



Railway Garden Manual



The Railway Garden acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the true sovereigns, custodians and caretakers of the land now known as Yarra. We pay tribute to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and pay respect to elders past, present and emerging. When we stand in this garden we especially think of past cultivators of the land, knowing we have much to learn. We deeply value the indigenous heritage of North Carlton, a living heritage stretching back to ancient times and continuing to this day.

History

The Railway Garden was created by the community, for the community and is the culmination of over a decade of lobbying Yarra Council by a group of gardeners who wanted to put to good use the Crown land that was once a bocce court. Once the project was accepted by Yarra Council, it took a further 4 years of working with the North Carlton Railway Neighbourhood House and the Council to develop plans and establish the infrastructure before the garden was finally opened to the community. The garden build was jointly sponsored by the North Carlton Railway Neighbourhood House, Clifton Hill/North Fitzroy Community Bank (a branch of Bendigo Bank), and Yarra Council.

It was clear from early community consultation that individual plots and profit-driven gardening were not going to be accepted. What was therefore proposed was an open garden that allowed anyone to participate, enjoy the greenery, and share the harvest. This proposal received overwhelming support from the community - with 95% of respondents in 2019 voting to establish such a garden - leading to the development of an aesthetically pleasing, open, inclusive, unfenced, and productive community garden. It was designed by local resident & landscape architect, Bruce Echberg.

Vision

Our vision is a collectively managed, open and inclusive garden and community meeting place where people gather to connect with one another, either through gardening activities or simply for the pleasure of being there.

Values

Our values reflect the collective culture of the garden and our commitment to upholding the principles of sustainability, as practised by the original custodians of this land. As gardeners, we:

- Respect the collective culture of the garden, ie. sharing plots, workload, and harvests.

- Strive to ensure a positive impact on the environment, for example, no pesticides, use organic gardening methods, recycle waste and nutrients where possible (eg through composting) and save seeds.
- Strive to ensure the garden group enhances community relations.

Objectives

- To provide people without a garden with the opportunity to enjoy the space, work in the garden, and grow, harvest and share fresh food with their community.
- To enhance community programs at the Railway Neighbourhood House, through extension of existing activities, the development of new programs, and collaboration with other community groups and organisations.
- To produce fresh vegetables and herbs for the neighbourhood.
- To create a culture of sharing knowledge and learning amongst the gardeners.
- To run educational classes and workshops on a variety of topics, using people's own areas of expertise from within our community as well as using external providers.
- To develop collaborations with local schools and other community groups.
- To model sustainable living.
- To run events relating to sustainability and environmental awareness.

Management Structure

- The garden is a Railway House program and collectively run by gardeners and Railway House staff, with input from Yarra Council staff as required. Railway House staff have responsibility for enrolments and maintaining records, communicating with the broader gardening group, social media, liaising with council, and health and safety and setting the annual budget for the garden.
- Each garden group has one or two lead volunteers ("Garden Guardians"). Guardians carry out orientations for new gardeners, plan the day's activities for their group, manage the group's budget in consultation with their group, and attend monthly meetings with the House manager. ***Please refer to the Garden Guardians Role Description for more information.***
- Each garden group has custody of a specific garden bed and other designated areas (eg fruit trees, compost, wicking boxes). Groups decide together what to grow in their bed(s), following an overall seasonal planting plan. ***Please refer to***

the Garden Technical Manual for more information. Groups also decide what time to meet on their given day and how to communicate with one another (eg, email, WhatsApp etc).

Procedures

- People interested in joining the garden program complete an enrolment form on the Railway House website, nominating the group they would like to join. Gardeners are organised into daily groups. There is no upper limit to the number of people in each group.
- Garden Guardians are formal Railway House volunteers and as such are required to complete a House volunteer form.
- Office staff will send on the contact details of new enrolments to the relevant Garden Guardian.
- New members receive an introduction pack and an orientation.

Finances

- Railway House allocates a budget of approx \$2000 to the garden each financial year to cover operational costs. This is subject to Railway House Committee of Management approval and is reviewed each financial year.
- There is no fee to join the garden program, however, a donation towards the program is appreciated upon joining. Gardeners are expected to assist in raising the garden budget via fundraising activities such as plant stalls at the Railway House markets. The budget may need to be adjusted if the funds are not raised.
- Each group will be allocated a budget of approximately \$250 for their bed(s) for the financial year. Guardians are responsible for managing their group's budget and for approving purchases made by members of their group.
- Approx \$1000 will cover operational costs for the entire garden (for example, equipment, compost etc that will be used by all groups). The House manager is responsible for approving these purchases.
- Reimbursement for purchases will be provided by the House upon provision of receipts.

Site Safety

Railway House is committed to providing a safe and healthy place in which to garden and aims to achieve acceptable risk. This will be realised through continuous feedback, reviewing and improving systems by garden guardians and the House manager. Gardeners should familiarise themselves with the Garden Risks & Hazards Table at the end of this document and also ensure that they:

- Follow COVID-safe requirements as directed by the government and Railway House.
- Wear appropriate clothing – eg covered shoes, gardening gloves, sun-safe clothing, and masks when exposed to airborne particles.
- Take reasonable measures to ensure their own health and safety, and to ensure they do not adversely affect the health & safety of others.
- Avoid digging anywhere outside of garden beds due to risk of contamination (asbestos and hazardous chemicals). If planting around the fruit and citrus trees, you must wear gloves and a mask.
- Keep paths clear and use signage when necessary (eg when using the hose).
- Return all tools to the storage area after use and keep the storage area neat and tidy.
- Ensure that dogs are always kept on a lead.
- Comply with any reasonable request given by Railway House staff or Garden Guardians relating to health and safety, and what’s planted in the garden.
- If an incident or accident occurs, notify Railway House staff immediately (or as soon as possible if the office is closed). If the event is of a serious nature, call an ambulance or medical professional immediately and advise Railway House staff as soon as practicable.

Soil contamination has required soil to be imported and the careful laying of barrier fabrics for all garden beds. On the northern fence line, next to the bocce court, the presence of asbestos requires that this strip of land is a **no-dig area**. The garden has been carefully designed and created in a way that minimises exposure and impact, but gardeners still need to be mindful of additional precautions:

- Avoid any tasks involving digging below 30 cm below ground level.
- Wear gloves and a mask if digging into the layer 30 cm beneath the granitic layer at ground level (for example if you are planting a tree).
- Seek the approval of the Yarra Council staff before undertaking any task that disturbs the layer 30 cm below the granitic gravel. Minimise any contact with dust from the contaminated soil layer.

- Avoid piercing the geo-tech fabric at the base of garden beds. If the geo-tech layer is pierced, it should be reported to the House manager.

Code Of Conduct

Volunteers of the garden are expected to abide by the North Carlton Railway Neighbourhood House Code of Conduct (available at www.railwayneighbourhoodhouse.org.au website) which outlines appropriate behaviour as follows:

- Developing relationships based on mutual respect, equity, and fairness
- Working in partnership in a courteous, respectful, and encouraging manner
- Valuing the input of peers
- Sharing expertise and knowledge in appropriate forums, and in a considered manner
- Respecting the rights of others as individuals
- Giving encouraging and constructive feedback and respecting the value of different professional approaches and points of view.

Garden Risks & Hazards Table

HAZARD	RISKS	CONTROLS & ACTIONS
Threat to child safety	Children are in contact with adults unknown to the Railway House	<p>All children under the age of 13 must be supervised in the garden and storage area by their parent or guardian, unless enrolled in a formal program.</p> <p>Orientation ensures all new members are aware of rule re child safety.</p> <p>Report any concerns relating to child safety to the Manger.</p>
Tools and Equipment	<p>Cuts, splinters from handles, stepping on rakes etc.</p> <p>Damage to hands or fingers</p> <p>Falls from ladders</p>	<p>Wearing gloves is recommended when handling tools.</p> <p>Ensure step ladders are fully open and stable. Do not use them if working alone.</p>
Soil and Compost	Risk of exposure to toxins. All compost, soil and manures contain bacteria and micro-organisms that may be harmful if inhaled or in contact with open wounds.	<p>If in frequent contact with Compost and manures, a face mask is recommended.</p> <p>People who are vulnerable eg. older people/children/people with health issues/pregnant women should wear a mask even when handling material in smaller amounts or with less frequency. Gloves should be worn if there is broken skin on hands.</p> <p>Consider a booster tetanus shot.</p>
Asbestos in the soil along the northern fence line next to the bocce lane.	Exposure to asbestos resulting in asbestos-related illness.	The bed is a NO DIG bed. NO weeding or planting of any kind is permitted.
Needles	Injury from exposure to a needle	<p>Wear gloves</p> <p>Be very aware and alert to working in a public place.</p> <p>Seek medical advice immediately if you are injured with a needle.</p>
Chemicals	Illness resulting from inhalation of fumes and contact with skin.	No toxic chemicals on site.

<p>Garden stakes and other structures, hoses</p>	<p>Garden stakes, structures and hoses being left on pathways, causing tripping hazards and injury.</p> <p>Large water storage being pushed over to cause injury.</p>	<p>Trellis structures to be firmly anchored.</p> <p>Water storage containers should be placed on beds, away from pathways so they can't be tipped over.</p> <p>Stakes should be placed away from paths and if sharp, have a plastic cap on top of them.</p> <p>Hoses to be packed away after use.</p>
<p>Materials on pathways</p>	<p>Stakes, bags of mulch etc. & creeping plants may cause tripping</p>	<p>All stakes, bags of mulch etc. to be placed on beds and not in individual pathways.</p> <p>Cut plants back from pathways.</p>
<p>Fauna</p>	<p>Insect stings, spider bites, snakes</p>	<p>Wear gloves if putting hands into thick vegetation.</p> <p>Spiders can be found when moving pots & timber – wear gloves.</p> <p>Remove all rotting produce and general rubbish which can provide food and shelter for rats.</p>