Your guide to Community Food Growing Space

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Argyll & Bute COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

This guidance has been produced to provide a framework for community groups who are interested in growing their own food.

The information contained within this booklet highlights important factors for groups to consider when developing a community food growing space.

In terms of involving local people, the community food growing space must be functional, attractive, accessible and meaningful in order to give them a sense of pride of place and ownership.

For help in finding land visit: https://sc.communitylandadvice.org.uk/en/sc/homehttps://sc.communitylandadvice.org.uk/en/resource/finding-land-site-features-checklist.

How can Community food growing spaces contribute to green spaces?

- Biodiversity – space and habitat for wildlife with access to nature for people;
- Amenity – places for outdoor relaxation and recreational activities;
- Climate change adaptation sustainable management of green spaces;
- Environmental education;
- Improved health and well-being – lowering stress levels and providing opportunities for exercise;
- Local character – the special qualities of an area;
- Education, Skills and Enterprise;
- Inequalities.

What are the multitude of benefits of people growing their own food?

Working in a community garden can give you a sense of belonging and provide a platform for social Interaction. The benefits of community gardens include:

- Knowledge sharing
- Social activity – meet and working with local people and developing friendships
- Physical outdoor activity in a pleasant environment
- Participation and communication
- Activities that foster self-help
- Nutritional health
- Supportive environments that promote social inclusion (for example, for frail, older people, people with disabilities, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds)
- Reducing your carbon footprint
- Complimenting your food chain and experiencing the joy and satisfaction of harvesting produce from the garden.

Steps to Setting up a Community Food Growing Space Group

Gauge interest in the local community by engaging with a range of age groups, either individually or via existing clubs/groups.

Establish a group. Here is a general framework: management team, constitution, bank account, community growing space rules, membership, funding, resources etc.

Funding: Access the Argyll and Bute Council website for further information:
www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/community-life-and-leisure/grants-and-funding

Find a growing space- contact the local authority to enquire about unused land owned by the council or social housing providers.

Factors to consider when choosing a site:

- Is the site within easy reach of the community?
- Does it have access to water?
- Is there electricity on site? This is not essential but work checking out.
- Does the site have space for a shed?
- What is access and security like
- What is the length of the lease? If you intend to apply for grants, funders will often want you to have a land/lease agreement for a minimum of five years.

Legal aspects:

(i) Leases- In implementing a scheme for devolved management, it is important to ensure that the community organisation taking on responsibility has an appropriate and democratic constitution

(ii) Public Liability – The lease should also include a requirement for the association to take out an appropriate scheme of insurance to indemnify the local authority and protect the association, its volunteers and its members as well as third parties on site – with or without permission. Some insurers offer policies specific to the needs of allotment sites and associations; again, representative bodies can offer advice.

(iii) Equal opportunities – Community Growing Spaces should operate within the spirit of equal opportunities and are rented out on a first-come first-served basis, without preferential treatment. Your age, gender, race, cultural background, sexual orientation, religion or health are not a barrier to you renting a plot.

Planning your garden

Factor in Biosecurity

This is a set of preventive measures designed to reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases in crops and livestock, quarantined pests, invasive alien species, and living modified organisms (Koblentz, 2010). The following poster may be suitable for your

Planning Permission- seek guidance from the local authority:
www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/pre-application

Planning consent will be required for:

- Change of use of land, for example from open space to allotment;
- Any works within a Conservation Area; and
- Structures on site, such as outbuildings and sheds on each individual plot; communal buildings; fencing; and parking facilities.

A detailed design of new sites involves striking the right balance between the preferences of new plot holders and the interests of the broader public. It should also incorporate sound environmental practices which should include biodiversity benefits.

Factors to Consider

Access- gated and lockable; car parking, including spaces for those with restricted mobility, and space to enable deliveries of manure and other essentials; parking for bikes.

Infrastructure and facilities: Note not all components will be required when setting up a growing site. The list will provide the group with identifying priorities: paths- wide enough to accommodate a variety of users, flexible layout, variable height beds, adjacent to conventional plots, water, communal shed and or tunnel with rainfall collection facility as not all plots may be able to accommodate an individual shed.

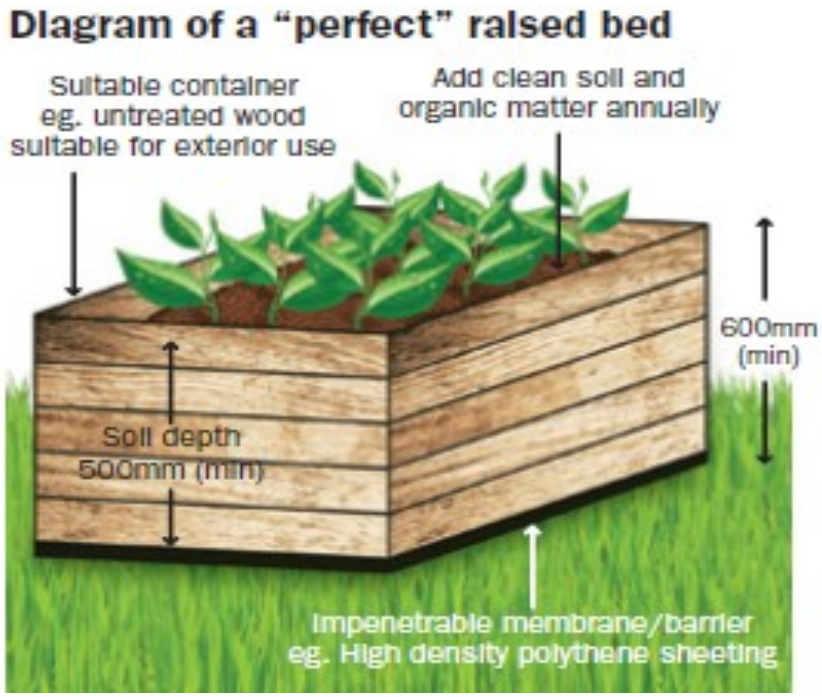
Where sheds, greenhouses and polytunnels are not supplied but are permitted, there should be clear design and/or supplier guidelines to ensure the overall quality of the construction on site and to enhance the external view. The need to provide toilets will depend on whether alternative facilities are already accessible in the vicinity. Where there are none, the most environmentally friendly alternative is recommended, such as a composting toilet.

Perimeter Fence: to show boundaries.

Layout: should meet the needs of the users with a variety of plot sizes: starter to more advanced- this can include raised beds. There are a number of ways of cultivating the plots. For example, a section of the site may be reserved for use by organic growers. Plot holders should be encouraged to reduce their environmental impact by adopting green gardening practices. Plots will vary in size and all must be demarcated and numbered.

Composting and waste disposal: there should also be a policy in place. This details of which will depend in part on site conditions.

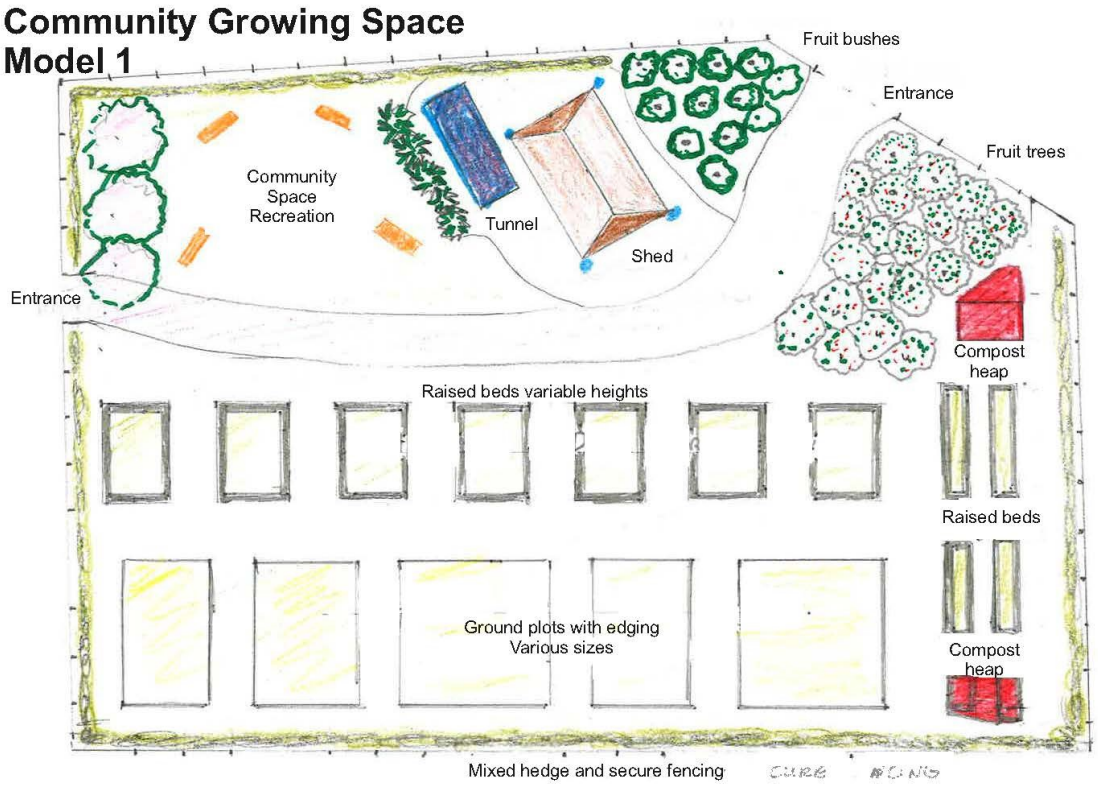
Integrating biodiversity into your space: provide a valuable habitat for native plants and animals, especially in more built up areas where green space may be limited. The variety of food growing in the cultivated plots, compost heaps, grass areas, sheds and boundary plantings of trees and hedgerows can attract a variety of birds, insects and mammals.

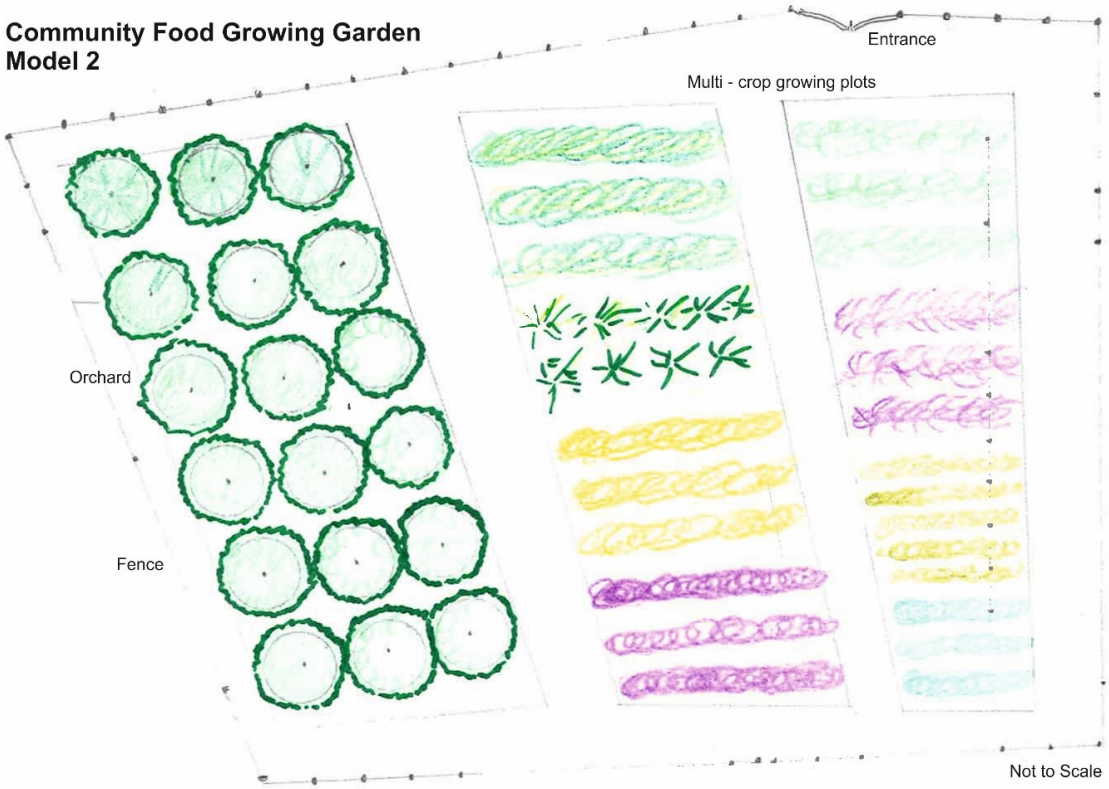


The following guide is very useful for anyone considering growing on contaminated land:

www.growyourownscotland.info/wp-content/uploads/images/Guide-for- growing-on-contaminated-land.pdf

Examples of sites:





Examples of community-run allotments

Helensburgh Allotment Association

Kyles Allotment Group