



Garden Guide for Tenants



We acknowledge Noongar Wadjak people and Elders on whose land we sit and speak.
This is Noongar country in the past, now and always.

This tenants' Guide is the go-to document for information about possibilities, responsibilities and do's and don'ts for the gardens at Connect Vic Park (Connect).

Introduction

The Connect gardens on Mackie, Cargill and Hordern Streets are the result of many years of work by our tenants and others, and provide pleasant surroundings for everyone's enjoyment. Today the gardens include mature and establishing exotic and native trees and shrubs, more than 40 fruit trees, an urban forest of local plants, a small bush food garden, herbs and vegetables, flowers and lawn areas. And as our climate changes, we're adapting together to ensure we have beautiful gardens that are suited to hotter, drier conditions and unpredictable seasons.

Areas for plants include the garden beds by ground floor units, and shared areas throughout the grounds. While the gardens are all part of and managed by Connect, as a tenant, you are strongly encouraged to partner in their care. The gardens are a valuable asset to be managed for today and for the future, and this relies on tenants' involvement. Many tenants take pride in looking after their own and/or shared gardens. Connect aims to give everyone opportunities and support for gardening, according to their interests and abilities.

Benefits the gardens provide:

A pleasant outlook and green spaces for tenants to enjoy and relax in.

Opportunities for individual and shared gardening.

A haven and habitat for local birds, insects and other animals of our area.

Produce, including fruit, herbs, vegetables and cut flowers.

Shade, lower local temperatures and improved air quality.



The gardens also benefit our wider Vic Park community by making our local urban environment greener and showing examples of gardening possibilities.

Garden Spaces

In the mix of ground floor and first floor units and shared areas, there is different access to garden space for tenants' own use. Connect will do our best to accommodate you if you want garden space (or additional space), or if you're not able to maintain your own area. And if you would like to help in the gardens generally, there are opportunities to work by yourself, with other tenants or with gardener Anne, doing things you enjoy (see 'Shared areas', below).

Ground floor units - Tenants have responsibility for maintaining the garden bed at the front and/or rear of their unit, unless they are not able. These vary in size and assistance is available to maintain your area. If you are new to Connect, the Housing Officer will explain the area you are responsible for.

First floor units - Tenants usually have a balcony for their use and care, and can add potted plants of their choice. There may also be garden space available for personal gardening, on request, as well as opportunities for you to help in shared areas.

Shared areas - Most of these are maintained by Connect, and many tenants enjoy being involved in their care, according to their interests and ability, with gardener Anne available for assistance and advice. Your participation is appreciated: it's an important part of maintaining our grounds. Through the seasons, activities can include raking, weeding, turning/watering compost, tending bird baths, small trimming, planting and more.

What would you like to help with?

Things to do and things to avoid

PLEASE DO:

Choose plants of suitable type and size for the area, and to suit the position, for example whether sunny, shady, reticulated etc. This includes being mindful of overall appearance, conforming to garden styles, and with future tenants in mind.

Keep your garden neat, tidy and free of litter, and care for plants by weeding, watering and small trimming as needed.

Move unwanted things on without wasting them. For example, find the best use for pots, tools, soil and other garden items you don't need or want. If you're not sure...ASK! (see below).



Be respectful of other tenants' garden areas, and of their interests, effort and abilities.

Keep safe! Be aware of and prevent trip hazards, and protect yourself from injuries, for example from tools and spiky plants, and insect bites etc. Please report potential hazards to the office on a Maintenance Request form.

PLEASE AVOID:

DO NOT plant, hard prune, or remove shrubs or trees. Get permission if you are considering this. Shrubs and trees can provide long term benefits as well as problems and they require special selection and care.

Gardens are for plants! Please avoid adding ornaments, especially plastic items, including plastic plants. These are not to everyone's taste and can look tacky, and can degrade over time to fragments that litter and pollute the soil.

We apply mulch and fallen leaves to garden beds to reduce water use, suppress weeds and provide nutrients as they break down over time. DO NOT REMOVE MULCH from garden beds – it's best kept neat and able to do its job.

DO NOT put soil, pots, plant tags or bags in the **light green lid bins**. ONLY PLANT PARTS SUCH AS LEAVES, FLOWERS, STEMS AND FRUITS PLEASE - NO soil, plastic, metal or terracotta etc.



Communication - it helps to keep in touch to keep things running smoothly

Talk to us:

- See gardener Anne around the grounds.
- Come to the monthly chat, drop and swap Gazebo get-togethers (usually 10am, first Tuesday of each month).
- Fill out a Maintenance Request form (available in Laundries), to drop at the Office.

Have you got questions? Ask us!

Do you want more space for gardening? Do you need help to maintain your garden? Do you have a garden area you don't want to manage, or can't? Do you need information about plant choices, plant care or composting? Would you like to help in the gardens? Have you got plants, produce, garden items (pots, tools etc.), ideas and suggestions or a special garden interest to share?

Covering costs

Tenants are generally responsible for covering costs of buying plants and materials for their garden area (including balcony gardens). Connect can provide limited amounts of potting mix, soil conditioners and fertiliser, pots, and occasionally plants. Talk to the gardener about this.



Sharing gardening resources

We have some tools that can be borrowed, and we welcome unwanted pots and other gardening materials, such as fertilisers, potting mix and tools etc., that can be shared. This is also a way to make use of garden things you no longer want. Occasionally we have mulch and compost available. Talk to the gardener about this and where things are stored.

SOME PRINCIPLES FOR ALL THE GARDENS

Our gardens are managed loosely using permaculture principles. This means we treat soil, water, other resources, people and the environment in ways that benefit all, and minimise waste:

Choosing plants

We choose suitable plants (see 'DO:' above) and care for them so they thrive without needing excessive inputs. Different plants give different benefits and our choices contribute to the overall appearance, feel and value of the gardens - whether it's visual display, shade, food, or habitat for birds and insects.

Water use

We're Waterwise and give plants only the water they need, and keep the types of plants and the weather in mind so we conserve precious water through all the seasons. Reticulation is used according to Water Corporation guidelines. Hand watering, when it's necessary, should be timely to minimise evaporation - not in the heat of the day.

Garden produce

Through the seasons, fruit, herbs etc. from the shared garden areas become available for tenants (and sometimes other Village Hub members) to enjoy. These are usually placed in the Village Hub hall for pick up and tenants will be notified by text if there are larger amounts. Occasionally we share more widely to ensure our produce, such as olives and quinces, is used. Tenants who grow their own veggies, herbs and flowers share these with neighbours as they may wish to.

Waste

We avoid waste, and manage it properly. This includes:

- Use as little as it takes to do things well: use just enough water, fertiliser etc.
- Make the most of things we use, for example look after gardening equipment, reuse pots and potting mix bags, share equipment.
- Find the best use for things we've finished with if they're not really rubbish, for example offer unwanted items to others, reuse or recycle clean plastic pots if possible.
- Make good use of 'greenwaste' by placing weeds, small pruning, old flowers etc. in **light green lid bins** (emptied fortnightly). We also compost (see below) and mulch, which keeps the benefits of organic 'waste' (including food waste) onsite.
- Dispose of rubbish correctly, in **red lid bins**.

Weeds

Most weeds are seasonal, growing from autumn through spring. They're best controlled by leaving mulch in place, and removing them before they mature and produce seeds. For tenants who are able, weeding your garden or other weedy spots can be very satisfying, and great for fitness. Weeding together is fun and rewarding, and we have a small weeding and tidying group for tenants. If you're interested, ask gardener Anne.



Chemical use

We avoid using harmful chemicals (especially Roundup/Glyphosate) and choose health- and environment-safe alternatives for fertilising, and for pest and weed control when necessary. Please talk to the gardener before you use any chemicals.

Mulch

We apply mulch and fallen leaves to garden beds to reduce water use, suppress weeds and provide nutrients as they break down over time. **DO NOT REMOVE MULCH** from garden beds - it's best kept neat and able to do its job.

Composting

We have compost bins for use by tenants and the gardener, for fruit and vegetable scraps, cut flowers, leaves and small pruning and other compostable materials. Composting makes the most of these to become soil conditioner for garden beds and potted plants. Follow the instructions on the compost bins, located at rear of Units 19-21, 35 and 39 Mackie Streets and at 12 Cargill Street. Compost is periodically available for tenants to use.

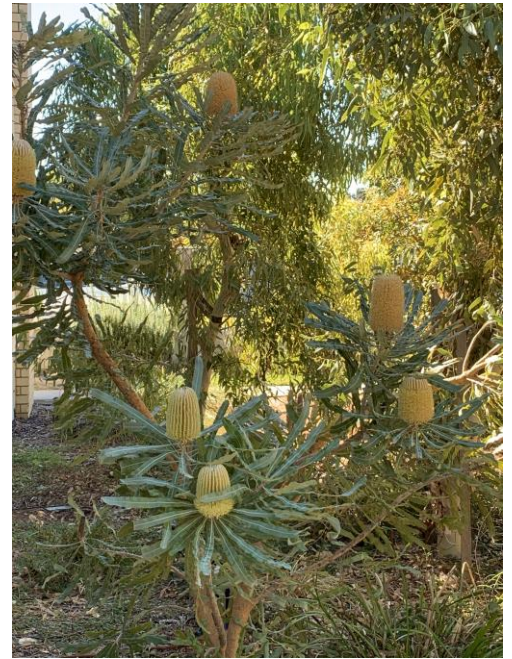


An invitation and some closing words

Enjoy the gardens!

There's always something to do, even in the smallest spaces, and gardening is a great way to keep active and help you to continue living independently. And it's scientifically proven that being around natural greenery, including indoor plants, enhances quality of life and overall wellbeing.

You're invited to make the most of your opportunities for gardening. Choose your means of connecting with the gardens and with each other, and let's get growing!



About our Gardener

Anne Pettit is a gardener, sustainability educator, all round recycler and 'resource rescuer' who loves finding good uses for things. A long-time resident of Vic Park, Anne recently moved to the Fremantle area. She works part-time as a gardener at Connect and also helps tenants find new homes for items they don't use or need anymore.