



A Guide to
Community
Gardening in
Brimbank



What are Community Gardens?

Community gardens are places where people come together to grow food and other plants, to learn new skills, meet other people, form meaningful connections with one another and be part of their local community.

The most important ingredient in Community Gardens is you!

- Would you like to grow fresh, healthy food but don't know where to start?**
- Would you like to grow produce with others and share it in your local area?**

This Guide

Brimbank City Council is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of our community. Growing food can help improve food security, promote healthy eating, increase physical activity, build community connections and enhance opportunities for sustainable living.

There are many ways that residents can get involved with growing food. We have developed this guide to help our residents explore opportunities in the City of Brimbank.



1 Growing at Home

For those wanting to grow food at home, many resources are available to help.

My Smart Garden is an online resource full of information, ideas, events and free resources that can help you grow food at home.

Sustainability Victoria provides a step by step guide to establishing a food garden at home.

Sustainable Gardening Australia has lots of helpful resources such as videos and articles on their website.

Council delivers a range of programs related to growing food and the environment in community facilities such as libraries, neighbourhood houses and community centres. Explore our **Library websites** for more information or check out **<https://learning.brimbank.vic.gov.au/>** for details of low cost and no charge classes and programs on cooking and sustainability.

Council staff in our libraries, neighbourhood houses and community centres can help you explore the internet and find the information you need including how to grow food in small spaces (even on **balconies!**).

For local residents, Council provides discounted compost bins and worm farms that can be sent to your home through the **Compost Revolution** program. Learn all you need to know about composting, worm farming or using a bokashi bin in only 10 minutes.

2 Growing at School

Growing food in schools helps children understand where food comes from and learn life-long skills in composting, caring for plants and creating healthy nutritious meals.

School [kitchen garden programs](#) provide access to food growing and environmental education for young people. Many young people at school in Brimbank have access to growing spaces and some have established kitchen gardens.

Council supports schools' environment and sustainability through:

- **Quarterly school bulletins:** online newsletters promoting upcoming environmental workshops and events, competitions, grants and awards as well as online tips and resources for teachers. [Sign up here.](#)
- **Online resources:** check out Council's [Schools Education webpage](#) for presentations on topics such as biodiversity, energy, waste and recycling, water and sustainable systems as well as other online resources, fact sheets and links.
- **Commercial worm farms:** to support schools reducing food waste and support food growing and learning, Council offers schools a subsidised *Worm Habitat Grande*. Contact the Environmental Education Officer for details on **9249 4000**.

- **Support and advice:** Council provides information to help with your environmental school project. Make an enquiry using our [online request form](#).

- **Brimbank Teacher Environmental Network:**

Council offers professional development for teachers, support staff, parents

and volunteers. Meetings may involve networking at a local host school, including a sustainability tour, or webinars to enable teachers to participate remotely. Register through the Quarterly school bulletin.

- **Vegetable seedlings:** Working with the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, Council has offered participating schools punnets of seedlings free of charge for students to plant, harvest and cook. Keep an eye out for updates in the Quarterly school bulletin as we hope to offer this program again in spring this year.





3 Joining a Community Garden

There are several established community gardens in Brimbank.

Council's Westvale Community Centre Garden in Kings Park has 50 garden plots of various sizes used by individuals and community groups. Some of these are used to garden and grow food collectively.

Westvale also manages 33 garden plots at the Padley Park Community Garden in St Albans. The current model allows community members to hire plots for private use.

If you'd like to know more, contact westvale@brimbank.vic.gov.au or call **9249 4665**.

Some of Brimbank's neighbourhood houses and community centres have small food growing spaces and facilities depending on the time of year and the programs being delivered. The [website](#) is updated regularly so keep an eye out for opportunities and make contact with your local centre or follow them on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#) (@bccneighbourhoodhouses).

[Kororoit Creek NH community garden](#) (KCNH) is next to Selwyn Park in Albion and has a mix of garden beds, including some edible native plants. The garden is open to the community to visit to see what's growing or pick some fresh produce to take home. You can also join as a garden volunteer and help maintain and develop the gardens at KCNH.

4 Considering starting a new Community Garden?

There are a number of things to consider in developing a new Community Garden.

- Who will be involved in the garden? While it is an exciting idea, starting and maintaining a Community Garden does take work and you will need help in getting it off the ground. Working effectively over time to keep it going means having a group with roles and responsibilities in some sort of structure.
- Where will your Community Garden be? There are many things to consider in finding a good site that is accessible to the community including location, local facilities such as toilets and how the space is currently used.
- Who owns the land and are there restrictions on its use, for example as a conservation area or a dog park?
- Is the soil safe and suitable for food growing and if not, are soil barriers or raised beds possible? How much space is needed for the garden? Is there a way to access water on site and does it get direct sunlight most of the day?
- What resources will you need to develop a Community Garden? Is there enough people power and financial support? Do you need money to purchase items and equipment? If you apply for funds, will you need an auspicing body?

The following websites offer great information and advice about the steps involved.

3000acres

3000acres are a Melbourne based not-for-profit that provide advice and resources to help groups with the skills and knowledge needed to grow fresh healthy food. If your group needs help with incorporation or needs an auspicing body, 3000 Acres can assist. Check out their guide to starting a new community garden [here](#).

Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network

ACFCGN are a national group that provide a range of resources on improving or establishing community gardens.

Sustainable Gardening Australia (SGA)

SGA have a huge number of resources for home gardeners, professionals and community gardeners alike. They have produced a [manual](#) with templates and guides for every stage of the community garden establishment process.

Happy gardening!

For more information, please contact the **Growing Brimbank Program Facilitator** on **9249 4000**.



As we all want to be healthy and well, it is always a good idea to check that your soil is suitable for food growing. Environment Victoria has information to help you find out about when and how to test your soil:

www.environment.vic.gov.au/sustainability/victoria-uneearthed/about-contamination/testing-for-contamination