neighbourhood Centre website ([beenleigh.org.au](https://beenleigh.org.au)), Beenleigh Neighbourhood Centre Facebook Page ([facebook.com/BeenleighCentre](https://facebook.com/BeenleighCentre)), as well as at the garden entry point.

Persons interested in or wishing to become a BCG member should contact Beenleigh Neighbourhood Centre via email at [bdcda@beenleigh.org.au](mailto:bdcda@beenleigh.org.au) or enquire in-person during BCG opening hours.

### **Disabled Access**

The garden design allows for adequate path width, accessible garden beds and easy access to most of the site.

## **General Maintenance of Garden Beds, Planter Boxes, and Plots**

BCG members are responsible for care and maintenance of the garden throughout the year, even during the winter months. It is the responsibility of BCG members to keep the BCG free of weeds, rubbish and any items that may be obstructing pathways or posing other health & safety risks. Mulching of garden plots is strongly encouraged to control weed growth.

If a BCG member is unable to attend, temporarily leaves the BCG due to illness, travel, work, or emergency, they must discuss their situation with the BCG Steering Committee and rosters will be adapted accordingly.

BCG Members and guests are not permitted to remove produce from the BCG without permission from the BCG Steering Committee. Produce grown in the BCG will be allocated to members based on a roster system.

### **Climbing Plants**

BCG members should use stakes for climbing plants, such as tomatoes and beans. If BCG members wish to store stakes when not in use, they should be bundled neatly and placed in the appropriate storage shed. Consideration should be given to over shading from tall climbing plants.

### **Building and other Materials**

Permanent structures must not be built on garden plots or on vacant areas of the BCG without written approval from the

BCG Steering Committee. BCG members cannot use the BCG to store building or other materials.

### **Additional Planting Space**

BCG members will play an integral role in the planning of the planting space available and which material to use i.e. polystyrene boxes, seed trays, planter boxes and containers. Shelving for seed raising pots will be provided.

### **Types of Plants**

BCG plots are to be used for growing herbs, flowers, and vegetables. Trees and large permanent shrubs are not suitable for the size of this garden, apart from dwarf fruiting trees in pots. Space saving pruning (espalier) of Apple or Pear trees may be feasible depending on available space.

### **Soil**

BCG members are responsible for improving the condition of the soil in plots they share responsibility for. It is important that nutrients are put back into the soil after every season as plants use up the nutrients in the soil as they grow. This can be achieved by adding manure, worm castings, compost, and mulch.

### **Garden Tools and Storage**

All tools will be stored in a lockable shed. The shed door is to remain closed and locked when not being accessed. Tools are to be returned to the shed after use and not left lying around or unattended as they can pose health and safety risks.

Water hoses are to be neatly coiled and placed near the tap after use.

No tools or equipment (belonging to the BCG) are to be removed from the BCG without written authorisation from both BDCDA and the BCG Steering Committee.

### **Site Induction**

All new BCG members are required to participate in a site induction, this may occur in a group or in a one-on-one setting. During this induction new BCG members will be provided with a copy of the BCG 'Site Safety Guidelines' document, see appendix 7.3. The induction will be brief, with its overarching purpose being to ensure that all BCG members are aware of the hazards associated with working in a garden environment.

During the site induction new BCG members will be made aware that they hold the following responsibilities:

- To take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and other BCG members and guests.
- To cooperate with fellow BCG members in the interests of the safety and welfare of all BCG members and guests, and to not engage in any conduct that could jeopardise the welfare of same.

### **Hazard Identification**

Hazards can be found everywhere. Before commencing a task, it is prudent to carefully your surroundings and assess the

situation for possible risks to health and safety. Considerations when assessing risks include:

- Your immediate environment
- The materials you are working with
- The tools and equipment you are using
- Your own health and wellbeing

Examples of hazards in a garden environment include excessive sun exposure, insect bites, injury from use of tools, inhalation of spores in soil and back strain from inappropriate lifting techniques.

### **Incident Reporting**

All accidents and/or injuries, major or minor, are to be reported to the BCG Steering Committee and BDCDA. BDCDA requires an Incident Report to be completed for all incidents, near misses and any first aid treatments administered.

### **Membership**

Any person residing in the Beenleigh district is eligible to apply to be a BCG member. An application for membership involves completing the appropriate membership application form, reviewing, and agreeing to all guidelines set out in this guide and paying the prescribed annual membership fee.

All BCG members are required to contribute to the general maintenance and upkeep of the BCG and infrastructure, as necessary. This may include attending working bees, assisting with composting, and/or being an active member of the BCG Steering Committee.

## **Management of Garden Areas**

Decisions on the plant and fruiting plant species selected for cultivation in the BCG will be made by way of a majority vote of the BCG Steering Committee. In planning the garden plantings, consideration will be given to the potential of mature trees to cast shade onto neighbouring garden beds or plots.

To assist in the management of the garden, the BCG Steering Committee will discuss and allocate responsibilities to those most suited BCG members based on knowledge, experience, and availability. Such tasks and activities may include:

- Organising maintenance of the shared areas
- List of tasks that need completing on the communal notice board
- Indicating on the notice board what has been done
- Coordinating a schedule for working bees and ensuring they occur
- Dispute resolution
- Resource management
- Compost management
- Mentoring
- Accident report

## **Animals in the BCG**

Only certified support animals are permitted on site. All other animals are prohibited on site.

## **Alcohol, Tobacco, Vaping, and Illicit Drugs**

Per the Code of Conduct smoking, vaping, alcohol and illicit drugs and substances are always prohibited in the BCG. BCG members who take over the counter or prescription medication must ensure it is kept on their person whilst in the BCG and cannot be accessed by children.

## **Code of Conduct / Gardener's Agreement**

The BCG welcomes residents from the Beenleigh district who are interested in fostering a sustainable urban environment by growing and harvesting their own food.

The Garden exists for the good of the community. The BCG Steering Committee asks that all BCG members share responsibility for maintaining the garden and for the enjoyment of all, BCG members and guests are asked to abide by the guidelines below:

- We maintain a neat and orderly garden and build an attractive and creative environment that is appealing to other residents of the community. We mow the lawns and our garden beds are lovingly tended.
- We maintain positive relationships with our fellow gardeners and the organisations that generously support us.
- We keep our noise within the garden to a level that does not disturb Beenleigh Neighbourhood Centre staff, volunteers, and other facility users.
- We do not discriminate against anyone due to differences in race, disability, culture, or sexuality.

- Our decision-making is democratic, inclusive, and transparent.
- We ensure that any water leaving the Garden is not contaminated by sediment, fertiliser, manure, or excessive organic matter that might pollute our precious waterways.
- We maintain our composting and planting systems in a healthy condition, so as to not attract vermin or produce unpleasant odours.
- We look after our rainwater harvesting systems to ensure our water is of a high quality.
- We operate an inviting garden where new members are always welcome.
- The BCG will be accessible to members from sunrise to sunset on selected weekends, public and school holidays.

## **Decision Making Processes**

### *General Meeting Guidelines*

A quorum will be achieved when at least half the voting members of the committee are present.

### *Types of Decisions & Methods for Decision Making*

The BCG Steering Committee is responsible for making decisions in the following areas:

- Financial (including fundraising)
- The strategic direction of the garden including any incidents or decisions that relate to the philosophy of the garden e.g. organic gardening principles

- Anything to do with the rules of the BCG Significant decisions or meetings with BDCDA
- Disputes between BCG members that have been referred directly to the BCG Steering Committee
- Any change to policy, rules, procedures, or fee structures
- Any change to BCG Steering Committee roles
- Any occupational health and safety issues, or breaches of the code of conduct
- Media engagements. Please note, the BCG Steering Committee and BCG members are not permitted to communicate with any media outlet without prior written authorisation from the BDCDA Management Committee.
- Approval of visits to the BCG by external groups.
- Significant changes to the garden e.g. increasing/reducing number of garden beds or adding a new physical structure
- Membership – limits on membership, management of the waiting list and fee collection

BCG Members also have the right to influence decisions relating to the BCG, under the leadership/facilitation of the BCG Steering Committee. Some areas members are likely to be welcomed to be involved in decision making include:

- Planting (type, number and placement of plants, and aesthetic decisions about the gardens)
- Working bees, maintenance schedules, composting decisions, use and retention of water
- Planning of workshops, induction programmes, visit to other gardens, first level dispute resolution

The BCG Steering Committee and BCG Members will use the following decision-making methods:

- Majority rules (60%) for decisions that are not controversial or heavily debated such as the sum of petty cash held, the type of form to use for a specific need, or the date to host a special event.
- Consensus for any decisions relating to disputes, disciplinary action, or changes to the philosophy of the garden or major physical changes to the garden.
- The BCG Steering Committee are more likely to use majority rules most of the time in their meetings to enable them to be efficient and effective.
- BCG Members are more likely to use the consensus method most of the time as the involvement and input from all Members for on the ground decisions will be important.

## **Dispute Resolution**

Where people attempt to cooperate in an endeavour such as community gardening, interpersonal conflict is possible due to differing life experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and learnings influencing people think and react.

The purpose of the BCG Code of Conduct is to suggest ways to minimise conflict and permit constructive decisions to be negotiated in the interests of all gardeners. It sets out standards of conduct expected of gardeners, so the experience of gardening is personally fulfilling, and the shared experience is harmonious.

To ensure all disagreements are resolved quickly and with minimum disruption, the following process must be followed by all BCG members:

1. The issue causing disagreement must first be raised between the parties involved in the conflict. These parties should attempt to resolve the problem themselves.
2. If the parties are unable to resolve their conflict and the issue continues it will then be raised at the next BCG Steering Committee meeting.
3. If the issue cannot be resolved at the meeting, then BDCDA will be approached for assistance in resolving the issue. All decisions made by BDCDA are final.
4. If the conflict is still occurring and is causing significant disruption to the BCG, the BCG Management Committee will consider asking the person(s) involved in the conflict to leave BCG.

### **Membership Fees**

An annual membership fee of \$5.00 is payable by all BCG members. The membership period is 1 July – 30 June each year.

Membership fees are non-refundable.